

six or seven months, the Labour Party will occupy the Treasury Benches.

The Minister for Mines: You have a long vision.

Mr. JONES: When that time comes it will be necessary to introduce taxation measures affecting profiteers and the moneyed classes of the community. Suppose we introduce a Bill to deal with land values taxation: on reaching another place, members would have the power to cut down the provisions of the measure. We are well aware of what has happened to money Bills in the past. The Government have asked for the exact amount required so that taxation would be equitable and would be exacted from those best able to contribute, but another place has turned down their proposals or so mutilated them as to render the measures useless. I want to avoid any recurrence of that sort of thing. It may be that the wording of the amendment may not be approved of by all hon. members. They may think that an income of £300 a year is not high enough. Possibly many of our farmers will be making more than £300 a year, and it may be desired to increase the amount to £500 a year. What I desire to see is that the taxation upon the wealthier men in the State is not interfered with.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—Continuation or early determination of Assembly:

Mr. JONES: My desire is to shorten the life of Parliament instead of prolonging it.

The Premier: Vote against the clause.

Mr. JONES: I do not wish to harass the Government.

The Premier: We will risk that.

Mr. JONES: My object is to assist the Government. It is hardly fair to the electors of the State when they voted for their representatives to come here for three years to prolong the period of their representation. If Parliament is prolonged for six months, what is to prevent another Bill from being brought down to prolong it still further?

The Minister for Mines: Any member can resign if he thinks he is doing an injustice to his electors by remaining too long in Parliament.

Mr. JONES: If the hon. member is referring to me, I would tell him that unfortunately there is no one who will stand against me in my electorate. I am not prepared to vote for a clause which will prolong the life of Parliament. The sooner the country gets rid of the present Government the better it will be for the State.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 1.7 a.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 20th November, 1919.

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

QUESTION—PASTORAL LANDS CLASSIFICATION.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES asked the Minister for Education: 1, What area of pastoral land has to date been classified under the Land Act Amendment Act, 1917. 2, How many men are employed? 3, Will the Government expedite the classification, so as to have the whole of the area classified before the end of 1920?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, 14,000,000 acres. 2, Two. 3, Arrangements have been made to expedite the work. It is hoped that the classification will be completed by the end of 1920.

QUESTION — FREEZING WORKS, WYNDHAM, PURCHASE OF BULLOCKS.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many bullocks were purchased for the Wyndham Freezing Works during the 1919 season? 2, What was the average cost and weight per bullock? 3, What was the average cost per bullock for killing and canning? 4, What average price was realised for the produce?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, 9,386, of which 9,281 were treated; balance being held. 2, £6 15s. 4d. — 630lbs. 3, Not ascertainable until accounts received from Wyndham, expected to arrive middle December. 4, Bulk of produce not yet sold.

MOTION—LAND SETTLEMENT, MANJIMUP.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.34]: I move—

That a return be laid on the Table showing—1, The area of land surveyed and subdivided for settlement in the district of Manjimup; 2, the number of blocks made available; 3, the number of blocks sold or taken up; 4, the number of blocks forfeited; 5, the number of blocks

now being worked; 6, the area in this district ringbarked by the Government; 7, the cost of these activities.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35]: I have no objection to the motion. The only reason why I asked for it to be put in as a formal motion was that I knew it would take some time to prepare the return that is required. The information will be supplied as soon as possible.

Question put and passed.

BILL—DROVING ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—FRUIT CASES.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—PURE SEEDS.

Report of Committee adopted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. Duffell and Prices Regulation Bill.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.37]: I should like to claim the indulgence of the House in order to make a personal explanation in connection with some of the remarks I made last week.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must understand that a personal explanation must deal only with the statement he made.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I quite understand that. The statement I made was in reference to the probable effect on the price of meat owing to certain properties in the North-West changing hands. In the course of my remarks I said that on or about the 22nd August last two gentlemen arrived at Wyndham and were entertained there by the manager of the freezing works and afterwards driven out to Catherine Springs, via Hall's Creek, in a Government motorcar driven by the chauffeur employed by the Government for Mr. Tindale. I have now learnt, as a result of further investigations, that these gentlemen paid the whole of the cost of the trip out of their own pockets and that, further, some time previously one of the officers of the Wyndham Freezing Works paid a visit to Messrs. Vestey Bros. Ltd. and was treated there very hospitably. It is due to the House that I should make this explanation, otherwise it may be thought that the Government were, through their officers, doing something that was not right with regard to the treatment of these gentle-

men and their travelling at the Government expense. I hope the explanation will be satisfactory.

BILL—PRICES REGULATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [4.39]: I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. At the same time I recognise that there are serious dangers associated with price-fixing. If the price be fixed so low that there will be no encouragement to produce, the result may be a shortage of supplies. A shortage in the supply of a necessary commodity may be even more serious than a high price. Admitting, however, that there is always that danger associated with price fixing, and that there are also other dangers which have been referred to by various hon. members, I intend to support the Bill because I believe that the circumstances of the present time are abnormal. A great deal of legislation has had to be passed, not only in Australia but all over the world, to meet these special circumstances—legislation which has seriously interfered with the law of supply and demand. But it is not only Governments that have passed legislation interfering with the law of supply and demand. Where private individuals have interfered in that law of supply and demand, either by means of trusts or combines or in any other way, I believe it is the duty of the Government to protect the people against extortionate prices. It is quite true that the Bill before us must of necessity be restricted in its operations. It can only refer really to articles produced in Western Australia, because after all no Bill that is locally controlled can affect the prices of imported commodities. The price of these commodities is fixed before they reach Western Australia, and is therefore beyond the control of any local body. I think this Bill is necessary, more especially as there is a good deal of doubt as to what may be done by the Federal authorities. There is a proposal now before the country to give the Federal authorities increased powers to deal with profiteering, price fixing and other matters. It is very doubtful whether that referendum will be carried or not. Some of the State Governments are opposing the proposals very strongly. Even if they be carried it is by no means certain that the Federal authorities will exercise their powers to the fullest extent. Whatever may be the fate of a referendum and whatever may be done by the Federal authorities I do think that, in the meantime, a measure of this kind is desirable, inasmuch as it will tend in some direction to keep prices low. One of the most important features of this proposal is, not the direct effect it may have upon prices, but the deterrent effect it may have upon those who may be inclined to take advantage of the present extraordinary state of affairs, and raise prices higher than is legitimate. Mr. Lovekin, in the course of a speech which in-

