

# ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL. STATE OF BUSINESS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.31]: I move—

“That the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday next.”

I am hopeful that there will be business coming forward by then. However, I will arrange through the Clerk to intimate to hon. members who may be in the country whether or not that will be so.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.32 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 13th March, 1918.

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

[For “Questions on Notice” and “Paper Presented” see “Votes and Proceedings.”]

### SELECT COMMITTEE, SPECIAL LEASE (GYPSUM) BILL.

Report Presented.

Mr. Piesse brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Special Lease (Gypsum) Bill.

Report received and read, and, together with minutes of the evidence, ordered to be printed.

### BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

### BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and, on motion by the Attorney General, read a first time.

### PAPERS — STATE STEAMSHIP “WESTERN AUSTRALIA.”

On motion by Mr. SMITH (North Perth) ordered: That all papers and accounts in connection with the Admiralty Arbitration case re the s.s. “Western Australia” be placed on the Table of the House.

# MOTION—REPATRIATION, RIVERTON ESTATE.

To adopt Report of Select Committee.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [4.49]: I move—

“That in the opinion of this House, the recommendations contained in the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the offer made by the owners of the Riverton estate to give an area of 68 acres in the estate for the purpose of repatriation, should be given effect to.”

I do not think it necessary to add any remarks to those already embodied in the report of the select committee.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [4.50]: I trust there will be an expression by the House that this project is not a part of the Government's repatriation scheme. If this motion was to go forth proclaiming the Riverton estate as suitable for the growing of vegetables by returned soldiers, without any adverse expression of opinion, even by a minority, it might lead to a false impression. The various reports we have had, including the report of the select committee, are to my mind not sufficient to show that Riverton is a good proposition for those returned soldiers. They are to have a loan of £500 each to assist them to make good on that property. There will be open competition with labour of all classes, including Asiatics, with the object of producing vegetables and fruit, or whatever the place may grow; there will be open competition with men established on choice spots for this particular class of work. We have been told that the soil is deficient in plant food. If that is so, the plant food necessary to the growing of these vegetables will have to be put into the land before it can be taken off in the shape of garden products. It strikes me those men are up against a tough proposition. I do not want to see a repetition of the experiences gained on wodgil lands. Having regard to the conditions under which these men will enter upon this estate, although near Perth, I am not convinced that they are on a good proposition financially, or in respect of the purpose for which they have taken up the land.

Mr. Munsie: Do you know the purpose for which they have taken it up?

Mr. HARRISON: From the evidence on the file, they are going in for poultry, vegetables, and so forth. Those men are no longer physically fit to be in the trenches, yet they have to go into open competition with men situated on better soil under better conditions.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Competition will be found in every avocation.

Mr. HARRISON: I admit it. The worst feature is, not so much the growing of vegetables, as our present method of marketing. We have the middle man, who takes from the producer the greater part of his earnings, and unless those returned soldiers are placed under absolutely tip-top conditions, I do not think they are going to make good. Until we have open markets where the producer can sell direct to the consumer a man growing vegetables is not in a good position. I know of no one in Western Australia who

has made a fortune out of growing vegetables. I enter my protest against this proposition. If those five returned soldiers like to go on the land, and if the owners of River-ton are willing to give them the land, I do not want to cast any slur on the Riverton estate, or upon the returned soldiers for trying to make good there; but I do not think it is a good enough proposition for Commonwealth money to be put into.

The Attorney General: It is State money, because we are responsible for it.

Mr. HARRISON: If it is State money it serves to strengthen my case.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [4.53]: I desire to support the views of the member for Avon. It is absurd to think that this 66 acres constitute the only land available in the metropolitan area for vegetable growing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The report does not say that.

Mr. MALEY: It infers it.

Mr. Munsie: It does nothing of the sort.

Mr. MALEY: Certainly it appears to me to be justifiable to purchase good land at any price up to £10, £15, or £20 per acre, for the purpose of putting those men on it. The expenditure of £3,000 entailed by the acceptance of this offer is altogether disproportionate to the value or quality of the land, when land of a more suitable nature can be purchased within the metropolitan suburban area.

Mr. Munsie: Where?

Mr. MALEY: Anywhere within a workable radius cut by Guildford or in the suburban districts good land can be purchased at prices ranging up to the figures I have mentioned.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.57]: I also desire to endorse the remarks of the member for Avon. I sincerely trust that this project will not be looked upon as part of the repatriation scheme.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What else is it? For what other purpose could they advance the money?

Mr. THOMSON: Possibly we may have to reluctantly accept that, but there are times when we should save men even from themselves. These men are quite sincere in their purpose, but I venture to say that if the practical man on the select committee had given a report voicing their own opinions on the productivity of that soil, they would have condemned the proposal. Paragraph 2 of the committee's report reads as follows:—

In regard to the quality of the land which they inspected, your committee were impressed with the apparent lack of fertility.

There is nothing enthusiastic about that. The paragraph continues—

But the evidence of neighbouring owners and of departmental officers compels us—

Perhaps against their own better judgment—to believe that it could be profitably worked by zealous and energetic men.

The Minister for Works: Those neighbours are nearer to the banks of the river.

