

# Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 28th September, 1921.

The Minister for Mines: I know there are things a magistrate cannot do, otherwise his decision will be upset on appeal.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We all know that. A magistrate, however, can do anything he is empowered under the clause to do. The clause is specific and definite, but the Minister has tried to tone it down by assuming that the magistrate will not do this and will not do that. The Minister has no warrant for any such attitude. The Committee is wise in assuming that a magistrate will adopt the most extreme limit of the powers conferred upon him. Although it may not happen in one case in a thousand, still that possibility is always there. It is begging the question to say that the magistrate would not do this or would not do that. It is practically impossible at this hour of the night to draft a satisfactory amendment. To submit the whole broad question to the court is conferring too much power altogether. The case put up to-night has been insincere, because those who support it are not prepared to agree to a postponement to allow of the drafting of an amendment. No effective reply has been advanced to the case submitted in regard to the possibility of an innocent man being convicted.

Mr. J. Thomson: No innocent man has yet been convicted.

Hon. P. COLLIER: How can the hon. member say that? Only the Creator could say such a thing. Innocent men have been hanged. The attitude of the hon. member is that if the court says a man is guilty he must be guilty. Take the case of McCahon's Great Hope mine with its wonderful crushing reported in this morning's paper. Nobody would be surprised if after that crushing the values were to fall.

The Minister for Mines: If we postpone the clause will you see the Solicitor General and get your proposed amendment drafted?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will. We must have in the Bill some power dealing with the examination of mines, but the clause as printed is altogether too sweeping. I will endeavour to have a satisfactory amendment drawn.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.

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

## QUESTION—WONNERUP TUART MILL.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Education: 1, When was the Forests Department tuart mill at Wonnerup commenced? 2, When was it finished? 3, What is the present output? 4, What is the total output to date? 5, What is the total expenditure in connection with the mill to date? 6, What is the cost per load on trucks of sawn timber? 7, Who authorised the expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, 1st May, 1920. 2, 11th June, 1921, but owing to difficulty in obtaining a manager, did not start cutting until 23rd August, 1921. 3, Five loads per day. 4, With the exception of two trucks of tuart, only jarrah timber for constructing mill cottages has been cut. 5, £10,295 to 31st August, 1921. This includes cost of tramline to railway siding, and all mill and bush equipment. 6, A full month's figures not yet available. 7, The establishment of the mill was approved by Parliament under Working Plan No. 2.

## BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

## RESOLUTION—FEDERATION AND THE STATE.

Select Committee appointed.

On motion by the Minister for Education (Hon H. P. Colebatch) resolved: That the Legislative Council be represented on the joint select committee by five members, the Hon. J. Ewing, A. Sanderson, H. Stewart, A. H. Panton, and J. W. Kiwman.

## MOTION—ELECTRICITY, GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION.

To Inquire by Royal Commission.

Debate resumed from the 6th September on the following motion by Hon. J. Ewing.

That in the opinion of this House the Government should appoint a Royal Com-

mission for the following purposes: 1, To investigate the workings of the Perth Electric Power Station and the generation, sale, and distribution of electricity. 2, To report as to the best means of generating cheap power for all purposes within the State. 3, The best location for the establishment of such a plant.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.40]: It is not my intention to speak at any length on the motion. Mr. Ewing should be complimented for having brought forward this matter for, if it achieves no other purpose, it will have the effect of directing attention to the Perth electric supply and the cost of electricity in this State. Generally, I am disinclined to support the appointment of Royal Commissions. Already the present Government have appointed a number and it appears that they intend to appoint more. I fail to find any instance in which the recommendations of Royal Commissions have really been given effect to by Governments; in many cases such investigations have resulted in either shelving the question or producing no adequate return for the expenditure incurred. The information obtained in many instances has been very valuable and it has been available in the records for the members of the general community to make use of. Should this motion be passed and a Commission be appointed, it would probably result in valuable information being collected in concise form and made available for anyone who might be inclined to invest money in the provision of a large supply of cheap electric power. Seeing that we have a large power house at East Perth, the output of which is not likely to be overtaken for some considerable time, it seems somewhat premature to talk about making further provision. If a Royal Commission is appointed, it is of paramount importance that the chief members of it should be men versed in electrical work, while one member at least should be fully competent to deal with the hydro-electric aspect of the case. Mr. Ewing indicated that he had been led to believe there was a possible source of cheap power in the Bunbury district. No electric power could be made available so cheaply as that generated from a hydro-electric source. As an instance of this we can turn to Tasmania, where the low figures at which power can be supplied to large consumers are really astounding. Mr. Ewing, in speaking on a somewhat similar motion last session, made a statement that the power sold by the Government power house in Perth was the cheapest in Australia. I do not know that I can join issue with him on that, but it is not anywhere near so cheap as Melbourne expects to get its power from the Morwell scheme. But for a considerable time the power available from the hydro-electric scheme of the Tasmanian Government was furnished on much cheaper terms than those indicated by Mr. Ewing. After hearing the statements of Mr. Ewing in this connection, I wrote to Tasmania for the purpose of ascer-

taining exactly what the costs were there, because I felt sure they were considerably lower than ours. The Tasmanian Government sent me the full tariff on which they work. Like many other large business concerns, like our Railway Department for example, the electrical power supply branch of the Tasmanian Government allow heavy discounts where the demand is large, and fair discounts even where the consumption is small. The schedule price is 2d. per unit, subject to a scale of discounts. Their discounts range from 20 per cent., equal to 4d., where the consumption exceeds 120 units per horse power installed per quarter, to 75 per cent., which discount reduces the price to the purchaser to one-halfpenny per unit, where 1,500 units per horse-power installed are used per quarter. It would serve no useful purpose to give the whole of the table. I should mention, however, that later I received a further statement that for large blocks of power, say 30,000 horse-power per annum, the supply is made at the astounding figure of .0735d. per unit, or one-tenth of the price at which the city of Perth is now being supplied by our East Perth power station. The Tasmanian figures I have quoted illustrate what it is possible to do where one has natural conditions permitting of the utilisation of water power with the necessary fall to allow of electric power being generated by hydraulic pressure. Those conditions constitute a very cheap source of power indeed. My view is that the development of industrial concerns should as far as possible be in the hands of private enterprise. It appears to me, however, that our sources of power adjacent to industrial centres are not of such magnitude as would justify the installation here of a large scheme on the Tasmanian lines. As regards the appointment of the Royal Commission asked for by Mr. Ewing, that step is one which should have been taken prior to the installation of the East Perth power station.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is not too late now.

Hon. H. STEWART: No; but since we have that installation at East Perth, it seems as if we should only be making the position worse by laying down another power plant for similar purposes while the East Perth establishment is still suffering from the incubus of excessive overhead charges by reason of only portion of its capacity being utilised. Any one who has taken an interest in the East Perth power station, and has met and conversed with Mr. Taylor, the engineer in charge, must be impressed with the fact that Mr. Taylor is a remarkably efficient officer, and a man well up to date as regards the installation of all appliances tending towards the working of an electrical enterprise with the minimum of labour and at the lowest possible working costs. The present position of the East Perth power station is so unfavourable, partly owing to adverse conditions, and more largely by reason of the work not having been done in the most

economical manner—by reason of its having been done by day labour instead of under contract. Thus the capital cost of the East Perth power station exceeded the estimate very considerably, and consequently there will necessarily be for all time very high overhead charges. I fail to see that at this juncture a Royal Commission could bring about any improvement commensurate with the expense involved in the process of investigation. Another reason for the high cost of current from the East Perth power station is the rise in the cost of fuel supply. So long as coal remains at its present figure, there will be one cogent reason why the costs of that power station must be high. No doubt things will settle down, and we shall see a general reduction in the cost of power from that plant, partly by reason of the altered conditions of industry generally, and partly by reason of the cost of commodities returning to something near the normal level, with the resultant reduction in the cost of living bringing about an all-round decrease in costs of production. Mr. Ewing gave the House some figures relating to the scheme which is being inaugurated in Victoria to utilise the low-grade coal deposits at Morwell. For the last 20 years these immense deposits have been the subject of investigation by Continental experts as well as by a Victorian Commission, known as the Brown Coal Advisory Committee, of which the then Victorian Government Geologist was chairman, and which included three of the leading electrical engineers of the State. A report issued by that committee in 1917 recommended an expenditure of about two millions sterling to establish large electrical supply works at Morwell, the current to be transmitted over a distance of 82 miles to either Newport or Melbourne, where the main distributing station would be established. The cost of the current delivered at that main station was to be 0.267d. per unit. The intention was that the Government should sell to the Melbourne City Corporation, and to the various large electrical supply companies which have been operating in Melbourne for the last 25 or 30 years. The Victorian Government were going to supply the Melbourne City Corporation and those companies with the power, to distribute to their various consumers, at a price cheaper than either the corporation or the companies would be able to generate at. The cost of .49d. per unit mentioned in this connection would be for generating only—the charges on power house capital expenditure not being included. I understand that the figure of .499d. represents the cost of generating current to the Melbourne City Corporation's power house in 1916, excluding capital charges on the power house. It is estimated that the Morwell scheme will, on full completion, be able to supply the Melbourne City Corporation and other large customers at .326d. per unit, thus leaving ample margin for the corporation and the companies

again to sell the power and still make substantial profits. The Victorian Royal Commission pointed out that the length of transmission involved, 82 miles, could not be looked upon as experimental, because already transmission schemes were in successful operation transmitting current over distances of as much as 300 miles.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: What is the estimated loss in transit over such a distance?

Hon. H. STEWART: I cannot say exactly.

Hon. A. Lovekin: In connection with the Winnipeg scheme the loss in transmission is 15 per cent. over a distance of 87 miles.