terested us all very much and provided a good deal of food for thought, opposed the proposal on the ground that it was costly to the State and that it would be of no avail. I quite agree that if this Bill is to be of no avail, no matter what cost it may be to the State, it would be too high a cost. But while I do not regard this Bill as a cure for high prices, and do not consider that the amount of good that will ensue from it will be as much as some people consider, still I feel convinced that it will effect an amount of good, more than commensurate with the cost of the measure. I supported the Control of Trade in War Time Bill brought forward by the Seaddan Government. I believe it did a great deal of good. Certainly for a couple of years after the outbreak of war the increase in prices was less in Western Australia than in any other State of the Commonwealth. I believe that was largely due to the deterrent effect of that measure. I was one of those who opposed the efforts put forward to prevent its re-enactment. I think it was a great mistake that the measure was not re-enacted. The Bill before us is a recognition on the part of the Government that an error was then made. It is much to be regretted that the Bill was not introduced some years ago. Seeing that the original measure failed to be re-enacted, some other Bill such as this ought to have been substituted. However, the Government have now seen that a mistake was made and at this late hour they bring forward this proposal. It is better late than never, because, although the war is over, probably the abnormal times will continue for several years to come. In England legislation of this character is still retained on the statute-book, and it is desirable that we should have something in the way of a deterrent, something that will threaten to expose those who want to exploit the people. I sincerely trust the Bill will be passed.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES (North) [4.47]: I was pleased to hear the explanation made by Mr. Duffell in respect of his previous remarks on the Wyndham country, and, more particularly, in respect of the charge he made that the Government had supplied motor cars to Vestey Bros.' managers. I also have made inquiries and found, as the hon. member stated this afternoon, that the car in which those gentlemen were travelling had broken down and, naturally, they stayed with the manager of the Wyndham Freezing Works, who would just as readily have entertained any other distinguished visitors. In order that they might get to their station before going to England, they arranged with the engineer to borrow the Government car. They paid the chauffeur £10 per week while they had the car, they supplied four new tires at £12 10s. each, and new tubes, and they furnished the petrol. Mr. Duffell said he thought those people were out to get control of the cattle country in that district with a view to increasing the cost of meat. I have previously stated that Wyndham is

the natural port for the cattle country in that district and that they have one of the best stock routes in Australia going down to that port. Assuming that the company referred to did buy a number of those properties, it would be far cheaper for them to send their cattle to Wyndham for treatment than to travel them overland through Catherine Creek to Darwin. Turning to Mr. Hickey's argument in reference to the cost of meat, I have worked out a few figures. I find that one of the main reasons for the increased cost of meat in the metropolitan area has been the shortage of shipping. The Government should provide sufficient ships to bring down the cattle, or, alternatively, get out of the business and allow private enterprise to supply the ships. The position in regard to the cattle industry last year was that only 5,000 head of stock were brought down, whereas the market could have absorbed 25,000. That 5,000 head were sold in the metropolitan market at an average of £20 each. Had ships been available for the 25,000 head, the cattle would have been sold at £12 per head, the normal price. The difference in the two propositions is this: The 5,000 head at £20 each represents £100,000, whereas the 25,000 at £12 each represents £300,000. Therefore, had the normal number been brought down, the growers in the North would have had an additional £200,000, and the State Government and the Federal Government each would have collected an extra £25,000 in income tax, while the consumers in the city would have bought their meat at 3d. per lb. cheaper, and so £187,000 would have been saved to the consumers. The total amount involved in the difference between the two propositions is £237,000, and this has had the effect of greatly increasing the cost of living. No less than £25,000 has been lost to the State Government and a similar amount lost to the Federal Government, while the consumers have paid for their meat £187,000 more than they would have paid if the shipping had been available. If the Government would only get out of the business and allow private enterprise to come in, it would be a far better means of regulating prices than is the Bill before the House. Mr. Panton said that 60 per cent. of the boots handled in this State were imported. That means that the public will not take the Australian article, as they should do.

The Minister for Education: He said imported from the Eastern States.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: Large numbers of boots are imported from England and from America. In pre-war days boots costing 10s. in England paid out here a duty of 10 per cent. plus 25 per cent., bringing the landed cost to 14s. 8d. The importer added 20 per cent., representing an extra 3s. and the retail price was thus brought to 17s. 8d. Of that 17s. 8d. no less than 4s. 8d. went to the Commonwealth in Customs duty. The distributor collected