Mr. THOMSON: It seems to me it is a very poor recompense to our soldiers that we should place them on land in respect of which even the select committee have said that they were impressed with the apparent lack of fertility. Our men are worthy of something better being done for them. Even at this stage, I feel that those men should be protected from themselves. I have in my own district a case on all fours. A settler was in a locality that proved unsatisfactory. He was advised by the department to select another farm, which was under the Agricultural Bank. He applied to the Agricultural Bank, but the bank refused to advance that man any money on that farm. The Industries Assistance Board also refused to assist him. Yet that man says, "I am going on; I know I can make a success of it." This, in spite of the Agricultural Bank, the Industries Assistance Board, and the experience of the men previously on that farm. I say in all earnestness that I believe we are exactly on all-fours so far as this Riverton estate is concerned. I do not say that these soldiers do not honestly believe that they can make a success of this venture.

Mr. Munsie: The departmental officers say they can.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not think they do say that.

Mr. Munsie: They told the committee they did.

Mr. THOMSON: I can only deal with the general report which is here. I am dealing with that report which the hon. member himself signed. He was one of those who concurred in paragraph 2 of this report, in which it is stated that the committee are impressed with the lack of fertility in the soil.

Mr. Munsie: Quite true.

Mr. THOMSON: Surely we have better land than this upon which we can settle our returned soldiers. Let us give them an opportunity of getting on to better land. I have no desire to disparage this particular estate, but I am speaking from the national point of view.

Mr. Munsie: Do not let anyone get a start in any way; keep them off as long as you can.

Mr. THOMSON: I have said repeatedly in the House that it is time we did something for our returned men.

Mr. Munsie: Then start to do something.

Mr. THOMSON: I have been endeavouring to see that justice is done. If I had my way as a practical man I would say that it was not in the interests of these soldiers to go on the land in this place, because I am convinced that they cannot make a success of the business. If these men have come back disabled we should give them the best land upon which to settle. But in this case the select committee state that they are impressed with the apparent lack of fertility in the soil. I hope this is not to be laid down as a standard of the class of land we intend to place at the disposal of our returned soldiers.

Mr. Munsie: I hope so too.

Mr. THOMSON: If this House endorses the settling of returned soldiers upon land of this description, it is safe to say that the Minister in charge of the repatriation scheme will be deluged with offers of land of this quality. In the report of the committee, it is stated—

In the opinion of the committee it is very desirable that the fullest inquiry should, without delay, be made by the Returned Soldiers' Settlement Board as to the possibility of securing all available land within the metropolitan area suitable for the purpose of intense cultivation.

We will probably be having a debate sooner or later upon this scheme, and I do not propose to touch upon that phase at the present time. I hope the House will not endorse the Riverton estate as part and parcel of any repatriation scheme.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [5.3]: The hon. member who has just sat down has been very explicit in endeavouring to show that he has never detracted from the value of this particular land. He has done this from the very inception and has lost no opportunity of doing so. He actually went out of his way to insult four reputable business men occupying high and honourable positions in Perth, and practically accused them of having exploited the Government. That was a very objectionable remark to make, for one would think that those gentlemen belonged to some firm of common Jews who were trying to victimise the Government. If hon. members will take the trouble to find out for themselves they will ascertain that those men are men of some standing in the city. I do not think they would lend themselves to any exploitation of the Government. They made a straightout offer to the Government, and gave every consideration to the offer made in return by the Government. They decided to turn that offer down, and have been accused of discourtesy in that respect. They made another offer of the land and I have the Minister's printed word that those men can now go ahead and make the necessary applications, and that everything is satisfactory. Now we have members here running down the land in the face of the opinion expressed by the Government expert that the land is fair land, and that, with energy and industry, the men could make a good living upon it. Surely that is all we want for land which costs us nothing. It is impracticable to put men upon land which has been bought at £20 an acre because they are not able to afford it. They must have money for clearing and developing their land, and must have money to keep themselves alive until the land becomes productive. It ill becomes the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) to put himself up against the Government expert, who is paid by the Government, and should be a man whose word should carry weight. Mr. Camm is a man who is competent, or else he would not be kept on by the Government. In the face of his report, in which he says that these men can make a good living, I cannot understand the attitude of the hon. member. It is said that these men will have to fight competition. Every market gardener has to compete with other market gardeners, and these men will have the same opportunity of com-

peting as other men have had. There are scores of men out at Osborne Park who are making a good living, and are doing so within 15 yards of Chinamen. I do not see why hon. members should, at this particular juncture, try to rouse up this business again, and go over the whole of the ground once more, just as if it had never been before the House. The settlement of this land has been stated to be practicable by the experts of the Government, and the Minister has publicly stated that there is no more difficulty standing in the way. I hope that hon. members will do their best to aid the men in making a start. These unfortunate soldiers are practically at the end of their resources. One man has had fearfully bad luck. His wife has been so affected by the waste of time and the scandalous neglect to which her husband has been subjected that she is now incarcerated in an asylum. This occurrence is due directly to the manner in which her husband was kept walking about the streets for months looking for work. If the men are prepared to work let us give them an opportunity to work, and if they want to go out to this land in order to make a living, let us give them an opportunity of doing so. If we lost the whole lot it would not amount to very much, and it is time enough to speak about a loss when the men come and tell us that they have lost. I believe that they will make a success of their business if only to flout those people who attack them on every occasion.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [5.10]: Ever since our soldiers have been returning to these shores there has been talk of repatriation. Now that there is some proposal, no matter how small, before us to which we can give effect, some of the ideas expressed in this Chamber seem to indicate that members want more talk and desire that nothing shall be done.

Mr. Munsie: Do not let anyone get a start.