Hon. H. STEWART: These points are all taken into account in the final comparisons drawn up. As regards the Morwell scheme, seven alternative proposals were submitted. The first was for coal transported by rail from Morwell to Newport, and the second for electric transmission of power generated from brown coal at Morwell. Similarly, two proposals were submitted in connection with the Altona coal, and also in connection with the Wonthaggi coal. Lastly, there was a comparison of cost with the use of Newcastle coal. I do not think it necessary to deal with that aspect of the matter further. All I have in view is to illustrate that in this Victorian instance the provisory committee were appointed to investigate every aspect of the question, in the same way as Mr. Ewing would like done here. But when that action was taken in Victoria, Melbourne was a large manufacturing centre with a huge population. Further, at the time the committee reported, the Victorian Government realised that in order to maintain the power position in Melbourne and have cheap current available for the factories already established there, and, further, to meet the increasing requirements of the city in 1921, they needed to inaugurate a very large scheme capable of supplying a huge volume of power. The Victorian Government estimated that they would be able to dispose of a sufficient volume of electrical power in 1921 to enable the Morwell scheme to pay if then in operation. As a matter of fact I think it is still some way from completion. I have here a paper from the Institute of Engineers, Australia, which contains a matter which I think will be of interest to members, more particularly to Mr. Ewing and Mr. Lynn. It is an illustration of the utilisation of a very inferior coal on a considerable scale. This refers to a plant and power scheme at Val D'Arno, in Tuscany, Italy, where a deposit of inferior coal was discovered 50 years ago, but for over 30 years only a very limited quantity was mined. At about that time briquet factories were established. The briquets manufactured at these works are flat and oval in shape. Pitch is used as a binder. The lignite and the pitch after crushing are mixed in the proportion of nine to one and then triturated, heated and compressed. The whole production is sold to the Italian State Railways. The coal is much inferior to

that of Collie, whether in its natural state or when air dried, for at the latter stage it still contains 25 per cent. of moisture. I learn from this publication that the greatest consumers of the fuel are two large iron works at Florence and at San Giovanni, Val D'Arno, where all sorts of finished sections of wrought iron are manufactured from raw pig. Two or three locomotives which run between the iron works and the mines at Val D'Arno use it entirely. This better grade of lignite has a calorific value of 5940 B T U when dried. It is being used successfully for such high purposes as briquetting and locomotive driving, notwithstanding that in the deposit it is a very inferior material, which in its natural state has so low a value as 4300 B T U; yet by being crushed and elevated into overhead bunkers it has been utilised for raising steam, which is the source of power from which they generate electricity for their big scheme and distribute it to Florence and other towns for general and industrial purposes. I especially draw attention to the utilisation of this very low grade fuel. If other people can make use of such a low grade material, surely no effort should be spared in Western Australia to fit our own railway locomotives for the utilising of our comparatively superior fuel without the danger of fires in country districts. Another phase of this inferior fuel question has been investigated in Victoria, namely, the using of the coal in pulverised form. The Victorian manufacturers requisitioned the services of Mr. R. N. Buell, an American specialist, and he has been investigating the utilisation of pulverised Morwell coal burned in various types of boilers, and has given a comparative estimate as follows of the B T U's available for one shilling in Melbourne: from Newcastle coal hand fired 325,178 B T U. Newcastle coal stoker fired 470,400 B T U. Crude brown coal hand fired 375,295 B T U. Crude brown coal stoker fired 461,176. Pulverised brown coal burnt in suspension 500,176 B T U. After six months investigation in Victoria following on his experience in designing plants in the United States, Mr. Buell says that in her brown coal deposits Victoria has the cheapest fuel supply in the world. Collie coal, of course, was not brought into that comparison. The comparative calorific values are as follows: Dry Victorian brown coal 10,000 B T U, Newcastle coal, dry 14,200 B T U, and good quality Collie coal dry 13,309 B T U. It shows that as a pulverised fuel there is plenty of scope for the utilisation of Collie brown coal, which stands in most favourable comparison with the deposits in Victoria. Mr. Ewing is to be congratulated on the very full way in which he dealt with this subject, and on the matter which he brought forward regarding the cost of supplying power from the East Perth station. It has been helpful to all members to realise what the position is, but I do not think the time is opportune for the appointment of the proposed Royal Commission. The time will certainly come when this matter will have to be investi-

gated and the best source and cheapest means of generating electricity at a large power station determined. Still, at present that would be somewhat premature, and therefore I do not propose to support the motion.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.10]: Before hon. members make up their minds on this question there are certain phases of it which I should like to put before them. It has been said that one man in his time plays many parts. When, in October 1915, from the place occupied by the hon. member who has just sat down I indulged in some candid criticism of the East Perth power station. I did not expect that six years later I should be called upon to defend that institution. Still having recently perused the speech I made on that occasion, I find happily that I do not require to retract anything I then said. I summed up my remarks in these words—

Whereas the Government were told that these works would cost £205,000, and would produce electricity at .54 pence per unit, and whereas they had reason to suppose that the works would be in full going order in 1914, the actual cost is going to be nearly double that amount, and the cost of producing the unit of electricity is going to be close up to one penny.

Largely due to the fact that the works were not completed within the specified time, the cost has been very nearly doubled, and is considerably over one penny per unit. I am sorry I cannot support Mr. Ewing's motion, largely for the reasons advanced by the previous speaker, namely that the appointment of a Commission would be inopportune and could serve no useful purpose. Royal Commissions are costly, and where they have to make investigation into Government departments they occupy a good deal of the time of the officials and, generally, are not to be indulged in unless there be ample reason. Doubtless the time will come when some authority or other will have to investigate this position, but that time is not now, and for the reasons I shall try to make clear the appointment of a Royal Commission at the present stage could have no useful effect, and would mean the expenditure of a very considerable sum of money. I do not think it necessary to go into details regarding the construction of the East Perth power station. The very long time that elapsed between the making of arrangements for its construction and its actual completion meant that it brought the latter into the war period; and partly for that reason the cost has exceeded the estimate very largely. It was pointed out at the time by Mr. Drew that the capacity of the plant had been increased by 33½ per cent. which, of course, would increase the estimate. Had the work been completed within the time originally intended, it

would have cost a great deal less than it did. We have to look at the position simply as it is to-day. I want first of all to deal with the remarks of the hon. member as to the supply of power to the Perth City Council at .75d. per unit. To my mind one cannot dissociate this matter from the purchase of the Perth tramways. It was because of that purchase that the Government found it necessary to establish a new electric lighting plant. When they determined upon that, it was thought, and I think wisely, that the best interests would be served by scrapping the existing Perth plant and working from one station only. It can easily be demonstrated that that is the only economical way of providing electric power in the community. The Government had on the one hand purchased the trams. They then found it necessary to call upon the Perth City Council to scrap its electric lighting plant and to take current from the proposed new works. In the circumstances the Government had to make such arrangements with the Perth City Council that the latter would agree to and which would be fair and reasonable. They set out to make this arrangement by offering to supply current to the Perth City Council at cost. The mayor and councillors, wise in their day and generation, wanted to know what that cost would be. The Government of the day had the estimate of .54d. as being the actual cost, so that when the arrangement was made with the Perth City Council it was agreed that the current should be supplied to it at actual cost, but that this actual cost should not exceed .75d. In certain circumstances I should be inclined to take the view that as this had increased beyond .75d., because of conditions which could not possibly be foreseen, there might be some justification for the Government going to the Perth City Council and saying, "So long as you are satisfied that we are producing electric current economically you ought to be content to pay us exactly what it costs us." There is, however, another phase of the question which prevents me from advocating such a course. I have always contended that when Parliament decided on the purchase of the trams they deprived the Perth City Council of a very valuable asset indeed. We all know the circumstances under which the original owners of the trams obtained their concessions from the Perth City Council. We know the terms under which they had to sell to the council without any allowance for goodwill after the lapse of a certain period, and we all know that at the end of a further period they had to give the tramways to the council in good going order for nothing at all. When the Government bought the trams they actually deprived the Perth City Council of a very valuable asset.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did you say a valuable asset?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Undoubtedly it was.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Your Government are running the trams at a loss.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Holmes jumps very quickly to all sorts of conclusions. The fact that the taxpayers generally have not obtained the benefit of the value is because too much was paid for the concern.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member will agree that the tramways of Perth, without this burden of interest and sinking fund on an exorbitant capital expenditure, would be a very valuable asset indeed.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It was a valuable asset at the time.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Undoubtedly. The fact that the taxpayers of the State are not getting any advantage from it is due to the fact that an exorbitant amount was paid for the trams, whereas, had the concession been allowed to run its course until the holders of the concession desired to negotiate on reasonable terms with the City Council, there would not have been this exorbitant capital value.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: One of your colleagues is responsible for that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot help that. I suppose Parliament itself is really responsible for it. I fought against the purchase of the tramways, even up to the third reading stage, and put up a harder fight on that question than the hon. member himself has put up on any question—even though I say that myself. It was Parliament that was responsible, and this House of Parliament must take its proportion of responsibility, for it was a majority of this House which carried it. If in future years the Perth City Council does derive any great advantage from the agreement in regard to the supply of power at .75d., it will only be getting back some compensation for what it lost when the tramways were purchased by the Government. It must not be supposed it is all a matter of disadvantage to the Government in regard to the sale of current to the Perth City Council.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is the point. It is not a disadvantage.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Government sells current to the Perth City Council at .75d., that is to say, high tension current at certain points. In return the City Council has to convert this into low tension current and to supply it to the Government wherever it is required within the radius of five miles of the General Post Office at 1½d. per unit. By that means the Government save a great deal as compared with the previous cost which had to be borne in like places, which cost was something like 4d. per unit.

Hon. J. Nicholson: And you avoid the competition of any other electric light plant.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Quite so! Before this power station was established at East Perth the question whether

it should be placed in Perth or at Collie was carefully considered. Collie was turned down because it was felt that the amount of current which would be needed for a considerable period of years would not justify a transmission system over a distance of 125 miles.

Hon. J. Ewing: I am not advocating any one particular centre. I only want an inquiry.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The mere statement that the hon. member desires an inquiry is not sufficient. He must put up a case for an inquiry. If it can be shown that there is no case for an inquiry, I take it a Royal Commission will not be needed. It was considered that for many years to come the consumption of current would not warrant the establishment of a transmission scheme over a distance of 125 miles. If that was the case, I think it will be seen that the decision then given was the right one. As Mr. Stewart pointed out, there is now a new factor in the position, in that we should not be starting afresh, for we already have a power house at East Perth which cost £400,000. We cannot get rid of that.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is the trouble.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The arguments which applied in the past against a transmission scheme of 125 miles apply to-day with the additional force of the interest and sinking fund on capital upon a plant of £400,000, which cost has already been incurred.

Hon. J. Ewing: What about the coal costs?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Whilst it is true that the cost of producing a unit of electricity is larger than it would otherwise have been, because of the increased capital cost as compared with the estimate, that factor has not influenced the position anything like as much as the great increase in the price of coal.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is a good argument.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And the Government get a high freight over the railways.