3s., out of which he had to pay working expenses, interest and insurance. To-day the prices of boots in England have risen enormously and the 10s. boot is now equal to 25s. Those figures, again worked out, bring the landed cost to 37s. 1d. It means that the Commonwealth has collected 12s. 1d., and the retailer has added 20 per cent. and is selling the boots at 44s. 6d. The retailer has had 7s. 5d. out of which to pay all his expenses, while the Commonwealth Government have collected 12s. 1d. The increased cost of living is not due to profiteering. It is quite clear that the Commonwealth Government are making a big levy on imported articles, not only boots, but other lines of clothing where the duty is still higher; and by the same reasoning the argument is still stronger, showing that the Government are the biggest profiteers after all. I agree with a lot that Mr. Holmes said. However, he pointed out that tinned meats from the Wyndham Freezing Works are sold at 15s. 6d. It was very gratifying to hear from Mr. Holmes that those works are going to be so great a financial asset to the State. In regard to the tinned meats, a few months ago the same article purchased at a Sydney factory cost 17s., which, plus freight and charges, amounts to 17s. 6d. here, or 2s. a dozen more than was demanded for the Wyndham product in Fremantle. I do not think the Bill will have the desired effect. The only reason why I intend to support it is that a number of people think the distributors are making enormous profits. It will cost the country something to prove to them that this is not the case. Mr. Lynn said he thought there were one or two lines on which huge profits were being made. If that is so, the Government will have in the Bill the necessary machinery to deal with people trading in those lines. I am opposed to three commissioners. I think one commissioner will be quite sufficient. It is a most difficult problem, this of regulating prices. The better scheme would be to regulate the profit which a firm shall make on its turnover. It all depends on the turnover. I know from experience. Some of my friends in the back country sent the Hall's Creek prices to the Price Fixing Commissioner in Melbourne. I was invited to discuss those prices with him. I asked him what margin of profit was allowed on goods distributed in the back country. He said 20 per cent. I reminded him that it cost from 15 to 16 per cent. to distribute goods in Melbourne, and I told him that 20 per cent. would not cover our distributing charges in remote districts. I think the Government will require as commissioner a man who thoroughly understands business. It is all a question of the turnover. In the back country a man has to carry £18,000 or £20,000 worth of stock to do the business which a man in the city would do on a £2,000 stock, for the man in the city can replenish his stocks every fortnight. Again, in the

back country districts, the wages paid are twice as much as those paid in the city, and on top of that the insurance is from 50s. to 90s. per cent. as against the few shillings paid in the metropolitan area. How is the price fixing commissioner going to deal with this question? He certainly will require to be a most capable man, with a thorough knowledge of business, or, as Mr. Cornell suggests, he should be a judge of the Supreme Court, with all the evidence before him. As Mr. Lynn pointed out, one person selling jam may sell a few thousand tins, where another man would sell only a dozen. On the margin of profit allowed, the big man would be making handsome returns, while the small man could hardly exist. As pointed out by Mr. Lovekin, the whole thing will represent an expense to the State and will not have the effect which the public hope for. I was pleased to hear Mr. Lovekin's speech and his idea of bringing capital and labour together. I used the same term in my maiden speech in this House. There is too much bitterness between the two sections, and if both could work more together and thus avoid the employee having to make his demands almost at the point of the bayonet, I am certain that the employees then would give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. The increase which have been taking place in the price of commodities are not confined to this State only; the same thing has been going on throughout the world, and it strikes me that they are likely to be higher than they have been, at any rate for another year or so. The question has to be faced and I intend to support the measure, not believing that it is going to do a great deal of good, but in order to give the public the protection which they are asking for, and so that it may be proved to them that there is not that profiteering going on which some seem to think.

Hon. J. MILLS (Central) [5.3]: Those hon. members who have preceded me have dealt almost exclusively with over-sea material or articles which are imported from the Eastern States. I will confine the few remarks I have to make on the subject of this measure to those commodities which we produce here. In 1913 fat cattle of from 5 cwt. to 7 cwt. were realising in the open market approximately from £8 to £16 per head. That was considered satisfactory to the grower, the butcher and the consumer, but during the period of the war the prices for cattle of a similar weight rose to £20 and £25 per head, and that too notwithstanding the herds had increased by 80,000 during that period, and also that 30,000 of the male adult population were away from Western Australia. Mr. Miles said that if shipping had been provided by the Government the high prices might have been avoided to some extent, and he quoted figures to show that meat would have been sold at 3d. per lb. less in the metropolitan area. Even then the price would have been high and the fact that 30,000 adults were away from the State would have been

a good set off against those cattle which Mr. Miles said would have been brought down to supply this market. In connection with sheep, the pre-war price for good Merino wethers was from 16s. to 20s. and occasionally a little more. But although the flocks increased by $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions during the period of the war, prices soared up and in some instances Merino sheep brought as much as 50s. per head. The increase in the price of wool I daresay would account for a little of that advance, but there was nothing to justify what appears to me to have been an outrageous increase in the price of mutton, particularly as mutton is not supplied to this market by ship, at any rate, not in any great numbers. The sheep are driven overland and I cannot imagine that either bullocks or sheep have, during the past five years, eaten more grass than they did previously, neither have land rents been increased, while the cost of droving is no different from what it was, and railway freights have not been advanced. In fact, there was no justification for the tremendous price which people throughout the State were compelled to pay and it was not until quite recently, when they objected to being plundered any further, and when they refused to eat the meat that prices again became almost normal. I have been informed, and I think reliably, that orders for stock trucks placed at Mullewa were during the greater part of the war period referred to Perth and submitted to people in the city who are interested. The object of that course should be apparent to everybody. Ostensibly it is to keep the sheep that might be undersold from starving, but as a matter of fact it is to keep the market bare and so maintain high prices.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You know there are no fat sheep up there.