Mr. FOLEY: They are doing this owing to, what they contend is, their whole-hearted sympathy which is going out to our returned soldiers. They can talk from now to Doomsday, but the returned soldier will want more than talk. This is something more than talk. It is only a small thing, but I want this House to make it definite that this is portion of the repatriation scheme. We do not want this to be the whole thing, and we know it is not going to be the whole of the assistance that we will render in this direction. If hon. members here say that this is going to be the lot, then when the people get an opportunity of saying who shall represent them in Parliament in the future, there will be very few who will be returned to this Chamber.

Hon. T. Walker: No one suggested such a thing.

Mr. FOLEY: The report of the committee has been presented. The mover of the motion is supposed to be a practical man, and he has moved that the report be put into effect. Even if he was not a member of the committee that gentleman has had opportunities of gaining knowledge which is going to be of much use in connection with our returned soldiers. And I feel sure that many hon. members support the view that this land should be given a trial. The member

for Katanning, or course, is opposed to the idea, but his experience—he follows principally the occupation of builder and contractor in Katanning—is not of much value to the House in this regard. The State is responsible for the expenditure of a certain amount of money which is being provided by the Commonwealth. I believe that the Government will have to pay a great deal more than they think for getting this money from the Commonwealth. The money will be paid out in order to give these men a chance on this portion of the Riverton estate, and it will not be wasted. It is said that possibly three of these returned soldiers will go back to the war. I hope they will not do so. But there is still a possibility of the other two making good. If the men make good on that Riverton estate, in spite of the talk we have had of repatriation, we can at least say that there are two soldiers whom we have settled on the land. We have not settled any so far.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Do not make an assertion like that. One would think we had not put any of them on the land.

Mr. FOLEY: I know that some have been put on the land, but I want to see more go there.

Mr. Teesdale: Two blocks have been applied for since we took up ours.

Mr. FOLEY: Hon. members who are opposing this scheme do not apparently want to see any more returned soldiers go upon this particular land. If these men think they are going to make a living upon that land, why should they not go there?

Mr. Thomson: That is all I am after.

Mr. FOLEY: On top of this, argument has been brought to bear by departmental officers who have said that the land is good enough for these men to take up, and make a living upon. We have also the experience of the mover of the motion, who has spent his whole life in agriculture. He has said that these men should be given an opportunity of making their living on this land. There is not one hon. member I think, in the Chamber, who wishes this to be the end of the repatriation scheme. I believe there is better land than the Riverton estate for the settlement of our returned soldiers within the metropolitan area, and that if we could place some of the returned men on the Osborne Park lands we should be giving them a better opportunity than if we placed all of them upon the Riverton estate. It is of course not proposed to do that. The committee have wisely recommended that this portion of the Riverton estate only should be placed at the disposal of the returned soldiers. The people who are working out at Osborne Park to-day are making a good living there. One hon. member in opposition to the motion, when the member for Hannans interjected, asked if any of the men there who are making a living had a motor car. I want to know if it is an indication from the agriculturist's point of view as to whether he is on a sound basis that he must possess a motor car. If a man must own a motor car to be in affluent circumstances and to be successful, then I contend that a great deal more should be going

into the coffers of the State in connection with our agricultural industry. I want to see these men given an opportunity for the following reasons. The land has been made available; there are returned soldiers willing and anxious to go on this land, and money is provided to help them; and lastly, the departmental officers, on whose word we rely almost solely for our administration in this State, have said that the land is worth a trial. We do not want to wait to see if these men make good, the Government can still go on with what they are doing in other directions. This will show that we have an earnest desire to forward the interests of the returned soldiers which we have not done up to the present time. It will be a dirty taste in the mouths of the returned soldiers if we turn them down. The Government officers say that the land is worth a trial and these men say, "We are willing to take the risk. We have taken greater risks at the front." If these men show the same pluck which put them up the hills at Gallipoli; if they show the same pluck that put them through the mud at Flanders, they will make a success of the 60 acres on the Riverton estate. I hope the report of the committee will be given effect to. It will do something in a general way to show we have an earnest desire to do something for our returned soldiers.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [5.17]: I shall support the motion and I agree with the remarks which fell from the member for Katanning, that this report is in no way enthusiastic, but merely an expression of the opinion of the select committee that on the evidence gathered by the committee and from departmental officers, people who are in a position to know, the committee came to the conclusion that it is possible for these men to make a decent living on the land in question. But I want it to be made perfectly clear, in any case from my point of view, that this select committee dealt solely with the 68 acres and that the recommendation has no bearing on any other land on the Riverton Estate, or anywhere else in Western Australia. I am prepared to say, while I have no knowledge of the capabilities of the land, on viewing the 68 acres, I felt disappointed and felt sorry to think that there was nothing better that could be offered these men on their return to Western Australia. I would like to feel that any proposition which these men were allowed to take on, there should be no doubt whatever, provided the men are willing and able to work, but that a good and fairly comfortable and easy living could be made there. I am expressing my own opinion. There is no shadow of doubt that these men are facing difficulties. They are facing a tough proposition where they are going, and I believe departmental officers will agree with that. But there is another side. These men have returned after doing a period in defence of Australia and the Empire. They were told on enlistment, and right through, that on their return every possible effort would be made to place them in as good a position

or even better, as they were in when they left Australia. There is one paragraph in the committee's report, I refer to paragraph 3, which I should like to draw attention to. The committee say—

They consider that a great factor in the promise of success is the confidence and enthusiasm shown by the returned soldiers interested in the scheme.