Hon. J. Ewing: Of course they do.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know that it is a high freight. It is certainly higher than it used to be, but I doubt if it is a high freight, taking all things into consideration.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is the highest in the world.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The power station was not completed in 1914 as was anticipated, and therefore had to bear the increased costs due to the war. It is interesting to note that the total cost of the East Perth power scheme is £36 10s. per kilowatt. The Morwell scheme has had to bear the extra war costs right through. A portion of the East Perth power station was erected under pre-war prices. The Morwell scheme costs £50 per kilowatt, and the pre-war costs of such a scheme would have been about half that amount. It is important in connection with this motion to examine

carefully the reasons why the cost of producing a unit of electricity at East Perth is so high. When the station was contemplated in 1912 coal was costing 4s. per ton plus railway freight of 6s. 4d., which meant a total cost of 10s. 4d. per ton. These conditions prevailed until 1917, when there was an increase in the price of coal of 2s. 11d. In 1919 it was further increased to 9s. 6d., and in 1921 to 12s. 6d. That is to say, the cost of coal itself increased from 4s. per ton to 12s. 6d. per ton, or an increase of, roughly, 200 per cent. Railway freights increased from 1918 to 1919 by 1s. per ton and from 1920 to 1921 to 4s. 4d. per ton. This increase in the railway freights is partly due to the increase in the cost of coal to the railways. The final result was that in 1921 the coal and the freight increases amounted to 7s. 4d. for the one year, being an increase of 43.5 per cent. in coal and coal freight over the year 1920. That is in the cost of coal landed at the East Perth power station. In the year ended the 30th June, 1921, coal and coal freights, that is to say coal landed at the station, amounted to 69 per cent. of the operating costs, or 62 per cent. of the total costs. Now we have a thing which costs over 62 per cent. of the whole costs and we add on 43.5 per cent. It will, therefore, be seen what an enormous influence this has on the position.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is what I am arguing. The matter requires investigating.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am coming to the point made by the hon. member. The argument of the hon. member is that by erecting a power station at Collie and using transmission cables the freight can be cut out. That is a position I do not think requires a Royal Commission to investigate. It is a very simple position. Had the cost to the Government remained the same as it was in 1917, that is 10s. 4d. per ton, made up of 4s. for the coal and 6s. 4d. for the freight, last year's operations would have shown a profit of £17,319 after paying interest, depreciation, etc.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Reduce the price of coal. That will solve the problem.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: When the station was started in 1916 coal was 10s. 4d. per ton. At that rate if we take the production for last year and leave the coal at the rate it was then, the total cost of production would have been 782d. per unit sold instead of 1,082d. as it is at present. Even if we were paying the same as last year, namely 9s. 6d. for coal and 7s. 4d. for freight, the cost under these conditions would have been .9d. per unit sold, and the average charge made would have been .973, so that there would have been a profit last year. If the cost of coal had remained as it was in 1920, the works would have shown a profit. I do not know that there was any agitation on the part of the miners at Collie or on the part of the proprietors there for an increase in the price of coal at that particular time. There was trouble in the Eastern States, and as

a result of a Commission sitting under the Chairmanship of Mr. Hibble, the price of coal in New South Wales was increased in order to meet a wages dispute or something in that connection. The price was put up 4s. a ton. It was then ordered that this increase should apply to Collie as well.

Hon. J. Ewing: It was 3s.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It was made 4s. there, and the proportionate increase here was 3s. I believe very few people understood anything about it, but this increase was made to apply also to small coal. I think there was a good deal of surprise manifested in many circles when this increase was made to apply to small coal.

Hon. J. Ewing: You have to pay to mine it just the same.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Quite so! There was this increase of 3s. per ton in Western Australia, and that increase had a material effect upon the increase in the railway freights, because the railways had to pay extra charges for the coal with which to run their trains. This increase of 4s. 4d. per ton made a total of 43.5 per cent. increase in the fuel cost for the one year on an item which already represented 62 per cent., or more than half of the total cost of running the station. It is necessary for the House to remember that if a power station were erected at Collie it would be necessary to pay for the coal just the same. The freight alone would be cut out.

Hon. J. Ewing: It would be a different class of coal that would be used.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It may interest hon. members to notice how this power station scheme has developed. In 1918 the units sold amounted to 9¼ millions. Last year they amounted to 22½ millions, more than double the quantity.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What is the full capacity?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know. They can go a long way with a certain small extension.

Hon. H. Stewart: I think they can duplicate the plant within the same building.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The engineer said he fully recognised that when it was no longer possible to increase the present plant so as to meet all requirements, then would be the time to investigate as to the best method of procedure. That time will not come for a considerable period yet.

Hon. J. Ewing: It will be too late then.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In 1918 the trams took 4,016,539 units; now they take 6,386,640 units. In 1918 the Perth City Council took 2,250,000 units and now they take 8,500,000 units. They were selling—and this is particularly important—in 1918 in bulk supplies to different consumers, the names of whom I will give to the House later on, a total of nearly 3 million units, whereas last year the bulk supplies to these large private consumers totalled 7,871,000

units. The load is steadily increasing and large consumers are availing themselves of cheap power from the station. When we look at the revenue and expenditure for the two periods we find that from 1918 to 1921 the revenue increased from £32,000 to £92,000, while expenditure went from £20,000 to £74,000. The big advance in the expenditure occurred between 1920 and 1921, during which years it increased from £43,000 to £74,000. This increase was almost entirely the result of the award I have referred to in New South Wales, where the price of coal was increased by 4s. per ton and the price for Western Australia was increased by 3s. per ton, and also of the increased railway freights. The result of that was that whereas in 1920 there was a net loss of only £1,850, there was a net loss for last year of £9,560.

Hon. H. Stewart: Does that take into account anything for depreciation?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It provides £20,644 for interest and £6,250 for antiquation charges. As a matter of fact, the operating cost per unit sold in 1918 amounted to .46d., while in 1920 it had increased to .72d. Notwithstanding the tremendous increase in output, because of the advance in the price of coal delivered and the increased cost in freights, the operating costs increased in that period from .46d. to .72d. In the same period interest had decreased from .45d., or nearly ½d. to .22d. or nearly ¼d., and the antiquation charges from .14d. to .07d. That is to say, because of the increased costs, interest and antiquation charges declined from .59d. to a total of .29d., which is a very considerable decline indeed. Had the operating costs remained at the 1918 level the total cost of working last year would have been .82d. Had it remained possible to operate at .82d., the charge of .75d. to the Perth City Council would have been a reasonable one. It must be remembered that in most electrical works those in authority do not expect to get the total cost for every unit they supply. If such works can get big consumers to take bulk supplies, particularly at a time when it suits them, they can afford to sell at half the cost of production, and still make a profit. There are no big electrical works in the world that run on other than these lines.

Hon. T. Moore: The coal magnates are getting too much.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The actual increased cost from the date when the tribunal's decision was issued in New South Wales to the end of June, 1921, was £9,180. When comparing the cost of production at the East Perth power station with power stations in other parts of the world, it is interesting to note that there is no station in England producing power as cheaply as we are doing at East Perth. The lowest in England is at West Hartle-

pool, which is situated in the very heart of a coal-mining district. Yet the total cost at East Perth is lower than at West Hartlepool.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Have you any Australian comparative figures?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: At Melbourne—I am not speaking of Morwell now, for I will refer to that scheme later on—they have an output of 42 million units actual sales. That is double our output. The total cost, including capital, is 1.450d., or one-third more than the total cost at East Perth. Compared with a total of 198 power supply systems, both municipal and company owned in England, that of Perth stands as the lowest. Our cost is .796 for operating and the total cost 1.082; whereas at West Hartlepool their costs are .810 for operating and 1.152 for their total cost. We are about one-eighth of a penny less than the cheapest electrical supply station in England.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Why complain about the cost of coal if you are running the cheapest power station in the world?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not complaining about anything; I am only showing hon. members that no good purpose can be served by appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into the cost of running the East Perth power station, seeing that it can readily be explained and that such an inquiry would represent unnecessary expense.

Hon. J. Ewing: Do you say it could not be improved?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In Sydney, Newcastle coal is available at 24s. 6d. per ton, whereas here the cost of Collie Coal is 24s. 2d. per ton. I understand that Newcastle coal has a 30 per cent. greater heating value than Collie "smalls."

Hon. J. Ewing: I do not think that is correct.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: These figures are supplied to me by the experts and I cannot of course, question them. They inform me, however, that Newcastle coal has a 30 per cent. better heating value than Collie "smalls."

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And what is the difference in price?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is practically no difference. There is some difference in that there is less distance between Newcastle and Sydney than between Collie and Perth, and that naturally means that the cost of hauling the coal is less in Sydney than here. In Sydney there is a smaller proportion for freight than is the case with us in Western Australia. The New South Wales Government have an output of over 131 million units for tramways and bulk supply to the Sydney City Council, and the cost of generation, excluding capital, is .637d. per unit as against our cost of generation of .796d. It is also interesting to note that the New South Wales Government have their power station in Sydney and not in

Newcastle where the coal is situated. The same applies to the Sydney City Council, who, I believe, are contemplating, in addition to their existing power station, the erection of another of larger capacity, which is to be erected in Sydney and not in Newcastle. Coming to the Morwell system, members who read of the Coal Commissioner's decision at the time that it appeared in the Press, will remember that after Mr. Hibble, the Chairman of the Coal tribunal, gave his decision which increased the price of coal by 4s. per ton, which meant an increase of 3s. applied to Collie Coal, the Victorian Government, as owners of the Morwell colliery, refused to pay that increase and there was trouble in consequence. The Victorian Government got out of the trouble, however, without paying. They will obtain their coal, I understand, for about 2s. 3d. per ton.

Hon. H. Stewart: It is an open cut mine at Morwell.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: However, that is the anticipated cost of coal at Morwell, and members will realise what an important bearing that has on the position. Had the amount of 3s. or its equivalent—because Collie coal is much better than Morwell coal—been added to the cost of Morwell coal, it is questionable whether they would be able to work that scheme on the figures Mr. Ewing has suggested. The Morwell scheme is not completed, and it is well for members to bear in mind that it is not only in Western Australia that Government estimates where big undertakings are concerned, have been exceeded.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Nor yet only in Western Australia where Governments have bungled trading concerns.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so. It is not confined to Western Australia. I will read a small extract from a report of the Commissioners regarding the Morwell scheme. They say—

To remove any misconception on the part of the public, it should be pointed out that the reduction in the cost of supplying energy will have very little effect on the present charges in force to the average consumer for lighting purposes, as the difference between the present generating costs in Melbourne is only .172d., and therefore this will have little or no effect upon the lighting consumer who is charged 5½d. per unit.

In other words, it is only customers for large blocks of power at high load factors like those suggested by Mr. Ewing, who will receive power at a ½d. per unit, at which price, it was stated, power would be available from the Morwell scheme. Reverting to the Government power station at East Perth, although it is losing money, it has had a good effect in many directions. Take, for instance, the Midland Junction Municipal Council. That body suffered a loss on their own electric supply scheme of £500 per annum.