Hon. J. MILLS: I know well that until 1918 we had four consecutive good seasons, and it was during that period that the prices were abnormal, and outrageously high. I personally know that fat sheep coming to Mullewa were detained in paddocks for weeks and weeks, and were sent to the metropolitan markets in drafts, the object being to keep the market bare. Should the Bill become law, these are matters which must command the attention of the Commissioners. Mr. Holmes reviewed the activities of the Wyndham Freezing Works and charged the Government with profiteering. The farmer, who expects the last penny for his wheat out of the pool, the product of his labour, is an absolute brigand because he refuses to sell his second quality wheat at the price dictated to him. It is only because profiteering is going on in Western Australia to-day, that the public are clamouring for the Bill. It is therefore my intention to support the second reading.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN (West) [5.7]: On a previous occasion when a price fixing Bill was before this House, I was one of those who opposed it and I opposed it for cer-

tain reasons, which I explained at that time. I still hold similarly strong convictions, but on this occasion it is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill, and I purpose giving briefly the reasons I have for my change of attitude. When the Bill was before the House on a previous occasion I said that the element of competition to my mind had almost kept prices of commodities down. While I still hold that opinion, I do not expect that the Bill before us will have any effect whatever on the existing prices of commodities where the laws of competition obtain. The only reason why I am supporting the Bill now is because of Clause 15 which sets out—

Any person who sells any foodstuffs or necessary commodities wholesale, subject to any condition, stipulation or agreement in restraint of trade, as hereinafter defined, commits an offence against this Act.

Since I spoke in this Chamber on the last occasion in connection with price fixing, I have discovered that the same condition of affairs exists in this State which has existed in various parts of the world, and that it is restraint of trade by those who export goods to this State. Certain goods are sent to us from different parts of the world and special agreements are entered into with the merchants who receive those goods. Those agreements provide that the merchants are not to handle similar commodities locally produced in competition with the imported article. If the Bill does nothing else, the clause which I have quoted will have the effect of preventing that. Mr. Miles stated that meat from Wyndham was sold cheaper than that which was imported. This might not be so if the Wyndham works were in the hands of a private body instead of the Government, as it is possible to assume that those persons who would be employed, say in the Eastern States, would enter into an agreement with the merchants here to prevent the local article being disposed of here. Those things are done. I have found on inquiry that several lines are at the present time being handled under secret agreements and that special rebates are made to people to sell imported lines in preference to the locally produced article. The Bill will have the effect of preventing that kind of thing and it is for that reason that I intend to support it. With regard to Clause 17, which provides for a percentage of the profit earned to be ascertained by the Commissioners, I consider it would be a pernicious thing for the Commissioners to publish the affairs of a private concern, more particularly when we know that it is proposed that the Bill shall only operate for a period of 12 months. This objection also applies to the declaration of secrecy which is provided for in Clause 19. This clause sets out—

A declaration of secrecy in the form in the schedule to this Act shall be made by every person proposed to be employed for the purposes of this Act before entering upon the duty of his office.

There is no penalty for any breach of that clause. Of course, we know that if a declaration is broken, a penalty is provided for under common law. It is argued that a similar declaration is entered into by officers of the Taxation Department, but there is a vast difference between the employees of the Taxation Department and the department it is proposed to establish under the Price Fixing Bill. The officers in the Taxation Department are permanently employed, while the officers who will be engaged under the price-fixing measure will be employed for a period of 12 months. The consequence is that the officers who are temporarily employed cannot be expected to observe the same secrecy as those who are permanently engaged in a department. For the same reason I think that when the Bill is in Committee it will be wise to delete the provision for the appointment of three Commissioners and reduce the number to one. It will be much more difficult to find three suitable gentlemen in this State who are prepared to accept positions of Commissioners for a period of 12 months than it will be to find one. Whoever administers the Act when it is in force must be of an upright character and must act conscientiously, but there will always be the fact that their engagement is only for a period of 12 months. I consider that it will be much easier to secure the services of one competent man for that period than it will be to get three, and if the Government succeed in appointing one gentleman of recognised ability they can pay him well. One of the difficulties in carrying out the provisions of the measure will arise from the fact that its operation will be limited to 12 months. Everything which is done by the Commissioners will be done with an eye on the fact that at the expiration of the year the office will cease to exist. With these few suggestions I intend to support the second reading of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [5.13]: In view of the fact that a great majority of members who have spoken have intimated their intention of voting for the second reading of the Bill, I do not see any necessity for further adjourning the debate and will occupy only a few minutes in replying. One of the arguments advanced by those in opposition to the Bill is that it cannot be entirely effective because we are depending to such a large extent on articles imported from outside the State. To my mind that argument fails for two reasons. In the first place, it is not a sound argument for rejecting the Bill because the Bill will not do everything. The admission that it will do something is sufficient ground for supporting it. In the second place, I am not in accord with those who say that the Bill can have no effect in regulating the prices of articles imported into the State. Articles which are imported into the State do not come direct from the exporters in other parts of the world or from other States of the Commonwealth to the consumer here. They go through other hands in this State

and there is no reason why, if abnormal circumstances shut out legitimate competition, there should not be provision to prevent persons who handle these imported goods in this State from making undue profit out of them—a profit which they could not possibly make if there was free competition as we understood it before the war and before the interruption of shipping. There is the case of boots, which are largely imported from Victoria. The Victorian Parliament is at the present time considering a Bill of a similar character to this, and in the Victorian Bill provision is made that—

Nothing in this Act shall apply to the sale or supply of any necessary commodity for export from Victoria.

So that it seems to me highly necessary, even from the point of view of checking the prices of imported goods, that we should have some power to regulate. Otherwise the Victorian manufacturer, restricted to a certain figure in Victoria, would be quite unrestricted in this State. Of course, some people argue, "If you put the price of boots down too low, the Victorian manufacturer will not send his boots here." That is a sound argument. But I reply, "If you allow the Victorian manufacturer a price which shows him a legitimate profit over and above what he can get by selling his boots in Victoria, he will sell them here." Sir Edward Wittenoom has suggested that the clauses of this Bill are original because there are no marginal notes. As a matter of fact, in the compiling of this Bill the Government have been able to refer to the price-fixing regulations promulgated under the War Precautions Act by the Federal Government, to the Act passed by the English Parliament a few months ago—and to which I made reference in moving the second reading—and also to the Bill now being considered by the Victorian Parliament; and an endeavour has been made, with the assistance of this existing and contemplated legislation, to frame a Bill that will be suitable to the requirements of Western Australia. Sir Edward Wittenoom quoted two authorities in opposition to price fixing. Those two authorities, if I remember rightly, were Diocletian and Mr. Lawson, the Premier of Victoria. Mr. Lawson, the Premier of Victoria, has altered his opinion and has introduced a price-fixing Bill. I have not had an opportunity of consulting Diocletian, but I think that if he were confronted with present circumstances he might be inclined to follow the lead of Mr. Lawson. I do not think it necessary to furnish any further reply to Sir Edward Wittenoom's arguments, seeing that he told us he was going to support the Bill. I was very pleased to hear the explanation made by Mr. Duffell this afternoon. I was not so much concerned about the hon. member's remarks as an attack upon the Government; but it did seem to me that they constituted a reflection, and a very serious reflection, on two highly placed officers. I am glad to find that the hon. member, on ascertaining the facts and discovering that those two officers had done nothing but their strict and