I regret to say that if delays go on for long one of the greatest assets these men possess to-day, the confidence and enthusiasm, the confidence that their countrymen in Australia will carry out their promise and place them where they can make a good living, will be lost. In losing that, these men will have lost their greatest asset. In the evidence given before the select committee by the departmental officers, it was stated that there is no better proposition available in the metropolitan area than this land. They have stated that in their opinion it is possible for the men to make a success of the venture and I, as a member of the committee, did not feel disposed to go against that recommendation. I trust that the report will be adopted and the men given an opportunity to make good. No matter what the House carries, there is another safeguard. The officers of the Agricultural Bank must satisfy themselves before any advance is made, that there is a possibility of success. It is not a matter of advancing the money, that makes me feel doubtful but the desire to feel perfectly confident that the men are going to make a success. No one likes to have the responsibility of saying, "We were responsible for placing the men there. We allowed them to go there," if in the next few years they do not make a success of the venture. I therefore think we should do well in not delaying further, but allow these men to go on the land and prove their assertion that they can make a living there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [5.22]: Speaking for myself, I intend to support the motion. When these men first approached me about the Riverton estate I argued a good deal with them and they impressed me with their earnestness and by the fact that they were practical men and knew what they were about to undertake. Some two or three of them are married men and their wives have been over the estate and know what they have to face. I have told the men that they will have to work early and late; that they will have to slog in order to make a success of the venture. They told me that they were prepared to do that; they were prepared to put their back into it and that they were going to make a success of it. I told them that the whole of Western Australia was open to them, that any lands which the Government were possessed of or could get hold of, they could have, but they do not want to go anywhere else. The proximity of the land to the metropolitan market and the easy transit to the metropolitan market was a great factor in the case. Then there was the fact that half a dozen of them would pool their goods. They would work together, they would

have one lorry or motor-boat. Although the land is not as good as land in other localities, those two conditions which I have mentioned are absent in other localities. These men say they have studied all that and they prefer to take the land in the position where it is. I have spoken to the men, not once, but half a dozen times, and I have spoken to their wives and I know they are thoroughly satisfied to face the position and they know they are going to make a success. There is no piece of land in Western Australia that we would not find somebody to say that it is no good; land at York or Northam, Moora, Serpentine or Guildford even, or on the Swan which is much better. We have land of all kinds and all sorts.

Mr. Angelo: The Gascoyne.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, if all the reports one hears of the Gascoyne are true, one would like to see a large settlement there, and if the member for Gascoyne has his way and puts his energy into it as he does into other matters there may be settlement there, and I will help him. If you want to hear a good account of Northam lands you write to the hon. member (Mr. Mitchell) and he will tell you that it is a glorious place, but if one goes to another district, people will tell you what a bad place Northam is. There is not a spot in Western Australia that people cannot be found both for and against.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That will apply to the whole world.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, but it is a peculiar failing of Western Australia. These men are willing and anxious to take this job. None of these men can market garden or farm by proxy. They cannot appoint somebody else to do the work for them. They have to reside on the blocks and do the work themselves and they tell me they are willing to do that and they are willing to take their wives and stand the brunt and carry the thing through. That being the state of affairs the House should agree, after the evidence that has been given, to the motion. Only to-day, to show members there has been no delay in the matter, the Manager of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. Paterson, the Chief Inspector Mr. Hewby, and one of the trustees, Mr. Richardson, paid a visit of inspection to this block. When I left the office this afternoon they had not come back, therefore I have not their report. Probably it will be available in the morning. Therefore I cannot say if they are for or against the land, but on the evidence before the House, I think our vote should be yes.

Mr. BROWN (Beverley) [5.27]: As one of the select committee who inquired into this particular area of land, I feel with the other hon. member of the committee, who has already spoken as to the land, after inspection, that it is not as good as we would like to see or we would like soldiers to occupy. The quality of the land is not up to the standard that I would like to have seen, but taking the evidence given before the committee we could come to no other conclusion but that this land is most suitable, within a reasonable area to Perth for the soldiers to be settled on. I came

to the conclusion that this land could be made, by adding manures to it and working it properly, equal to almost anything in and around Perth, for producing vegetables. These men are very anxious to go on these particular blocks and I think it would be a pity to put anything in the way of preventing them going on the blocks and making a comfortable living. They are going to settle on the blocks and outside of that, from the evidence given, they intend also to go in for some other occupation in the City. That is that their wives will attend to something else to combine in the making of a reasonable living. The evidence given by two men, Metcalf and Riley is undoubtedly in favour of the land being able to produce vegetables. Mr. Riley stated in evidence, and he has been on the land 21 years, that on his present holding he is averaging an income of £400 a year. The highest income he has derived from any one year's operations has been £600 and his average net profit was £400, and if that was possible on an area of 24 acres, surely these returned soldiers would be able to make a fair living from the blocks they propose to go on. The average quality of the land adjoining these blocks is very similar to that of the cultivated blocks and there is a fair amount of moist country there. The water is not deep on any of the holdings and it would be an easy matter to grow produce. I admit that the task will be laborious, but that proposition was put to the men and they expressed themselves as being thoroughly satisfied to go on to the holdings, being well aware of the difficulties they would have to contend against. The only matter that stands in the way is the question of the advance of £500. It seems a large sum of money to advance for the security that will be held by the Government, but seeing that the men are so determined to go on this land and seeing that they are convinced that they are going to make a fair living from it, and also taking into consideration that Lieutenant Williams stated they would not require the whole of the £500, I think the least the House can do is to give the men the opportunity of going on to the blocks and make a comfortable living for themselves. I do not recommend to the House or to the Government that any other portion of this property should be cut up for repatriation purposes. I would advise that a trial be given to this settlement, and if it proves satisfactory, the Government will then be able to settle more men on the area. I do not think that sufficient investigations have been made in and around the metropolitan area, and nearer to the market for better land. But in connection with the Riverton estate, seeing that the land has been made available for the soldiers, I consider they should be allowed to settle there. That, however, should not debar the Government from conducting investigations elsewhere in the metropolitan area with the ultimate object of settling other returned soldiers.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.34]: I do not object to the two members who spoke first wanting to dissociate these five soldiers from any repatriation scheme of the Government. We have talked repatriation for months, but