At the present time, taking current from the Government scheme and retailing it, the Midland Junction Council make £1,000 per annum. The Guildford Municipal Council show a profit of £600 per annum. I am not in a position to say what profit the Perth City Council show, but in this proportion it is probably greater than either of these two because the Perth City Council get the current very cheaply. Amongst the bulk consumers who are taking large supplies from the East Perth power house are the Perth City Council, Fremantle Municipal Council, the Naval Base, Midland Junction workshops, the Peerless Flour Mills, Messrs. Cuming, Smith & Co., Douglas Jones, the Greenmount Quarries, Messrs. Foggitt, Jones, and Company and Mr. R. O. Law. At the present time there is practically only one power station between Guildford and the Naval Base. Subiaco and Claremont have their stations, but the former is now in the process of changing over to bulk supply. At Claremont, I believe, they have the same matter under consideration. The Australian Electric Steel Company, who will start operations next month in Perth, came to Western Australia solely because electric power was available at a price at which they could not obtain it in the Eastern States. It cannot be said that, although the scheme has had tremendous difficulties to contend against, it has not shown good results. The heavy capitalisation, which I think could have been avoided, and the enormous increase in production costs, have hampered its operations. One point to be kept in mind regarding any proposal to transmit current is this: The cost of the Morwell transmission line is estimated at £323,000, turbines sub-station plant £276,000, a total of, say, £600,000. The length of that line is 82 miles. The length of the line from Collie would be 125 miles, so that the capital cost of the line would be £493,000. The terminal station could be put at half the cost of the Melbourne station, because it would be only required to deal with half the output. If we were to double the present output of the East Perth station, the freight on the coal—and that is what would be saved—would not pay interest on the capital cost of the line. That, I think, is sufficient to show that, until our consumption increases very largely, the transmission of power from Collie is not economical, for the reason that the interest on the transmission line itself would exceed the freight on the coal. So long as that is the case, and I am advised that it would exceed the freight on double the quantity of coal at present used, it must be obvious that the transmission would not be economical at the present time.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is worth inquiring into.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It might be if there were anything to suggest that within the next few years it would come within the scope of practical politics, but when it can be demonstrated that if we doubled the output and used twice the quan-

tity of coal it would still be cheaper to pay freight on that coal, it seems to me that the only conclusion we can come to is that the time for investigation has not arrived.

Hon. J. Ewing: Perth is not the only place on earth.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Perth is not the only place where the increased cost of generating a unit of electricity has been enormous within recent years. The working costs at Coventry, in England, in 1914—and that is a characteristic case—totalled .35d., a little over a third of a penny, and now, in 1921, the working costs are .92d. The reasons for the increase are exactly the same as the reasons in our own case. Coal used to cost .18d.; now the cost is .60d. Wages came to .04d.; now the figures are .11d. Those two factors, coal and wages, have been responsible for just as big an increase as in Western Australia. In the light of these facts, I cannot see what good purpose a Royal Commission is going to serve. To commence with, what would be the scope of that Commission? If a Commission were appointed, most of the investigations would have to be conducted elsewhere. When they had completed their investigation in Western Australia, it would be necessary to visit Victoria and investigate the Morwell scheme. An inquiry of this kind would not be complete even with the investigation of that scheme. Unless we were in a hurry, what benefit would result from investigating the Morwell scheme in its present incomplete state? Then it would be necessary for the Commission to go to New South Wales to ascertain why it is that the Sydney City Council intend to build their own new station instead of taking current from Newcastle.

Hon. H. Stewart: The Morwell Commission never went outside Victoria.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Commission, too, would need to visit Tasmania, and get facts regarding the transmission side of the great scheme there. What would be the outcome of it? The Commission would merely obtain information that would be available to the Government, or to those interested in the ordinary way, and I have no doubt that when the Commission had completed their report, they would not tell us anything that we did not know already. The most important thing would probably be that when we have dear coal, any product that depends chiefly on coal for its production, cannot be cheap. Some years hence, when the present consumption has been doubled, and when the present plant and buildings are unable to cope with the demand, it may be necessary to investigate the best method of providing increased supplies. That time has not yet arrived, and for the reasons I have given, I hope the House will not agree to put the country to the expense of appointing a Royal Commission which cannot serve any useful purpose at the present juncture.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, debate adjourned.

# MOTION—STATE FINANCES, ECONOMY

## To reduce Parliamentary Allowances.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the 22nd September, on the following motion by the Hon. H. Stewart:—

That the finances of the State demand the exercise of the most rigid economy in expenditure as well as efficient and enterprising administration, and in the opinion of this Council the Government should legislate for some reduction in the Parliamentary allowance to impress upon the citizens of the State the seriousness of the position and the necessity for their support and co-operation.

and on amendment by the Hon. J. J. Holmes as follows:—

Strike out all the words after "Government," and insert "in order to impress upon the citizens of the State the necessity for the strictest economy should forthwith bring in legislation to provide for a decrease of at least 50 per cent. in the allowance to members of Parliament.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	5
Noes	..	..	..	18

Majority against .. 13

### AYES.

Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. J. A. Greig
Hon. J. Nicholson	(Teller.)

### NOES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagb	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. H. Pantou
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN (West) [5.55]: I oppose the motion because I claim, as a representative of the Labour Party, I am pledged to a certain platform. When I was standing for election as a representative for the West province, I made certain declarations to the electors, and gave certain pledges. Amongst those pledges was one which is included in the Labour platform, that the salaries of members of Parliament should remain at £400 per annum.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: What did your opponent advocate?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I do not know.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: He advocated a reduction.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: And suffered defeat. There is an instance where the electors had the opportunity of deciding as to whether a reduction should be made in the Parliamentary allowance. During the present year there has been a general election, and in the course of that election I do not know that it was the policy of the Government at any time to urge a reduction in the Parliamentary allowance. The Government were returned with a majority, and consequently it is fair to assume that a majority of the people of the State were in accord with the allowance as it is at the present time. Those hon. members who are now advocating a reduction, did not go on the hustings and urge the reduction there. If they did, the people did not take any notice of them.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I suggested it.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: The hon. member may have suggested it, but he was not taken any notice of. The point that impresses me is that the people quite recently had an opportunity of declaring on this issue and, so far as I can determine, they declared that the present remuneration of members should stand. It is remarkable that a member of the Country Party should be responsible for launching this motion. If I understand the position at all, the Country Party at their recent conference decided that there should be no alteration in the allowance. As recently as August last the conference representing the various branches in the country declared that no alteration should be made. If that was the mandate, one would naturally think that the representatives in Parliament would give effect to it.

Hon. H. Stewart: We are not bound by caucus.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Then you are not representing the conference.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Hon. H. Stewart: No, I am representing South-East Province.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: The amendment seeks to impress upon citizens the necessity for the strictest economy.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They will be impressed when the vote is taken.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: The electors have had an opportunity to speak, and they have said in no uncertain voice that the present allowance should stand. It seems rather hypocritical that members who have been returned by only a section of the people should endeavour to dictate the policy in this regard. Had a motion of this kind been launched in another place by a member pledged to support a reduction, he could have claimed to have a mandate for his action from the people. This motion, however, comes from a House that represents only a section of the community. I have still to learn that the electors really desire that the motion be carried.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We represent the people who pay.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: While all members recognise the importance of urging the need for rigid economy—

Hon. T. Moore: Some of them.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I do not think this will make any impression on the people at all. It is only tinkering with the business. If some members think they are not worth the present allowance, there is no need for them to take it. There is no reason why they should not set an example in economy and pay back the allowance into general revenue.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: And then have to pay income tax on it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You do not advocate scabbing, do you?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: As a representative of West Province I claim to have a mandate from the electors that the Parliamentary allowance should stand, and I am further pledged by the Labour platform and am prepared to abide by that. I oppose the motion.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [6.5]: I believe there is a great deal of misunderstanding and a great deal of kite-flying in connection with the matter of the Parliamentary allowance. I well remember in 1911 that the first executive act of the Labour Government was to increase the wages of railway servants from 8s. to 9s. a day. The allowance to members of Parliament at that time was £300 a year. If we consider the increase granted to all employees in the State since 1911, we must agree that members of Parliament have not received a pro rata increase. To say that certain strikes were brought about by reason of the fact that members increased their salaries is simply moonshine. The salaries paid to members here are lower than those paid in any other State of the Commonwealth, with the exception of South Australia. During the general election, I addressed one meeting and there was a gentleman present who was very persistent in his interjections as to whether I and other speakers were in favour of members' allowances being increased or reduced by the Arbitration Court. I stated that I was, and gave my reason. In New South Wales recently the question of members' salaries was referred to the Judge of the Arbitration Court, and he granted an increase of £300 a year. There are many ways in which we can practise rigid economy. Possibly we may employ them when the Appropriation Bill comes before us. There is an immense amount of expenditure going on which might very well be cut out. I think Mr. Stewart was on the right track when he referred to the railways. I do not know of any place in the world where there has been so much reckless expenditure as on our railways. In my province there is a loop line from Brown Hill to Boulder and Kalgoorlie which has been provided with luxurious stations, and immediately after these were erected, the tramline was brought into competition with the railway. There are other instances

of this kind. Throughout the State, we can see evidences that the railway department is spending money recklessly in this direction. When I was in England I passed a railway station of a fairly large town and Sir Newton Moore, who was with me, pointed out the station and said that it catered for about 7,000 weekly passes in addition to other passengers. Then he asked, "What sort of a station would you have in West Australia for that number of people?" Here we would have a station costing a quarter of a million; there one could hardly see the station at all. I did not intend to speak to-day, but I wished to direct attention to the increases granted to members as against the increases paid to all other employees in the State. I oppose the motion.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [6.10]: When I first saw the motion brought forward, I felt exceedingly embarrassed, and I think that feeling possibly extended to a good many other members. I think we are all in accord with the first part of the motion. In fact it does not need any argument at all. It sets forth that the finances of the State demand the exercise of the most rigid economy in expenditure as well as efficient and enterprising administration. All we have to do is to vote "aye" on that, because that expresses the view of everyone. There was no necessity to go into all the details, and I am of opinion that, on a motion of this kind, it was not the proper time to go into such details. The proper time would be on the Appropriation Bill, when we may be able to effect some reduction and do some good. Mr. Stewart's criticism was certainly useful, but it was superfluous at the time. The wording of his motion, however, is good, and I am prepared to accept it. We find that other members have been advocating economy and pointing to this expenditure. Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Lynn, Mr. Sanderson, and Mr. Kirwan have spoken and what has been the result? During the two months of the present financial year we have had larger deficits than ever before. That is the result of pointing out these things. Therefore, it is of no use talking. The time has come when we must act. The proper time to act will be when we have before us the Appropriation Bill containing particulars of the expenditure for the coming year. Then we may be able to take some steps. Now what does Mr. Stewart suggest in his motion to remedy the present state of affairs? He suggests a reduction of Parliamentary allowances. I commend Mr. Holmes for his amendment—though I cannot support him—because he was definite in what he said, but Mr. Stewart was not definite. He said that the Government should legislate for some reduction in the Parliamentary allowance. If Mr. Stewart wanted to make a reduction or to economise, why did not he suggest the sale of some of the industrial concerns or else a reduction in the number of members of Parliament, say to ten in this House and 20 in another place?