proper duty, was good enough to correct a wrong impression that would otherwise have remained on the minds of hon. members. I do not propose to follow the contentions set up by Mr. Holmes, because I do not think they have anything whatever to do with the Bill. If he was able to demonstrate that the Government were profiteering in connection with the Wyndham Freezing Works, would that be any reason why the House should not pass this Bill? Surely it would be quite a reasonable argument—if Mr. Holmes's contention of profiteering by the Government has been established, which I do not admit—to say that if Mr. Holmes, who is interested in that particular business, can find out that the Government are profiteering, the chances are that in other lines of business other people are doing the same thing. Three-quarters of a million sterling of public money has been invested in the Wyndham Freezing Works, and I do not think there is much doubt that the people who have benefited most from the expenditure of that money are the northern pastoralists. It is well that they should benefit. It was intended that they should benefit. It was intended that that expenditure should benefit the pastoral industry. But I do not know that it is altogether grateful on the part of the representatives of that industry to attack the Government for their conduct of the works. Mr. Holmes suggested that we should drop all price fixing and go back to the old order of things. As I said recently when speaking on another measure, "You cannot unscramble eggs, and you are not going to get back to the old order of things for a very long time to come." To drop price-fixing legislation under present conditions is, to my mind, to leave the public open to exploitation. We see that illustrated all over the world. I am quite satisfied of that in my own mind, and I do not think that any member who takes a broad survey of things, who sees to what extent the ordinary methods of competition, by which the law of supply and demand is supposed to operate, have been interfered with of recent years, can come to any other conclusion. Mr. Lovekin is one of the few members who announced an intention of opposing the Bill. Being, as he is, fresh from his constituency, his views are entitled to exceptional consideration by members of this House. But I confess that personally I should have been inclined to attach a far higher importance to his opinion on this question if I could find that during the brief election campaign from which he has triumphantly emerged he had made a point of telling his electors that he was going to oppose the price-fixing Bill. There is no man in the community more familiar with current politics than Mr. Lovekin. He knew perfectly well that this Bill was in the forefront of the Government's platform. He knew quite well that one of the first things the successful candidate would have to deal with upon entering Parliament would be this measure, which was the most discussed matter from the public point of view. I

have gone through the hon. gentleman's speeches, and I cannot find in them anything to suggest to the electors that he was going to oppose this Bill. Therefore I must say that I do not attach to his opposition the same importance as I would have done had his electors sent him here to oppose the measure. I go a step further, and, because of my long friendship with the hon. member, I will express satisfaction that he did not take up such an attitude, because I am very convinced that had he done so we should have been deprived of the benefit of his services in this House.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What did you say two years ago?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: As regards my own altered attitude, I think I explained it fully in moving the second reading; and nothing that has fallen from any other member during the debate has suggested to me a necessity for adding anything to what I have already said. We are told that there are certain people who never change their opinions, who never learn anything and never forget anything; but I think my political record in the matter of consistency will stand the test of comparison with most members'. All that I claim is that when I have to reach a decision, I reach a decision which my reasoning suggests to me as the right one. If in different circumstances I come to different conclusions, I do not know that there is any particular inconsistency about that. I do not intend to say anything regarding the various clauses which have been mentioned, because we can deal with them fully during the Committee stage. I do not propose to take that stage this afternoon. There are one or two minor amendments which I intend to place upon the Notice Paper, and I trust that any other member who wishes to move amendments will also place them on the Notice Paper, so that we shall be in a position to deal with them on Tuesday next. Coming back to the question of meat, I do not know that this price fixing Bill depends entirely on how we regard the question of meat supply. Mr. Miles has said that although meat was so high in price, the pastoralists got less money for their cattle than they would have received if shipping had been normal. He said that the Government ought to have secured ships to bring down meat. The Government exhausted every possible means to obtain ships. The fact is that very little meat was brought down, and that little was brought down in Government ships.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: But the Government ships were idle half the time.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That was not the fault of the Government. It was not in the power of the Government to run the ships at that time. But this is the position. It is suggested that the people engaged in the pastoral industry really got less for their cattle than they would have done had the ships been running as usual.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: And the consumers paid more for their meat.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Quite so; but that is not the point I want to place before hon. members. The pastoral industry comprises a large number of individuals. Certain of those individuals were fortunate enough to secure space on the Government ships, and those individuals obtained for their 5,000 head of cattle something over £20 each. Now, does Mr. Miles suggest that it is an entirely fair proposition that a few pastoralists, who were lucky enough to secure freight on the Government ships and thus to get their cattle to market, are entitled to receive what he himself admits is double the proper value? And can it be legitimately urged as a set off against their undue profit that other pastoralists, who could not get their cattle to market at all, sustained losses? To my mind it is a fair thing that if there is only a very limited quantity of freight available—