nothing has been done to give the men a chance of getting on the land. We have the opportunity now of settling these men on the Riverton estate on areas which have been given to them, and we have it on record also in the form of evidence from departmental officers that they believe these men will be able to make a living on that land. One of those officers declared that he knew no better land. I asked this question of Mr. Camm—

Do you know of any other land that is better in your opinion than the Riverton estate blocks and is as close to Perth as these are?

His answer was—

I think we ought to be able to find land equally as good as that.

Mr. Camm admitted that if an investigation were made of the land within an area of nine miles it might be possible to find land which was as good. Then hon. members come along and say, "Do not let those men go there for fear that they may fail." I do not care where we put men on land in Western Australia, there will always be some failures. I want now to read the remainder of Mr. Camm's reply, and I hope the Honorary Minister will take heed of that answer to my question, the number of which is 353. Mr. Camm goes on to say—

I have recommended to the Minister that we should have a classification made of all Crown lands within five miles of existing railway lines. One cannot put one's finger on any plan now and say, "Here is good or here is bad land," All we know of is what has been selected, but there must be some patches of land that are very suitable.

There we have the repatriation officer telling the select committee that he has made that recommendation to the Minister. I hope the Minister will give effect to it. In question 354 I asked Mr. Camm—

I want to know if you are cognisant of any better land than this Riverton estate land?

The reply was—

I really cannot say. We are anxious to get the soldiers settled on some lands near Perth.

Mr. Camm was absolutely favourable to those men being given the opportunity of taking up that land. Then we got the opinion of Mr. John Robinson, Chairman of the Land Qualification Board, a gentleman with 35 years' experience, and he went even further than Mr. Camm. The complaint of the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) in regard to these blocks is that the analysis of the soil showed a deficiency in plant food. Mr. Robinson gave us his experience of analytical tests for soils in this State. He spoke of country which was absolutely condemned for wheat growing as the result of an analysis. That was 25 years ago, and it was land held by Mr. Padbury. Mr. Robinson told us that he had taken no less than 35 bushels to the acre from the first crop from this very land. There is practical experience against theory. We had before us the practical experience

of two men who have been on the Riverton estate for a considerable time, Messrs. Metcalf and Riley. There is not the slightest shadow of doubt that the swamp which goes through the land taken up by three of the returned soldiers is a continuation of that swamp on Metcalf's block, and if Metcalf has been able to make a good living, the soldiers I have no doubt will be able to do the same. I hope the House will endorse the committee's report and give those men the opportunity of taking up that land and getting to work. Hon. members have suggested that we should wait until we can see whether we can find better land somewhere else, but I would point out that those men are anxious to get to work. They are eating their hands off as things are and if they remain idle much longer, they will not go on the land at all. I hope these men will get the assistance they are asking for, but I do not believe that, except those who want some stock, they will accept the full £500 which is due to them in connection with the repatriation scheme.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay—in reply) [5.42]: I cannot but admire the earnest desire of hon. members to see that the returned soldiers get a fair deal in the matter of settlement on the land. Many of the members who have expressed a genuine doubt as to the probability of these men succeeding on small holdings, have not a full knowledge of the capabilities of the soil in the coastal areas. I claim to be a practical man and I am fully conversant with the soils of the Avon Valley, and I know what they are best capable of producing, but when it comes to the coast and the sandy hills, I must admit I have some doubt about that land being made to produce a paying crop. But we have only to go to Claremont, where on the hills we find that many fruit trees, and vines in particular, flourish. On the rise at Claremont I have seen a single vine in what seemed to be the poorest and hungriest looking sand, producing a quarter to a half a ton of grapes.

Mr. Munsie: And that land was much higher than the water level of the Riverton estate.

Mr. PIESSE: Anyone who has a knowledge of the vine is well aware that inside six months it extends its root system to a depth of soil which fertilisers cannot reach. In connection with the Riverton estate, I regarded it as being one of the most miserable looking patches of land it was possible to find, but when we got to Metcalf's property and saw the luxurious growth of rhubarb in white sand, I altered my opinion. Rhubarb is a winter plant, but the stems of the leaves we saw there were remarkable for their size even at this period of the year. I came to the conclusion that I had yet a good deal to learn with regard to the capabilities of sand in the coastal areas, and that was one factor which induced me to agree with my fellow members of the select committee to give the returned soldiers an opportunity of testing those soils. As regards the men themselves, I was struck by their physique. They seemed by no means to be invalids, but able-bodied men, who were dis-

playing a keen interest in settlement on these particular blocks. I feel sure that these men will do well at Riverton. I have listened to several members speaking in generalities on repatriation, but although those members are actuated by the best desires, they fail to realise that the remarks generally made with reference to repatriation are of little value to the Government or to the House. What we want is a practical scheme, though of course I realise the difficulty of the Minister who is controlling repatriation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing repatriation under this motion.

Mr. PIESSE: I merely desire to back up the arguments used in favour of this particular area. I do think that these returned soldiers have a reasonable chance of making a success of this portion of the Riverton estate.