Hon. H. Stewart: I have already done that.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: That would have been a good practical suggestion. Why should the hon. member have come down with this proposal? Was it for some reason of popularity? I do not say that it was so, but that point of view does crop up. We have discussed this question before, and I do not think I can do better than repeat some remarks I made on a previous occasion, because those remarks were made after a good deal of careful consideration. They will be found in "Hansard" for 1919, page 2,043, and read—

We have in our Constitution definitely stated that every person over the age of 21 shall have a vote. Therefore, they have a right to the free selection of their representatives. Even if we found people to serve in Parliament without pay the people themselves would not have free selection. In the circumstances, we must have payment of members and provide these people with the representation to which they are entitled and which they deserve, and which it is in the interests of the country they should have. We know perfectly well one of the most difficult things is to get a man with any wealth or any position into Parliament by election. There seems to be something against men who have property and who have an independent income, for if they go up for election they are generally beaten by someone whom the electors seem to think would be more of their kind and would not be a monopolist. The fact remains that as a rule men of means and wealth are not elected to Parliament. We must, therefore, endeavour to give advantages to the people in order that there may be represented in Parliament the class that would not otherwise be represented. We do not expect people to come here and carry out the duties for which they were elected on an insufficient remuneration to enable them to live decently. We all recognise that a member of Parliament is a man in a good position. He represents a portion of the country. He is chosen by a large number of his fellow citizens. He must have their confidence and he is, therefore, entitled to be properly paid to carry out those duties on behalf of those he is sent to Parliament to look after. If we do not pay a man a fair remuneration one of two things will happen. Either men will get into Parliament with independent means who are perhaps not in touch with a large section of the community, or we will have men sent in paid by the very classes that they represent. Both the Labour party and the Country party representatives are tied down to vote in certain directions. How much more tied down would a man be were he paid exclusively by those who sent him here instead of being paid by the Government? Suppose the Labour, the Liberal or the Country party sent in a member and paid him themselves. They would claim the exclusive right to his services. In these circumstances, he would be a dele-

gate and not a representative. Instead of having a position in which men would come to Parliament for nothing or else be paid by those who sent him here, it is better that each Parliamentary representative should be paid by the Government, for in that way he is at all events independent of those he represents so far as his salary is concerned. I heard it said by Mr. Duffell that when a member works for three or four months in the year only he ought to be able to get a living somewhere else. We know well that there is the greatest hostility in some sections of the community against any man having two jobs. How can any man take up a permanent job when he has to spend five months in Parliament? Is it to be expected that he can take up any job and drop it for five months and take it up again at a moment's notice afterwards?

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Before tea I was quoting some remarks which I had previously made in this connection. I was saying that it was not to be expected that a member could take on a job, and drop it for five months, and then pick it up again. The report of my remarks continues—

I am in favour of the reduction of the number of members, but I believe in paying those that we have an adequate salary. If we are convinced that the number of members should be reduced, let us bring in a Bill next session and do it, without, however, interfering with what we are going to do this time. It is stated that people outside Parliament are very hard pushed to live, and that therefore nothing more should be given to members of Parliament. I think some members of Parliament are also hard pushed, and deserve consideration. We want to have members of Parliament who will give their attention to the requirements of the State and satisfactorily carry out their duties. No man can satisfactorily carry out his duties if he be discontented and cannot pay his liabilities or obtain the requirements of the household. If we can get that satisfactory state of things with another £100 a year each, there should be no question about giving it. Therefore I intend to support the second reading of the Bill as it stands.

Those are the remarks which I made at the time, and they seem to me now to cover the ground almost without any addition. Perhaps, however, I may supplement them by saying that a member of Parliament who is chosen by a large number of people to represent them is a man who certainly deserves consideration. He is expected, amongst other things, to dress and appear decently—which cannot be done for

nothing. He is also asked on numerous occasions, many more, possibly, than he likes, to contribute towards subscriptions; and that is by no means an unimportant consideration. Then, when members travel among their constituents, as it is their duty to do, it costs them many a few shillings spent amongst friends. I feel sure no member of the House will contradict me on that point. All these things cannot be done for nothing. Moreover, one can fairly say that a member of Parliament must be a man of at least average intelligence. Therefore he is entitled to fair remuneration. As Mr. Dodd put it to-night, nearly all classes of the community have had their wages, salaries, or emoluments raised, and why should at this present moment members of Parliament have theirs lowered? A decent shearer, who can shear his average of 150 sheep per day—not a high average—is able to earn £2 per day and food. I know of a presser who by himself makes £12 per week. Surely a member of Parliament, representing hundreds and sometimes thousands of people, should be fairly entitled to a remuneration equal to that of a man working at those trades. Moreover, when we come to the question of taxation, regarding which I made it my business to institute inquiries, it appears that a member of Parliament, like any other person with an income of £400 a year, is taxed to the extent of £20 1s. 8d. per annum. He pays £7 5s. 8d. to the State, and £12 16s. to the Commonwealth. So there is £20 of his income gone straight away in income taxation. Viewing the position all round, I do not think we can reasonably begin our economies at the particular point proposed by the motion. I would willingly have supported Mr. Stewart in his proposals for the sale of State trading concerns or for reduction in the number of members, but I do not think we would be doing right in trying to reduce a remuneration which, according to what has been stated here, is certainly not higher than that obtaining in most Australian Parliaments. At all events, the policy of reducing parliamentary salaries at this juncture seems wrong. We all admit that the government of the State is a matter of difficulty at the present time. The financial position is peculiarly difficult, and all the wisdom of Parliament is needed to direct matters into the right groove. Is it wise, therefore, that when we are in such a difficulty we should reduce the remuneration of those who are expected to manage the affairs of the country? If a man has a station or a large business and gets into difficulties, does he immediately reduce his manager's salary? Certainly not. The manager is the very man whom he wants to keep up, to keep working, in order to make things go right. Having regard to the difficult position of our finances, I do not think it would be wise to attempt to reduce salaries at the present juncture; and therefore I cannot

support the motion. I should like to support the first part of it, but it seems to me that the two parts are inseparable as the motion is put. Therefore, not being able to support the two parts, I intend to vote against the motion.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [7.37]: I rise with some diffidence to suggest to Mr. Stewart that he should withdraw his motion. I think I can give him satisfactory reasons why he should do so. Mr. Baglin made some reference to the attitude adopted on this question by the recent conference of the Primary Producers' Association, and I have had a look at the Constitution, the rules, and the political platform of that association. I find that the objective of the association is "to put into practical effect the platform as promulgated from time to time by conferences of delegates." I learn that the platform agreed upon is to be found on the last page of the volume. I find, too, that "the persons eligible for membership of the association are those who undertake to support loyally the constitution and the political platform." Those are very reasonable provisions. When I turn to the platform, I find it provided that "parliamentary salaries are to be altered by referendum only." Since the present parliamentary salaries were fixed, there has been a general election; and I take it that the platform of the association means what it says. The salaries having been raised, and a general election having been held since they were raised, I assume that under the platform of the Primary Producers' Association those salaries shall be altered by a referendum only. However, I am not very much concerned with that aspect of the matter. Why I ask the hon. member to withdraw the motion is that the purpose of the motion, as it is expressed here, is to impress the citizens of the State, that its purpose is the influence that it will exercise on public opinion. The purpose of the motion, we are told, is to influence public opinion. Now, what influence is this motion going to have on public opinion? How are the citizens of the State going to regard it? I would ask hon. members, and particularly the mover, to consider that point seriously. Suppose a member of another place, or let me say of another Parliament, had voted in favour of an increase in salaries, and that the motion or Bill, as the case might be, having been carried, he, having received this increase, taken it and continued to take it, then came forward with a motion that a reduction be effected. No matter how pure that member's intentions might be, the great majority of public opinion would say to him, "What is your game? You know very well that the motion is not going to be carried. What is your motive? If you did not want this increase, why did you vote for it? And, having voted for it, what right have you now to try to make out that you did not want

it?" The opinion held in regard to an individual would be held equally in regard to a House of Parliament. Now, this House, constituted almost identically as it is at the present time, had in 1919 an opportunity of saying whether or not this increase should take place. The Bill providing for the increase was not voted on by way of division in another place, but a motion was submitted in favour of the increase. Against that motion nine votes were recorded in another place—only nine. Of the nine members who voted against the motion for increasing parliamentary allowances, five are no longer members of that Assembly: only four of those who voted against the motion for the increase are at the present time members of the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Were the other five rejected for that reason?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We are not particularly concerned in that voting, but the public will say that we are concerned with our own votes. And what was the position in this House? The general question was put to a division, and was carried by 14 votes to 10. Allowing for the fact that we have only 29 members on the floor of this House, and that all of them are not present in every case, it may be said that that vote represented the opinion of the Legislative Council. It was not a snap vote.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Some members could not be found.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We had 14 votes in favour of the Bill.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: There was no snap vote about it; it took all night.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It was a deliberate vote of this Chamber, and this Chamber having deliberately voted, at a time when the financial position was just as difficult as it is at present, in favour of the increase, and there having been in the meantime a general election which has undoubtedly confirmed members of another place in their contention that £400 a year was not more than an adequate salary, can it be said for a moment that any one member of this House imagines that if the motion is carried it will be given effect to in another place? It being known that the motion is not going to be given effect to, what will be the public impression of our action in voting for a reduction of salaries, especially as we voted for the increase when the question was in our hands? Now that the matter has passed out of our hands, are we to vote in favour of a reduction? Is that going to make a good impression on the public mind? During the debate one hon. member threw out the suggestion that if the Constitution permitted it he would urge that members of this Chamber should be paid at a lower rate than members of the other Chamber; but when he learned that the Constitution did permit it, he dropped the subject. Again, during the debate on the Bill for the increase

of parliamentary allowances Mr. Stewart, to be consistent—and I am not attacking the hon. member's consistency—moved that the increase should apply only to members of the Legislative Assembly. What was the result? The voting was ayes 6, noes 17. That was the result. I put this to Mr. Stewart and to hon members generally: In 1919, when the financial position was very much what it is to-day, we were asked would we as a House approve of an increase in the payment of members, and we said "Yes," on a measure adopted by 14 ayes against 8 noes. Then we were asked to apply the increase only to the Assembly, and we said "No" by 17 to 6, declaring that Council members should have the increase as well. In the meantime there has been a general election which has confirmed another place in its attitude. In view of these facts, what will the public say if we carry a motion of this kind? I venture to say that the public will declare that we do not mean it at all. Therefore I suggest to Mr. Stewart that he withdraw the motion.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [7.45]: The double barrelled motion submitted by the hon. member may be likened to the curate's egg, in that it is good in parts. The first part declares that the finances of the State demand the exercise of the most rigid economy in expenditure, as well as efficient and enterprising administration. I am quite in accord with that, and with the hon. member's anxiety to impress the public mind on the lines indicated. All hon. members would support the proposition that we travel the hard road of economy by overhauling the various departments with a view to seeing that waste is eliminated and expenses reduced to a minimum compatible with efficiency. The motion refers to enterprising administration. Whether or not the hon. member meant State enterprise, he did not say. In my view that would not tend to economy. We would be quite agreeable to anything securing the proper utilisation of the resources of the country and the attainment of the greatest efficiency. The second part of the motion proposes that in the opinion of the Council the Government should legislate for some reduction in Parliamentary allowances in order to impress on the citizens the serious position and the necessity for their support and co-operation. But will the seriousness of the position be impressed on the public mind by the carrying of a pious resolution suggesting to the Government that they should reduce members' allowances? Mr. Stewart, in moving the motion skillfully evaded showing how this might be effected. He did not even indicate whether he would reduce allowances by £1 or by £399, but confined his remarks to a disquisition on the finances of the railways. If the motion be carried, will the public mind be impressed with the desirability of effecting economies generally? It might be successfully argued that a practical demonstration of thrift would