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: The freight should have been allotted pro rata.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is not possible to allot pro rata in such circumstances. The Government had no knowledge that the opportunity for bringing the cattle down was going to be limited by several months of the season being cut out altogether. It seems to me an entirely fair proposition that if only a small number of pastoralists were able to bring down their cattle on the Government ships, they should secure a legitimate profit, but that they should be prevented from making an exorbitant profit as a result of the shortage of shipping.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: On the whole, those pastoralists are worse off.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The pastoral industry as a whole is worse off; but is it any satisfaction to the pastoralist who did not get any meat to market to know that his neighbour secured an exorbitant profit? To my mind it is not. As to the advisableness of the Government's abandoning the service to the North-West, and leaving that service to private enterprise, I am quite satisfied to allow the two North-West representatives, Mr. Holmes and Mr. Miles, who hold diametrically opposite views on the question, to fight it out amongst themselves.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Are you going to get us some ships next year? That is the point.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Government are at the present time doing all that is possible to secure sufficient ships.

The PRESIDENT: I would point out to hon. members that the question of providing shipping has nothing to do with this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: With these few remarks I ask hon. members to support the second reading.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	4
Majority for				15

AYES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)
Hon. A. Sanderson	

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Interpretation:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in the definition of "owner" paragraph (d) "the trustee, attorney or authorised agent of any such holder, lessee, or mortgagee" be struck out.

The land might be more or less valueless, and the owner might fail to remit to the attorney the money due for the rates. Why then should the attorney be made liable for the amount when the land is the security for the rates? I believe a similar provision has crept into the Municipal Corporations Act, and the principle is quite wrong.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If an owner leaves the State, someone should be left in the position of the owner.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You have the owner's personal liability as well as the land.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is a common provision in every Act of this kind that recourse should be had against the owner's representative.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The owner leaves the land behind.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I support the amendment. While the authorities have the land as security, that should be quite sufficient. There are instances where the land is not worth the amount of rates charged. Some time ago a man offered to make me a present of a number of town blocks in order that he might be rid of the rate charges,

but I refused to accept them. If he left the State, the person in charge would be held responsible for the payment.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I support the clause. During the war, I acted for a number of soldiers and realised the responsibility of paying rates. If the person acting is satisfied the land is worth the amount of rates likely to fall due, the local authority should have this security.

Hon. J. A. Greig. The local authority has power to sell the land.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Road boards have to serve on owners notice regarding arrears of rates, and how should we get on if the owner left no representative?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There is no compulsion on the part of the owner to leave an attorney, and it is good service if the notice is posted to the owner. The road board would be able to recover the rates under its powers to sell the land.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: What if the land would not realise sufficient.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Then the road board must proceed against the owner. Why should the attorney, who accepts a gratuitous duty of this kind, be held liable by Act of Parliament for the rates?

Hon. J. Cornell: Is not that a question between the two parties?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Everyone knows how these things are arranged.

Hon. J. Duffell: When the owner returned, he would find that the land had been sold for the sake of the rates.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There should be no redress against an attorney who has no definite interest in the land.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: The attorney would charge a fee.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Very often this sort of work is done without fee.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6-22—agreed to.

Clause 23—Qualification of members:

Hon. H. CARSON: Mr. Stewart has asked me to move the amendment standing in his name on the Notice Paper. I am very glad to do so because I think it is a very necessary proviso to embody in the Bill. I therefore move an amendment—

That at the end of the subclause the following proviso be added:—"Provided that no person shall be qualified to be elected unless on the day of nomination all rates payable in respect of any land within the district, for the payment of which he is liable, have been paid.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The proviso was inserted in the Act of 1911. At that time a select committee recommended the abolition of this restriction on the ground that the rates could be sued for, and also that after a period of years the

land could be sold. It was thought unnecessary to place any further disability upon the person who had not paid his rates. That is the reason why the proviso was omitted. It is a point on which there is room for difference of opinion.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I do not think it is necessary to put in this proviso. It is possible that a man who takes a keen interest in his district may be requested to nominate for a position on the road board, but be unable to accept it because, through some misfortune, he had fallen in arrear with his rates. That is sufficient to justify me in voting against the amendment.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I support the amendment. A man who nominates for a position on a road board should not be in arrears with his rates, especially as he will probably be one of those who would sue other people for their rates.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I intend to oppose the amendment. I doubt if a case will ever crop up where a man who aspires to become a member of a road board will not have paid his rates.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: I have known of that before.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If it has cropped up it probably only did so as the result of an accident. If a person nominated at a time when his rates were in arrears he would be seriously handicapped when he went up for election. Already the franchise is more restricted than I should like to see it, and I have no desire to restrict it any further. There is no sentimental value attached to the amendment.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I support the amendment. The Chairman of a road board may be in arrears to some extent, and it is hardly likely that he will order other rate-payers similarly situated to be prosecuted because of their position. Members of road boards should not be in arrears with their rates. They are handling a large sum of money and should be above suspicion in this matter.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Road Board Act of 1902 provided that no person could have his name placed on the electoral roll unless the whole of the rates due by him were paid. That was the same as the Municipalities Act. In 1911 the Roads Act was altered so far as persons being entitled to appear on the roll were concerned. Persons' names might be put on the roll in respect of one property although they might owe rates in respect of another. It is now proposed to make it uniform in regard to a person seeking election. If the proviso is accepted this position may be created. A man may own a good deal of property and may have his rates paid on them all with the exception of the rates on one small block, and for that reason he will be disqualified from election. Whilst the Municipalities Act still maintains the position that a man cannot be put on the roll as an elector if his

rates are not paid, it does not prevent a man who owes rates from becoming a councillor or a mayor. The proviso is not needed, because a man cannot be elected unless his fellow ratepayers desire it.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: That should not release a man who is about to ask his neighbours to support him in his candidature. Members of road boards are in control of the whole district, and if they have not paid their rates it is an incentive to other people also to refrain from doing so. The effect of the non-payment of rates is to throw a greater burden on those who do pay them, in the event of its being necessary for the board to get an overdraft from the bank as a result of this non-payment of rates. Candidates can have the whole of the rates paid before election day, and yet very speedily allow them to fall into arrears afterwards.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The point raised is of but minor importance, and I think it would be wise to let the Bill pass with as few amendments as possible.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: It is highly desirable that a candidate, before nominating, should set a good example by paying up his rates.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I will support the amendment. Members of road boards work in an honorary capacity, and we do not want men of straw in that position. If a man cannot afford to pay his rates he can ill-afford to give his time to the work of the board.