Question put and passed.

#### MOTION - - REPATRIATION OF RETURNED SAILORS AND SOLDIERS.

To inquire by Select Committee.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.47]: I move—

“That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the question of repatriation of returned sailors and soldiers.”

I do not claim to have been Heaven sent in this matter or to have any more knowledge of the question than the majority of the members of this House. Furthermore, I have no desire to disparage the efforts of the Government in this respect. At the same time, I realise that this is a matter of grave urgency. It is also a matter of duty and honour. It is a matter of honour inasmuch as when we sent these men from our shores, who are now returning, we sent them away with a definite promise that it was our desire and intention, if possible, to place them upon their return to Western Australia in a better position than when they left these shores. It is both a duty and a privilege which should be vouchsafed to members of this House, to do something in the direction of rewarding those men, who have stood between us and worse than death. I also appreciate the privilege afforded to me of bringing forward this question of repatriation. I recently asked a question, not through mere idle curiosity, but in order to carry out a promise that I made to my electors that I would make repatriation one of the first planks in my platform, and because I felt it my duty to do my utmost to impress on the Government the urgency of this matter, but the answer given to my question was, to my mind, not quite satisfactory. It did not indicate that the Government at that time were fully seized of the urgency of the question of repatriation. One of the questions I asked was as to whether the Government had done anything in regard to the industrial aspect of the case, and the reply was that the industrial aspect of repatriation had not yet received any consideration. With regard to the land settlement scheme, I had placed in my hands a proposal formulated

by the Minister in charge of repatriation, who was assisted by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell). This scheme was placed before me as something which had been definitely decided. I subsequently moved a motion that a return should be placed upon the table of the House showing the land available for purposes of repatriation, and I was then informed that the scheme had been wiped out of existence, and that the boards which had then been formed no longer existed.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): To what boards are you referring?

Mr. PICKERING: I am referring to the boards which were mentioned in that scheme. If these boards are in existence now, then the Minister who told me that they had been wiped out must have been in error. I should like to draw hon. members' attention to a very important statement which was made by the Treasurer when he returned from Melbourne. It is such an important statement that I hope hon. members will listen very carefully to it. It was stated that the Treasurer had a long interview with Senator Millen, and that the Senator had pointed out that apparently every State was in the same position as Western Australia in the matter of repatriation, in the position of not knowing where they were. Just conceive of the Minister in charge of repatriation in the Commonwealth admitting at the expiration of three years of war that the Government did not know where they were! If that is the position of the States then it is a sorry one for those men who have returned to our shores, and are returning here almost every day. It was then suggested that the outcome of the difficulty would be to have another conference. What would be the result of such a conference? The object of the conference, so far as I can understand, was to decide as to what were the respective spheres of action of the State Governments and the Commonwealth Government. It should not be necessary after three years of war that we should have to define our relative positions. If this is the case the whole thing is disgraceful.

The Premier: I do not know that it is disgraceful.

Mr. PICKERING: It is disgraceful that we do not know what the respective spheres are as between State and Commonwealth at this juncture.

The Premier: The Commonwealth do not know.

Mr. PICKERING: I say that the Commonwealth do not know where they are. It is very evident to me, if we are to have a successful land settlement scheme, that the decision as to the line upon which this scheme is to be built, must rest with those who are cognisant of the local conditions. It is impossible to imagine that the authorities in Melbourne can arrange any scheme which would apply to the local conditions of Western Australia. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Piessé) illustrated my meaning very well when he drew attention to the fact that he knew thoroughly the conditions which

appertained to the Avon valley, but that he was not cognisant of the conditions appertaining to the coastal area. Practically the whole of my experience has been gained in the coastal areas of this State. If I happened to be at Kellerberrin, and was asked to express an opinion regarding the character of the land in the vicinity I might say that such and such land was first class and that other land was not as good. In the opinion of those resident in the district I might be quite wrong, and one part of the country might be good in a wet season and another part good in a dry season, but I would not be sufficiently cognisant of the local conditions to know this. When we realise the difficulties which confront us in our own State in this direction how is it possible that the Commonwealth authorities could put forward any scheme which would apply to each particular State? I think in the past the attention of this House has been confined more or less to only one of the two phases of this question, namely, to land settlement. I would point out that the other phase of this question is in connection with our industries. With regard to land settlement, it will be remembered that I asked the Premier to lay upon the Table of the House a return showing what land was available for repatriation purposes. Unfortunately owing to the disorganisation of the train service I was not present in the House when the return was laid on the table, and have therefore not had a fitting opportunity of seeing it. I would point out that if this return had been available at an earlier date some of the difficulties which arose in connection with the Riverton estate might have been obviated. I have no desire to touch upon the Riverton estate at this juncture. In my opinion, and in the opinion of the Farmers and Settlers' Association, of which I am a member, the scheme that is best suited for the purpose of repatriation is that of re-purchasing estates on existing railway lines. If possible wherever there is good land adjacent to our railway system, it should be the duty of the Government to secure it for the purpose of settling our returned sailors and soldiers. It is not intended that the land should be exactly alongside the railway, but that it should be within a reasonable distance of our railway system, so that each one of the soldier or sailor settlers should have a reasonable prospect of successfully developing his holding, and incidentally developing the railway system which is so badly in need of freight. The main essential to my mind in a scheme of land settlement is that we should be sure that the men who take up land have a certainty of success, provided they exercise a reasonable amount of energy and determination. That should be the one object that should be kept in view by anyone who is dealing with this question. It matters not where the land lies, whether at Northam, Kellerberrin, or some other centre, but wherever the land is that is suitable for this purpose the Government should procure it and make every effort to see that these men secure a living from the beginning. It is of course a sine qua non that the land must be of first class quality. It is no use settling these men under such conditions as appertain to the Riverton estate. It should be our desire to get hold of the very best land that is procurable,