serve to direct attention to the necessity for economies. I venture to say it would not bring about that result. It must not be overlooked that the Government who were responsible for increasing the allowances of members, and also for accumulating a deficit of 1½ million during their term of office, have been to the electors, who have again returned them to power. All the members of the Assembly have been to the highest tribunal, and while some were rejected the great majority of them still hold their seats. Not having been here to listen to the arguments in favour of the increase of members' allowances, I have looked up the remarks of the Premier in moving the second reading of the Bill. He said he wanted to see every member of the community paid in accordance with the value of his services. In my opinion those were good words. He said he knew what his duty was, and that he was going to do it by getting the Bill through. That has been endorsed by the people, and therefore any motion, such as that before us, which might be carried here, would be without effect. It has been suggested that we should have gone to the Arbitration Court instead of raising our own salaries. Had we gone to the Arbitration Court we might have done better, because on the figures submitted by Mr. Knibbs the salaries would have been £420 instead of £400.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What about citing a case now?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: And if the Federal Arbitration Court were approached we might be put on a level with Federal members.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I will see about organising a union to-morrow.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Mr. Stewart has not impressed me with his arguments. I do not think the motion, if carried, would have the desired effect. All hon. members approve of the first part of the motion, but probably very few would give their support to the second. I move an amendment—

That all words after "administration" be struck out.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member cannot move that amendment, an amendment having already been moved to a subsequent part of the motion. If the hon. member wishes to amend any words after the word "Government" I am prepared to listen to him.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [7.53]: Mr. Holmes' amendment sought to reduce the allowance of members by at least 50 per cent. The motion as it stands merely says that there should be some reduction. I will not vote for a motion which means, perhaps, some pettifoggish reduction which would have no effect on the finances and would be no lesson to the citizens. I should like to add the word "substantial" before "reduction," but apparently you, Sir, would rule me out of order just as you

have ruled against Mr. Harris. Therefore, I move an amendment:—

That all words after "position" in line 7 be struck out and "provided such reduction shall be of a substantial nature" inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North—on amendment) [7.56]: The amendment says "substantial reduction."

The PRESIDENT: As a matter of fact the amendment is to strike out the words "and the necessity for their support and co-operation." Hon. members speaking to the amendment will kindly confine themselves to the advisability or otherwise of striking out those words.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is self evident that there is necessity for their support and co-operation. If we are agreed upon that, why drag in all these side issues?

Hon. A. H. Panton: You moved to strike all that out.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Reference has been made to parties in this House. I claim that in this House I know no party. The danger I see, is that the House is likely to become a party House. The Constitution provides for this House being non-party, Governments come and Governments go, but this House goes on for ever.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Not on your life!

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is idle for the hon. member to put up a proposition like this: "Do we reduce salaries when the business manager has a difficult task?"

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the hon. member is speaking to the amendment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I should like a ruling on the point. I am speaking to the motion.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must speak, not to the motion, but to the amendment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: But the hon. member asked do we reduce the salaries of business managers when the firm is right up against it? What this House did—and what has been worrying me ever since—when the country was right up against it, was to increase salaries. That has had an immoral effect on the community.

The PRESIDENT: The remarks which the hon. gentleman quotes as being made by another hon. member were not made on this particular amendment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have nothing more to say on the subject.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [8.0]: The hon. member in moving this amendment has overlooked the very essence of the motion, and has eliminated from it that which it is most essential should be retained, namely "the necessity for their support and co-operation." He wants to strike out the very words which I wish to see retained. I feel I cannot support the amendment as it is. If the hon. member had moved

an amendment to add to the end of the motion such words as "in an endeavour to effect a substantial reduction in such allowance," this would have met my requirements.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman would be in order in discussing that after this amendment is disposed of.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am merely seeking to ascertain if that is what the hon. member is aiming at. If he strikes out these words he will strike out what is really the essence of the motion.

Hon. A. Lovekin rose in his seat.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. gentleman has no right to speak at present.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move—

That leave be granted to withdraw the amendment.

Motion put and negatived.

The PRESIDENT: The amendment cannot now be withdrawn.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East—in reply) [8.4]: My object in framing this motion, and in not stating any definite amount, was to put forward a motion that would appeal to all members, and to bring forward one which they could conscientiously carry without stultifying themselves or creating an impression in the public mind such as was suggested by the Leader of the House. I felt the motion would be carried by a substantial majority and that it would have a beneficial effect. I believed that the result would have been that the Government would have taken it into consideration as they did the motion for an increase which arose in another place. I thought it was unnecessary to give specific reasons why some reduction should be made, or to specify any particular amount. I thought, provided the motion was carried, the good sense of the Government would induce them to do something which would constitute an object lesson, and that whatever was done would have the effect of impressing the position upon the community. I realise, however, from the tone of the debate, there is a difference of opinion, and that the motion has not met with as much support as I thought it would.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It has met with more than I expected.

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Cornell said that no argument had been put forward in support of this motion. The matter dealt with is very simple, and the reasons given in the motion fully explain the desirability of carrying it. I thought it unnecessary, therefore, to labour the question. We all expected that there would be a decrease in the cost of living, and we all hoped to see it. Although the Leader of the House says that the financial position is no worse than it was two years ago, I think that two years ago it was not expected that the position to-day would be as bad as it is. The position, in fact, is worse

than it was two years ago and the outlook is even less promising.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It will be worse to-morrow than it is to-day.

Hon. H. STEWART: I believe that is quite true.

Hon. T. Moore: Do not be so pessimistic.

Hon. H. STEWART: There is no pessimism in stating facts. Mr. Cornell said I made no suggestion regarding the railway administration. He said I was talking wildly, without suggesting anything. I did not deal with the matter fully, but I put up a couple of suggestions which I think might have been considered. If, under the conditions of the railways, the position was such that, on account of awards and each man having to do a particular job in some out of the way place, it meant unreasonable expense, it was necessary to apply to the Court of Arbitration for some common sense agreement, or to let contracts for these small jobs in out of the way places, so as to ensure the more economical carrying out of specified repair works.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do you know what the award provides for in that respect?

Hon. H. STEWART: Apparently certain things are being done for which there is no justification, and for which no reasonable excuse has been offered. This, however, does not alter my opinion. Another suggestion I had to make was in regard to tramway extensions. I expressed the opinion that instead of making extensions it was preferable to consider the advisableness of resuming unutilised suburban land adjacent to railway lines and open stations on existing railways in those places where houses could be built. A certain amount of responsibility has been thrown upon the Commissioner. He took the responsibility of introducing the 44 hours a week and the five days per week system. He points out in his reports that he did not get the same result from that system as he was getting from the six-days a week system. Mr. Dodd agreed with the attitude I took up. Members have spoken of the value of their services and of the question of an adequate reward for them. Although I may be accused of being illogical, I do not say that members are paid too much or that they are not paid enough. I have tried to take into account all the circumstances. The point that strikes me is that, when the Parliamentary allowance has been increased from time to time, it has been increased at the closing hours of the session, and has been made to apply to the Parliament then sitting. It is the way in which these increases have been made that has aroused so much attention. In the last instance, following upon the statement that the Government had made for years past, that they had no money with which to pay increases to the civil servants, prior to the civil servants receiving any increases the Government gave an increase in the Parliamentary allowance. It was not that the Government were wholly to blame, but it was Parliament which was to blame. I have been consistent in my attitude on the question of



economy ever since I became a member of this House. I thought that in framing this motion, without putting in any specific amount, I would ensure that there would be no question of hypocrisy or of dodging the issue. Even if a reduction of five per cent. was made, that reduction would constitute an object lesson. It was the principle I desired to stress. In my opinion Mr. Holmes's amendment was of too drastic a nature and would have caused hardship, if carried, upon members of both Houses. It would not be fair to expect many members who devote so much time to their duties to have had to come under such an amendment, and I therefore could not support it. Had Mr. Holmes moved for a 50 per cent. reduction plus substantial travelling allowances for members who live in far back places, and have to sacrifice five months of the year away from their homes, it would have created a more equitable position and I would have supported it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I do not think it will come forward.

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Dodd said that the last increase in the Parliamentary allowance had nothing to do with the strikes which have occurred. In my opinion there was a direct connection between the action of the Government and the unrest in the Civil Service, and possibly in the railways too. I am sorry that certain members feel that they are placed in an awkward position as the result of the wording of this motion. I did not think it would place any member in any awkward position. It is not a question of a business concern being in troubled waters, as suggested by Sir Edward Wittenoom. It is a question of introducing economies not only in the lower branches of a concern but of introducing economies in all its branches. This motion, if carried, would give the Government a lead, if they considered it right and proper to follow it, to effect further economies. Regarding Sir Edward Wittenoom's remarks that had I come forward with a proposal for a reduction of members, I would have secured more support, I am glad to hear that much. The first year I entered Parliament I asked the Government if they proposed to move for a reduction in the number of members. I advocated a reduction in the representation of the provinces, two members to be elected every three years instead of three members elected every two years. That system is practised in South Australia with apparently satisfactory results. The Government, however, considered the proposal involved too paltry an economy. Regarding my bona fides, I suggested at the time that my proposal should take effect at the next general elections, when I would have had to seek re-election. I wrote to the then Premier, Sir Henry Lefroy, and also to the then Leader of the Country Party, Mr. Willmott, who was a member of the same Cabinet. I have their replies. I suggested to the Government of the day that they should bring about a reduction in the cost of government

and proposed a reduction in the number of members of Parliament. I instanced, as an illustration, the possible reduction of members in the Legislative Council. The Premier replied as follows:—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 26th instant, on the subject of economy in administration, and advocating a reduction in the cost of Parliament, and a reduction in the numbers of members of both Houses, and have to advise you that the Government are now considering the question of reducing the cost of Parliament and the matter will be submitted in due course. I am pleased to have your views upon this important subject.

We know the extent to which the cost of government has been reduced. That cost might have gone down during the time Mr. Gardiner held the position of Colonial Treasurer, but whatever he did in the way of effecting economies has been nullified since and, in all probability, the expenditure has gone back to its former state.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They did not show too much gratitude to Sir Henry Lefroy for bringing in any economies.