Hon. J. CORNELL: None but a ratepayer can be nominated for the position. Why, then, put him on a different plane from those voting for him? Mr. Carson says the candidate should pay his rates in full, while Mr. Hamersley points out that he can, immediately after election, allow his rates to fall into arrears. Logically he should then forfeit his seat.

Hon. E. ROSE: Road boards have great difficulty in collecting their rates. If members of the board have not paid their rates, how can they expect the ordinary ratepayers to pay up? I will support the amendment.

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

Ayes	8
Noes	9

Majority against	..	1
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AYES.

Hon. H. Carson	Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. G. W. Miles
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. J. W. Kirtwan
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 24—Disqualification:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in line one of the proviso "five" be struck out and "four" inserted in lieu.

This is a consequential amendment. In the original draft there were five disqualifications. One was struck out in the Assembly, leaving but four.

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

Clauses 25 to 32—agreed to.

Clause 33—Electors:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is provided that land held as one holding and situated partly in one ward and partly in another shall be deemed to be situated within one of such wards. I think the owner or occupier of such land should be entitled to utilise his votes in both wards.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think the argument applies to this clause, which is the same as the provision in the existing Act. I think it would apply to Clause 34, for which an amendment is already on the Notice Paper.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: If the owner or occupier has land in one parcel, in two wards, it is to be assumed that the land is in only one ward. I do not think that is right.

Clause put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause 34—Number of votes:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Under the Municipalities Act an elector may have as many as two votes for a councillor and a total of four votes for mayor, but the same elector may have two votes for councillor in each ward. Under the Roads Act there is no provision for voting for Chairman, but the ratepayer may have as many as four votes in each ward, so that if a road board is divided into seven or eight wards it will be possible for a ratepayer to have four votes in each ward. A proviso was inserted in the Assembly reading "Provided that no person shall exercise more than four votes in any road board district." Although that differs to some extent from the Municipalities Act, if it is to stand, it is necessary to have machinery by which it can be carried into effect. I therefore propose to amend the clause in accordance with the amendment appearing on the Notice Paper. I move an amendment—

That the words "or ward" in line 5 be struck out, and the following proviso be added:—"Provided also that where a district is divided into wards, and any person has qualifying land in each of several wards, he may select the ward or

wards in which he desires to be registered as an elector, but he shall not have a number of votes for any ward exceeding the number proportionate to the value of his qualifying land in such ward, and the aggregate number of votes for any such person shall not exceed four."

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

Clauses 35 to 48—agreed to.

Clause 49—Certificate, etc., of revision:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: An amendment appears on the Notice Paper in the name of Mr. Nicholson who has asked me to move it for him in his unavoidable absence. I therefore move—

That after the word "Chairman" in line 1 the following words be added:—"or some person appointed by him in writing."

The idea of the amendment is that the Chairman may at times have such an amount of work to perform in this connection that he should be able to appoint a secretary or some other person to initial the names which have been struck out or inserted.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I question whether the amendment is desirable. It certainly is not in accord with the spirit of the clause. The clause reads, "The Chairman shall in open court." The term "chairman" does not necessarily mean Chairman of the board; it means Chairman of the court, and it will be contrary to the spirit of the Act to say that some other person shall do this work for him.

Hon. E. ROSE: The Chairman of the court must be there to initial these names, and as this duty should not be performed by any other person I hope the amendment will be rejected.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 50 to 127—agreed to.

Clause 128—Appointment of officers:

Hon. H. CARSON: On behalf of Mr. Stewart I move an amendment—

That in subclause (1) the following be struck out: "Provided that no secretary shall be appointed or removed without the approval of the Minister: Provided also that the secretary shall vacate his office if so directed in writing by the Minister." These provisos give far too much power to the Minister. The boards are competent to deal with their own officers.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I recognise that at first sight there appear to be objectionable features in these provisos. The reason for their insertion, however, is that a number of cases have occurred where, had the boards consulted the Minister before making appointments, they would never have made the appointments they did make. In one case the secretary of a road board was convicted of misappropriating funds from the board. After coming out of prison he

was appointed by another board, and did the same thing again. On this second occasion he was again convicted, notwithstanding the fact that just before the prosecution the office and records of the board were destroyed by fire. There was another case of a person who occupied the office of secretary to three road boards in succession, and had to be dismissed by each of them for defalcation, though he was not prosecuted. The Public Works Department through their auditors have full knowledge of these matters, and can advise the boards.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 129 to 147—agreed to.

Clause 148—Owner or occupier may require fencing to be erected:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Subclause 1 of this clause reads—

Within ninety days of the taking of any land by a board for a road, the owner or occupier may, in writing, require the board to erect along the land taken on both sides thereof, either at once or at some future time to be specified by such owner or occupier, a fence similar to that on or bounding the land not taken.