and this land must be of first-class quality. The question then arises as to the improvements upon this land. One thing we have to bear in mind is that everything required for the improvement of the land for these men will be obtained at a fictitious value. We know that to get wire for fencing or iron for roofing we have to buy at a price which will not represent a fair asset to any institution that advances upon such security. So far as improvements of that nature are concerned, they should in my opinion be as limited as possible. The money that is given to these men should be spent more on the development of the land for reproductive purposes, and in order to assist them to make a living from the very start. To that end, as little expenditure as possible should be made upon either buildings or fencing. Another question is as to the payment for these lands. I am not in a position to say by what means the Government could purchase these estates; that is a matter for the Government themselves to decide. The suggestion which I desire to put forward is that the House should take into consideration the possibility of obtaining land on very long terms.

The Premier: The Royal Commission has been dealing with the business for a year and a half.

Mr. PICKERING: I will go so far as to say that the period of repayment upon land of this nature should be anything from 50 years to 60 years. It has been the experience of South Australia that the solution of the difficulty there in settling these repurchased estates can only be overcome by extending the period of repayment for these assets to as long a time as 64 years. It will be the opinion of most hon. members, I think, that the question of the settlement of people on the land has been dealt with in other parts of the world than in this State. The same difficulty has been found to occur in England. A committee was appointed to go into this question in the Old Country, and found that the solution of the difficulty lay in making life on the land attractive. Any settlement that is brought about in this State in connection with repatriation should be formed on a system of grouped areas. If we send these people to isolated parts of the State, men who have been accustomed to living cheek by jowl in the trenches, there will be a danger of driving them to despair. My idea, therefore, is to have grouped areas. Such a system will render it more easy to provide those facilities which are necessary to make life on the land attractive, in the way of agricultural halls, schools, post offices, railway sidings, and such like facilities, and these should as nearly as possible be placed in the centre of each group. I would commend that aspect of the question to the careful consideration of the House. Some time must elapse between the return of troops to this State and their settlement on the land, and to tide over that period I would suggest that we should utilise the State farms as receiving depôts for these men. If the men who desire to go in for mixed farming were drafted to the Brunswick State Farm, an excellent opportunity would be afforded them

of getting first-hand knowledge of the life they intend to follow. Returned soldiers desirous of embarking on wheat growing, or another kind of farming, might be sent to the Narrogin State Farm, or to another of those institutions. We must constantly bear in mind that this is a grave national emergency. We have men coming back to our shores. As they arrive here, there is no immediate provision for them; and in some instances they drift into a life of idleness which is not good for them or for the State. The sooner, after their arrival, the men are taken in hand and given the opportunity of making good, the better it will be for the State, and the better it will be for the men. Touching now on the industrial aspect of the question, I personally am not prepared to put forward a scheme in that direction. The reason why I am anxious to have a select committee appointed to go into the question is that the committee may be so constituted as to embrace both sides of the question. If the Government are good enough to concede my request, hon. members will bear in mind that I should like to see represented on the committee the various aspects of the repatriation question. We have had so many suggestions of different natures from almost every member of the House, that I think it is absolutely essential the suggestions should be finalised, so that they may be utilised in the best interests of the soldiers who have returned, and will return. It is a matter of honour and a matter of duty that we should approach this subject at once, and with the utmost earnestness and the utmost zeal. I do trust hon. members will realise the seriousness of the position as I have realised it, and that they will give this particular motion the most hearty support.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [6.3]: I second the motion, which the member for Sussex has placed before the House so clearly as to leave me little to say. Like many members, I have for a long time been dissatisfied with the progress, or lack of progress, which has characterised repatriation matters. I quite agree with the observations of the mover on group settlement, and on the necessity for making the life of the man who goes on the land not only profitable but attractive. This is no new phase of the repatriation question. It has been discussed in many other parts of the world. In a country like North America two select committees have sat to inquire into the repatriation problem from beginning to end. The first committee went very fully into the matter, but, as the results were not considered to be entirely satisfactory, a second committee were appointed and again most exhaustively examined the whole question, getting in contact with a military hospital commission, and finally submitting a set of recommendations which places our North American brothers in the very front rank as regards repatriation schemes in His Majesty's dominions. As I say, I have been dissatisfied with the progress of repatriation. I discussed the subject on many occasions with Mr. Carpenter, a former member for Fremantle. That gentleman and myself asked

questions on the subject in this House, and the answers which we received lulled us into a false sense of security, into an unfounded belief that everything was going well. The trouble all along has been that of dual control. Western Australia has not been able to get anything definite from the Commonwealth Government, who in this respect exhibited a lack of zeal. I really believe that in Western Australia there have been earnest endeavours to grapple with the problem. But funds have not been available, and there have been many difficulties, more especially that of dual control. All these factors tended to produce uncertainty, and, as a consequence, there has been nothing but a multiplicity of counsels, and nothing to satisfy the man who, in many a case, has come back here human wreckage, out of which we must make human salvage. It is useless for me to labour the question. The motion must appeal to hon. members, and I have every confidence that the House will decide to appoint a select committee.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move—  
“That the debate be adjourned.”