Hon. H. STEWART: Regarding the remarks by the Minister for Education, as a member of the Country party I gave my adherence to the platform and constitution as it obtained at the time I was elected. In bringing forward this motion I am acting in accordance with what was in vogue at the time I was elected. I am endeavouring to bring about the position as it stood then. In bringing forward that aspect, the action of the Minister for Education constitutes a tribute to his astuteness rather than to his understanding of the constitution and principles of the members of the Country Party, and the basis on which they act. We are not put here by the electors to at all times obey the resolutions of conferences which take place each year and to follow the advice of irresponsible bodies. We have a definite constitution and platform which we conscientiously believe in. In moving the motion standing in my name, I am merely acting in accordance with the attitude which I adopted when the Act under which Parliamentary salaries were increased was before the House.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You are always two years behind your platform, according to your showing.

Hon. H. STEWART: We are not subject to the decisions of such large bodies of men as assemble at the annual conference.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Hear, hear! That is why we have ours every three years.

Hon. H. STEWART: Regarding the contention of the Minister for Education that by carrying this motion we would create an impression that members of Parliament were stultifying themselves and that members merely carried a motion which they knew would lead them nowhere, I think that attitude is unjustifiable. I think the public

would give this Chamber much credit if the motion were carried.

Hon. H. STEWART: It would have a good effect upon the public if we carried the motion. If we carry it, the Government should take notice of it as they took notice of the motion of a member in another place upon which they brought in a Bill to increase the Parliamentary allowance. The contention of the Minister carries no weight with me. I realise with some regret from the tone of the debate that if I had only put in the word "substantial" in my motion, it would have secured more support. That aspect is not of such importance that any member should refrain from voting for the motion simply because no specific amount is mentioned, nor yet because the word "substantial" is not included. I feel I am not justified in withdrawing the motion which I had hoped would appeal to the majority of the House. I am not contending for one moment that the allowance is either sufficient or adequate, but the passing of the motion would have—

Hon. R. J. Lynn: A moral effect.

Hon. H. STEWART: That is the position. It will have a moral effect outside the Chamber.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	4
Noes	..	..	..	15

Majority against	..	11
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#### AYES.

Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. C. McKenzie	(Teller.)
Hon. J. Nicholson	

#### NOES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

### BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second reading.

Debate resumed from 22nd September.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.28]: The Bill was explained by the Leader of the House in his customary lucid and able manner, so that there is no necessity for anyone to waste words in attempting to explain the objects of the Bill. It is a subterfuge, Mr. President, and was admitted by the Leader of the House to be a subterfuge. I am not in favour of subterfuges, but in this particular case I admit I do not know how the Leader of the House

or the Government could get out of it. I will support the second reading of the Bill. I want to draw the attention of the Leader of the House to a telegram from Melbourne—I regret I have not got it by me at present, but possibly he saw it himself—to the effect that the Federal members and Federal officials were watching this particular Bill. I am glad to hear that they are watching something that is going on over here.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Hear, hear!

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I hope the Leader of the House when he replies will tell us what that watching is going to bring about. I come to one other point, and that is, who is going to avail himself of this Bill when it becomes an Act? I take it it is not introduced for the benefit of some particular individual.

The Minister for Education: There are no elections coming on just now.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I take it it has been framed for general purposes. I am afraid it is not going to have a very good effect upon public opinion. On this point I should like to hear the views of other hon. members who have had experience something like mine in State and Federal politics.

The Minister for Education: It will only apply to members of Parliament.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Would it increase a member's chances in an election if he avails himself of this legislation?

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Quite possibly they might want to lose him from the State Parliament.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is a matter of importance to us as working politicians either in this Chamber or elsewhere. I would not avail myself of this measure, because I think it would injure me very materially in the eyes of the electors. I hope I am wrong in that opinion. I hope the Leader of the House will be able to point out that I am wrong. I do not know whether anyone has availed himself of the Act similar to this which has been passed in the other States.

The Minister for Education: It has only just been passed in Tasmania, and it has been the law in Victoria for two years.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is not a matter that concerns the public; it does not affect them; it can only affect members of Parliament. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North) [8.35]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill if for no other reason that I think it is a mistake to be dealing with legislation of this kind when more important legislation could be brought before us for consideration. What will this Bill mean if it is carried? It will mean that it will give the right to individual members of Parliament to nominate for the Federal Parliament. They must tender their resignations nominally, and their seats in the State Parliament will be kept warm until it is ascertained whether they have won the

Federal election or not. I put this proposition to hon. members: take my own case. I have no doubt that my seat in this House is as secure as that of any other hon. member. Suppose for the purposes of illustration I resigned as member for the North Province, and nominated for the Federal House, and that I failed to secure election to the Federal House. Would I have the audacity to come back and offer my services to the North Province? Would not the North Province electors be entitled to say to me, "You deserted us in order to secure something better and you have no right to ask us to re-elect you." That is one view I take of it. On the other hand, who is to fight the Federal Government under this proposed Act? I think the Leader of the House told us that it is the individual member who will have to fight if the Federal authorities refuse to alter their present policy.

The Minister for Education: We are not asking them to do anything.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We shall not be able to prevent them doing something to block what we propose in the Bill.

The Minister for Education: I think we can.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If they do something to effectively block an hon. member who may be returned, it will be the hon. member they will have to fight, and not the State. The Leader of the House told us the other night that we had an exceptionally good case against the Commonwealth Government in connection with the surplus revenue, but that it was not right for the State to fight the Federal authorities. Then if it is not right for the State to fight the Federal authorities on an important matter like that, is the State going to fight on behalf of an individual member who is blocked from taking a seat in the Federal Parliament by some action of the Federal authorities? The hon. member talked about State rights, and what a State could do, and what the Federal Parliament could not prevent. My reading of the Constitution is that the Federal legislation overrides State legislation. That was my objection to Federation right through. We were junior partners, and I know the position that a junior partner occupies always. Western Australia will be the junior partner in the Federation to the finish. The supporters of Federation put up nothing else but "One flag, one destiny, and one people." and these supporters to-day should feel anything but pleased with that policy of "One flag, one destiny, and one people." The trouble of an individual fighting is the cost. The individual has to spend his own money, but the Federal authorities spend the money belonging to the people. We have the States fighting individuals, not because the authorities think they are right and that the individual is wrong, but because they know they have more money than the individual has. If we pass this legislation, that will be the

position. The Leader of the House can say what he likes, but the fact remains that Federal legislation overrides the legislation of the State. When we entered Federation we sold ourselves, body, soul, and spirit. I do not think the Bill is worth the paper it is written on, and I shall vote against it if, as I said at the beginning, for no other reason than that we should not be wasting our time on matters of this description.

Hon. Sir Edward WITTENOOM (North) [8.40]: I cannot follow the arguments of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. This seems to me to be a simple matter, so simple in fact that I have been through it myself. So far as I understand the Bill, it means that if any member of the Council or the Assembly wishes to contest a Federal seat, he must resign within a certain number of days, and that his resignation is held in abeyance, and then if he is not elected, he can return to his seat in the State House. I do not agree with what Mr. Holmes said about a member leaving this Parliament to enter the Federal Parliament. My opinion is that if a State member is elected to a Federal seat, he leaves his constituents more for their own good than for his own.

The Minister for Education: As a matter of fact he does not leave them at all.

Hon. Sir Edward WITTENOOM: That is so. Take my own case in 1907. I was foolishly induced by the late Lord Forrest and others to contest a seat for the Senate. I will not say what it cost me.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And you were amongst the "also rans."

Hon. Sir Edward WITTENOOM: Yes, I also ran. I remained out of State politics for a year or two, waited for a vacancy and then came back to this House. I believe that if a State member is a good man it is far better to have him back again in his old place if he suffers defeat in connection with a Federal contest. If the opinion is that a useful member of the State Parliament can do more good in the Federal Parliament, it is wise to help him to get there. The Bill in my opinion is a good one, and if, as has been said, the Federal Electoral Act will not allow a State member to nominate for the Federal Parliament without resigning his seat, then this is the only way to get over the difficulty. I support the second reading.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [8.58]: I support the second reading of the Bill. The whole question has had a rather interesting history. I will relate as briefly as I can, a few features of that history, and I think I shall be able to prove that the embargo now placed by the Federal Electoral Act on State members of Parliament nominating for a Commonwealth seat is a concoction that was brought about right through the piece by members of the Federal Parliament and those members alone. The Constitution did not impose this embargo on State members of Par-

liament. As a matter of fact half the members of the original Commonwealth Parliament came from the State Parliaments, and the first Federal Cabinet was made up pretty well of the Premiers of the various States of the Commonwealth. I think the framers of the Constitution had in mind that the State Parliament would form the training ground for entrance to the larger Parliament.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: It had to be.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Federal Parliament saw fit to place a section in the Electoral Act which provides that no member of the State Parliament shall nominate for a Federal seat unless that member has resigned his seat fourteen days prior to the issue of the writ. So far as I can understand, that is the only degree in which the Federal Parliament has departed from the original framing of the Constitution, but it is tantamount to saying that members of State Parliaments are in the same category as rogues and vagabonds, and shall not contest a Federal seat without first resigning the State seat. I well remember that this question was discussed at a Federal Labour congress in Brisbane in 1910, and a motion was carried by about four to one that this blot should be removed. Nothing happened. I attended a Labour congress in Hobart in 1912. Andrew Fisher was then Prime Minister, and a motion was submitted to that conference of 36 delegates from all States, not only condemning this embargo on State members, but the then Labour Government for not having removed it. Mr. Fisher appealed for the question not to be put, as there would be no vote against it. However, the position was not altered. In the last amendment to the Electoral Act, no alteration was made by the party then in power. The measure was brought down just prior to the last elections, and had reached the report stage when Senator Russell moved that the Bill be re-committed for the purpose of inserting a new clause. This new clause was then inserted. It passed the Senate and went back to the House of Representatives and was ratified. Therefore, there is no difference between the parties in the Federal House on this question. I am satisfied that the people of Australia, irrespective of political opinion, never believed in this embargo being placed on the entry of State members to Federal politics. There is no other way of removing this blot. Mr. Holmes says that the Federal legislation will prevail. If this Bill is passed and a member of a State Parliament desires to nominate for the Federal Parliament, he must conform with the Commonwealth Electoral Act by resigning his seat not later than such date as is set forth in the Act. This measure will permit of conformity with that provision, and will place the member in nearly as good a position as if the clause to which I referred had not been inserted. After all these years of protest, it is time that members of the State Parliaments did something for themselves.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [8.50]: As Mr. Sanderson has said, I have noticed the telegrams from Melbourne in which it has been stated that certain Federal officials say there is a Federal constitutional objection to the course now being taken. I am waiting to learn what the Federal constitutional objection is. To my mind there is the strongest possible constitutional objection to the action of the Federal Parliament in setting up in the Electoral Act a disqualification that was never contemplated by the Constitution. How clear it is that the disqualification was not contemplated is shown by Section 44 of the Federal Constitution which sets up the disqualifications. One of these is Subsection 4 which says "Holds any office of profit under the Crown." There is a proviso to Subsection 4 which states that it does not apply to the office of any of the Queen's Ministers for a State. The Constitution itself says that the holding of an office of profit under the Crown is a disqualification for candidature for the Federal Parliament, but that this shall not apply to a State Minister.