The period of 90 days I have always held to be insufficient for notice, especially as many country mails run only fortnightly or even monthly. Whenever a road board take land through a property which is already fenced, the duty of the board should be to fence the road on both sides. Owing to the limited period for notice, many boards have escaped the liability to fence; and thus hardship has been caused. The period of notice should be 12 months.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: If a road board resume land through a cultivated property, they should at once fence the road. I regard the period of 90 days as sufficient.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The invasion of this country by the rabbits has created a need for closely scrutinising this clause. Say a man has enclosed his land with a rabbit-proof fence. Then, if the board make a road through that land and merely put in gates, which are liable to be left open, the fence becomes useless. The unfortunate owner in the back blocks is in this position: if he does not make a claim within 90 days, the responsibility for fencing the road rests upon him, and not upon the board. Either he should have a period longer than 90 days, or it should be compulsory for the board to fence a road on both sides. The trouble is that outback owners do not know the existing law, and will not know of this amendment.

The Minister for Education: Under this clause the responsibility is the same as under the existing law.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: A man might be ruined by failing to get his notice delivered within the 90 days.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It must be borne in mind that, before the board

take the fenced land, notice has to be given to the owner and all the conditions laid down have to be complied with. I can hardly conceive of a case in which 90 days would not be sufficient.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: A case came under my notice. A board, looking to the future, declared a road through a holding with a rabbit fence. To suit their own convenience, they twisted the road in dog-leg fashion and compelled the man to cross the river three times instead of once.

The Minister for Education: He knew all about it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes, and took action. The board had to fence the road or close the road, and preferred to close the road. This shows what some boards will do when they think they have arbitrary powers.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The whole question is whether 90 days is sufficient time to do certain things after ample notice has been given.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I have always considered that 90 days was not sufficient. In the city it might be ample time for anything, but in the backblocks a man might be away from his home for weeks at a time or be out of reach of someone who can do his correspondence for him. There are many instances in which the boards waited their opportunity to get rid of the 90 days and, as soon as the time had elapsed, the owner had to do the fencing at his own expense. I know of several owners who were not aware of the Act, and who missed the bus. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause 1, "ninety days" be struck out and "six months" inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 149 to 153—agreed to.

Clause 154—Notice of subdivision to be given:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Dr. Saw and I both have amendments on the Notice Paper, and as the matter is worthy of discussion, I move—

That consideration of Clause 154 be postponed until after the consideration of Clause 356.

Motion put and passed; the clause postponed.

Clauses 155 to 158—agreed to.

Clause 159—Powers of board:

On motion by the Minister for Education, consideration of the clause postponed until after consideration of postponed Clause 154.

Clauses 160 to 186—agreed to.

Clause 187—Management of sewers and drains:

Hon. J. MILLS: Sir Edward Wittenoom has given notice of a new clause relating to fire breaks, but I think it might be included as a subclause to Clause 187.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It would be preferable to move it as a new clause. The marginal note of this clause relates to sewers and drains, and Sir Edward Wittenoom's proposal would not come under that heading.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 188 to 193—agreed to.

Clause 194—Channels from mines:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: On looking through the amendment on the Notice Paper I find that the notice I have given is clumsily worded. I move an amendment—

That after the word "mining" in line 1 the words "or other" be inserted; that after the word "mining" in line 7 the words "or other" be inserted; and after the word "mining" in line 9 the words "or other" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed; clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 195 to 210—agreed to.

Clause 211—What shall be rateable property:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—"Provided further that nothing herein contained shall exempt the Crown or any trading concern under 'The State Trading Concerns Act, 1916,' from liability from rates under this Act in respect of any land used or occupied by any such trading concern."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot accept the amendment. But it has been placed on the Notice Paper, and probably it would not be satisfactory to arrive at a decision on the matter now. I move—

That the clause be postponed until after the consideration of postponed Clause 159.

Motion put and passed; the clause postponed.

Clause 212—agreed to.

Clause 213—Unimproved value:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 the words "appertaining thereto" be struck out.

These words have no place in our Land Taxation Act, or the Municipalities Act, and I do not know what they mean. It is better that all our land taxation laws should be on the same basis so that a common decision in any case may govern the whole.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I am inclined to think that those words apply to improvements on a person's property.

The Minister for Education: Not on his property. If it is on his property it is covered.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: A person frequently has a portion of his property that is rateable, and he may have provided windmills or other improvements on another portion. These improvements probably appertain to one property and are taxable in some other district.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: In the matter of assessing the value of improved land, the Road Board Act must be considered as a measure subordinate to the State Land Tax measures, and it is undesirable to put into a subordinate measure something which is not in the principal measure.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: This should coincide with the Land Tax Act. It is contiguous improvements which are often not allowed for in the Land Tax Act, and there is a means here of providing for them. We might be doing an injury if we take those words out.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The amendment has been placed on the Notice Paper by the Crown Law Department on the ground that it is undesirable to put into the Act something which might lead to litigation and other controversy.

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

Clauses 214 to 233—agreed to.

Clause 234—Minimum rate:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That the words "a minimum general rate of two shillings and sixpence" and "a minimum loan rate of one shilling" be struck out, and "a minimum sum of two shillings and sixpence in respect of the general rate" and "a minimum of one shilling in respect of the loan rate" be inserted in lieu thereof.

This will improve the wording but not alter the meaning.

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

Clauses 235 to 239—agreed to.

Clause 240—Exemption:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is here a printer's error. In line 3 the word "many" should be "may."

The CHAIRMAN: I will have the correction made.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 241 to 247—agreed to.

Clause 248—Who is liable for rates:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move—

That consideration of this clause be postponed until after consideration of postponed Clause 211.

Motion put and passed; the clause postponed.

Clauses 249 to 263—agreed to.

Clause 269—Application of proceeds of sale:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move—

That consideration of this clause be postponed until after consideration of postponed Clause 248.

Motion put and passed; the clause postponed.

Clauses 270 to 356—agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 8.46 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 20th November, 1919.

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

BILL—ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL COMPANY, LIMITED (PRIVATE).

Message received from the Governor recommending the Bill.

Select Committee, Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, the time for bringing up the select committee's report was extended to the next sitting of the House.