Hon. J. Cornell: Who is a member of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Quite so. Therefore, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the Federal Parliament, in its Electoral Act, has evaded the clear terms of the Constitution and thus limited the rights of the States as to whom they shall send to Parliament to represent them. The hon. member asked who was likely to take advantage of this provision. We can only look back on past experience. There have been two or three instances of State members, who desired to contest Federal seats, having been compelled to surrender their seats in the State Parliament in order to do so. I take it there will be a similar number of cases in future. As to whether it would benefit a member's chances with the electors, I do not think that would enter into the question at all. The electors would choose the best man to represent them and would not be much concerned with what happened afterwards to the defeated candidates. To a large extent Mr. Holmes has already been replied to by Sir Edward Wittenoom. He seemed to be under a misapprehension as to the object of the Bill. He says it is to make individuals fight the Federal Parliament. The object of the Bill is to relieve individuals of that obligation. An individual could fight the Federal authority under the law as it stands at present. When an election came along, a member of Parliament, without resigning his seat, could put in his nomination, and it would be rejected under the Commonwealth Electoral Act by the returning officer. The member could then follow the Federal Government through all the courts of the country up to the Privy Council if he liked to demonstrate that the provision in the electoral law was ultra vires of the

Constitution. Is it likely that any individual would do that? This Bill will enable State members to comply with all that the Federal Parliament rightly or wrongly asks them to do and give them a way out afterwards. I quite agree with Sir Edward Wittenoom that the right course would be not to resign the State seat until elected to the Federal Parliament. I venture to say that if the Federal Government or the officials suggested in these telegrams do start a constitutional fight, they will get the worst of it. The objection to the whole thing is having it in the Commonwealth Electoral Act. If they had amended the Constitution, well and good. They would have had to follow the proper procedure and move by way of referendum for the consent of the people. If we wished to take up a similar attitude and say that no member of a municipal council shall be eligible for nomination for the State Parliament we could do it, but we would have to do it through the Constitution and we would have to adopt the formula provided for amending the Constitution. We could not put such a provision into the Electoral Act. If we followed the proper procedure to amend the Constitution we would certainly fail to get such an amendment made. Similarly the Federal Parliament would have failed to get this provision in as an amendment to the Constitution and that is why it was put into the Electoral Act.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Vacancy occurring by reason of resignation to contest Commonwealth election:

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: In line 8 reference is made to "his" intention. We have amended our Electoral Act making provision for women. Should not similar provision be made here?

The Minister for Education: The Interpretation Act provides that the pronoun shall apply equally to either sex.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 22nd September.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.58]: This is one of those comparatively unimportant Bills that would seem to demand some little consideration. I regret that no case against this Bill has

been put up. I cannot see that it is sound to make a fundamental change in the long established practice, custom or law. whatever members like to call it, without adequate discussion. I admit that I have attempted to find out a satisfactory reason for, I will not say opposition to, but for full discussion of this Bill, and I am bound to admit, after having consulted various authorities, that the authorities apparently are in favour of the change. But I told the Hon. T. Walker, who it will be remembered was Attorney General, and who, I understand, intended to introduce a Bill of this kind when he was Attorney General, that I had found no authority to support me, but that still I had a kind of suspicion at the back of my mind that this Bill might work out differently from what he expected. Therefore I gave him quite a friendly warning lest such a thing should occur. I am not at all fond of repeating here, "I told you so," but I drew his attention to what had taken place in connection with another measure introduced by a private member, namely, the measure amending the Divorce Act. I think we ought to recognise that we are making a big change in the general practice and custom of law in this country, and that change is that an administrator is to be paid. I shall not oppose the second reading, but two points strike me in connection with the Bill. One is that we have in this country a trustee company. I may say that I am not even a shareholder in that company; but the existence of that company in this State is an important fact. Now, are we going to put administrators on a better footing, or a worse footing, than that company, or on the same footing as that company? To me that point seems to want some little discussion. If we are going to make a change, let us clearly understand what we are doing. The second point that struck me was, what about the establishment of a public trustee? That certainly is a matter which will come up for consideration very soon. I commend it to the Leader of the House as a means of obtaining revenue. That consideration should appeal to him and his colleagues. I do not know what the trustee company would say to that suggestion, or what the ordinary executor would say to it. I will not delay the Bill, but certainly I think the general public should have the fullest opportunity, by means of discussion, and possibly by a little delay, of knowing what is going on. No one can say from the newspaper reports of the discussion on this measure, or even from the reports in the Parliamentary Debates, that there has been any opposition to the Bill. To judge from the reports in the Press, the public have had very little opportunity of fully appreciating what seems to me a fundamental and radical alteration in an important branch of public and private life. I hope I am not putting too much emphasis on what some members may consider a small matter. I do not ask for anything more than that the Leader of the

House should put off the Committee stage until next week. That seems to me a reasonable demand. The general public should know clearly and fully that this great change is to be made. If anyone can find any good reason for thinking that public interests or private interests, whether interests of individuals or interests of a company, are affected, the individuals or company concerned should be afforded the fullest opportunity of voicing their opinions. To me it is very regrettable that in so many cases our work here is put through without full discussion, with the result, very often, that in the next session we are faced with the fact that we have done something we did not think we were doing, and are also faced with a very troublesome amending measure—and sometimes even the amendment has to be amended. I understand that the Leader of the House is willing to put the Committee stage on next week. Personally I have no opposition to offer to the second reading.

On motion by Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom debate adjourned.

## BILL—BUILDING SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st September.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [9.6]: Since this Bill was previously discussed here, I have had the opportunity of discussing it with the representatives of some of the building societies interested. I have ascertained that the measure will give effect to a provision which should have been made in the measure passed last session. That matter is provided for by proposed Subsection 2 in Clause 2, fixing the time within which existing building societies shall register. It was omitted from the previous measure. Proposed Subsection 3 in the same clause makes one or two verbal alterations, as to which I may offer some suggestions by way of amendments when the Bill is in Committee. I understand that the measure passed last session, as also this Bill, was to some extent drawn from an Act which is in force in England and from an Act in force in Victoria. There are just one or two amendments which would bring the present measure more into harmony with our requirements. These I propose to submit when the Bill comes into Committee. Meantime I intimate my intention to support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

### Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in proposed Subsection 3, line 3, between the words "all" and "properties" there be inserted "estates and interests in."

This amendment will bring the measure into harmony with what is expressed in the English Act.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move a further amendment—

That in proposed Subsection 3, line 9, between the words "any" and "conveyance" there be inserted "transfer."

The object of the amendment is to meet the position with regard to our Transfer of Land Act, which calls the document a transfer and not a conveyance. Under the English law there are only conveyances.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I think I shall be in order in asking whether Mr. Nicholson has communicated with the building societies on this point. If my friend assures me that his amendments are in order, I have no objection to offer.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have been in conference with the solicitors to the various building societies, and also with representatives of the two principal building societies, in regard to these amendments, which are the result of the conferences referred to.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I shall have a further amendment to move in the twenty-second line of proposed Subsection 3. The words I purpose to amend are "on payment of such fees as may be prescribed by the Governor." The representatives of the building societies point out that these fees ought to be determined, and that they could easily be determined seeing that they are fixed at the present time by the scale of fees payable under the Transfer of Land Act. All that is to be done here is equivalent to what is called a transmission. For example, suppose I am entering up the total of an estate to an executor or a trustee, the fee for the service is fixed and determined, namely 10s. for the first and 2s. for each endorsement thereafter. I move an amendment—

That in line 22 "such fees as may be prescribed by the Governor" be struck out and "the same fees as for the time being are payable on a transmission under the Transfer of Land Act" be inserted in lieu.

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

### Clause 3—Amendment of Section 4:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This clause was inserted in the Assembly.

It is suggested by the Crown Law authorities that the words "Coming into operation of the principal Act" should read "prior to the commencement of this Act." I move an amendment—

That the words "coming into operation of the principal" be struck out and "commencement of this" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 4:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That after "Act" in line 5 the words "or is intended to carry out such objects as aforesaid" be inserted.

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

Clauses 5 and 6—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

*House adjourned at 9.23 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 28th September, 1921.*

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

### QUESTION—OIL PROSPECTING AREAS.

Mr. A. THOMSON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it his intention to place on the Table of the House a map showing concessions granted for prospecting for oil in the State? 2, The approximate area of the concessions? 3, The amount charged per year per area? 4, The labour conditions required under

the Act and subsequent regulations to hold same? 5, If any labour conditions—are they being complied with? 6, Can forfeiture be claimed failing such compliance? 7, In case of dissatisfaction, is there any Court of Appeal other than the Minister? 8, Can a syndicate holding eight or ten million acres work with a few men on, say, 10 or 20 acres, and hold the balance against any prospecting by Australian prospectors? 9, Having found oil on a concession held by another syndicate say 25 to 50 miles away, where the syndicate is operating, and able to prove that the syndicate holding the concession have never attempted to prospect that area, can the finder apply for and obtain a small concession to prospect and develop his find? 10, The Federal Government having offered £50,000 as a reward to the finder of payable oil, is it a fact that the State Government have given practically the whole of the State in concession to about 15 syndicates and threaten with heavy penalties anyone prospecting for oil although unable to obtain concessions, thus preventing any but the favoured syndicate participating? 11, As certain areas held by concessionaires are not being prospected, will he consider the advisableness of altering the regulation to permit of an oil prospector entering on such concession and prospecting for oil?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1 and 2, My intention in this regard is to comply with the wishes of the House, and will therefore do so if it is desired. 3, See Section 6 of Act No. 50, 1920. 4, See Section 7 of Act No. 50, 1920, Regulation 25d, copy of which was laid on the Table of the House on 28th July last. 5, As far as I am officially aware, yes. It is within the province of any person to apply for forfeiture; if it is considered that such conditions are not being complied with, action may be taken under Subsection 2, Section 7, of the Act, No. 50, 1920. 6, Answered by No. 5. 7, No. See Subsections 2 and 3 of Section 7 Act No. 50. 8, Yes, if it is considered reasonable, although provision is made for reduction of the area. See Clause (c), Regulation 25 (b). 9, Answered by No. 8. 10, Concessions only cover Crown lands, and I am not aware of any threat as suggested in the question. 11, The position is already met by Clause (c) of Regulation 25 (b).

### BILL—DREDGING LICENSE.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

### MOTION—SPEAKER'S GALLERY, PRIVILEGES TO WOMEN.

Mrs. COWAN (West Perth) [4.35]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the privilege of admission to the Speaker's gallery should be extended to women as well as to men.