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

Ayes .. .. .	32
Noes .. .. .	10
Majority for .. ..	22

#### AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Brown	Mr. Mullanv
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munis
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Davies	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Durack	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Foley	Mr. Roche
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Stewart
Mr. George	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Green	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Maley	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Johnston

(Teller.)

Motion thus passed; the debate adjourned.

#### MOTION—WHARFAGE CHARGES, FREMANTLE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [6.12]: I move—

“That in the opinion of this House the practice of the Fremantle Harbour Trust in handling all goods on the Fremantle wharves should be discontinued, and that such service should be optional with shippers; also that the charge for storage of

wheat at Fremantle wharves is unwarrantably high, and should be in conformity with the rates charged for similar accommodation in the Eastern States of the Commonwealth.”

When the Fremantle Harbour Trust Amendment Act No. 35 of 1906 was passed, it included a section, No. 35, reading as follows:—

The Commissioners may provide servants and labourers for loading and unloading goods on the wharves and for working cranes, etcetera, provided by the Commissioners.

This provision appears to have been omitted from the original Act, No. 17 of 1902. The reason for its introduction was that, owing to absence of sufficient wharf sheds prior to 1906, the responsibility for goods in transit between the ship's side and the railway goods shed at Fremantle became, for obvious reasons, an acute question, and at the request of the mercantile representatives the Trust were empowered by the Act of 1906 to effect all handling and delivery.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The best thing that ever happened to the port of Fremantle.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Fremantle Harbour Trust are the only port authority in Australia who act in this way to-day. As shed accommodation increased, the necessity for the Trust's assistance disappeared; but, notwithstanding urgent representations from mercantile interests—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: From shipping interests.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Trust continued this unnecessary and cumbersome service pregnant with delay and other disadvantages. The obsolete business methods prevailing at Fremantle to-day have been discarded, as I have already indicated, at all other Australian ports; and the retention of the out-of-date methods represents a loss, as well as an affront to the prestige of the State. Comparisons are odious, but we are faced with the fact that handling services costing 2s. per ton at Fremantle cost only 1s. 1½d. per ton at Melbourne. The necessity for a change of policy is manifest, and calls for immediate action.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Before tea I was endeavouring to show the House the excessive charge at Fremantle as against the charge prevailing at the other ports of Australia, that is, the 2s. rate charged at Fremantle as against the 1s. 1½d. rate in Melbourne. Even the 2s. rate is only made possible by assistance from a high storage rate for wheat as admitted by the hon. gentleman in his reply to my questions in reference to the £12,000 per annum rate for the service. The chief argument adduced by the Minister for Industries regarding the £12,000 per annum for the storage of wheat was incurred in making provision for necessary storage. The visible results accruing for the expenditure of £71,000 are profoundly disappointing, but notwithstanding that fact, interest and sinking fund amount to only £3,200, and if the House agrees to shippers

doing their own handling there will be no necessity for penalising the wheat growers. My contention is that shippers should have the right to handle their own goods at Fremantle, as is the practice in other Australian ports. The high charges levied in Western Australia on primary products practically place the State the most distant from the home markets. I will instance one anomaly, the Fremantle wheat storage is a veritable mountain. Last November the quantity of wheat stored at Fremantle was 77,000 tons, on which a charge of £12,000 per annum was and is still being levied, or 3s. 1d. per ton per annum. The rates in the other States' ports is about one-twelfth of the Fremantle charge. When the hon. gentleman was replying to my questions on wheat storage, he made a great deal out of the effects at Fremantle, and stated that over £70,000 had been expended on storage arrangements. As the interest and sinking fund is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on that sum it only amounts to £3,200 per annum. Therefore, what justification is there for charging £8,800 over and above the sinking fund. As the storage arrangements in the other States give satisfaction under a low rate, it is evident that the expenditure at Fremantle is excessive. Credit must be given for the grain shed, which represents £14,000, but in the other States the ground surface has to be flushed as well as that at Fremantle. The Minister, when replying to me, also confessed that wheat storage charges provided interest and sinking fund on wheat handling plant and facilities. It was pointed out that the interest and sinking fund should be added to the handling charges, which would place the storage conditions on the same basis as in other places in Australia. For the Minister to argue that for the prodigious charge of £14,000 two million bags can be stored where there is not half that quantity requiring accommodation, is incomprehensible. These answers, divested of camouflage, show the storage conveniences should work out at £3,200. There is a further allocation of £8,800, bringing the total to £12,000. This is an iniquitous charge. The mercantile community are keen on handling their own goods as it can be done for 40 per cent. less than the alleged reduced handling charges. Before sitting down I would like to give the members of this Chamber the charges at the other ports of Australia. At Sydney there is no charge made for wheat for open air storage, storage on railway premises other than at the Darling Island sheds. Melbourne, 7s. 8d. per 1,000 superficial feet per month is charged, which works out at  $2\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton per annum. In South Australia, at the chief ports, Wallaroo, Port Pirie, and Augusta, the space occupied is charged for at 7s. 6d. per foot frontage per annum, working out at  $2\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton per annum, the same as Melbourne. At the 17 minor Gulf ports square measurement is charged, and as the stacking blocks carry the rights of business premises, storage is practically free. To come to Western Australia, Bunbury and Geraldton are almost identical with Melbourne and South Australia,

but are expressed in different terms. The charge works out at 3d. per ton per annum. All the low rates are imposed by the various Railway departments concerned. Approximately, therefore, I may say the storage charges in the other States are one-twelfth the amount at Fremantle. The out-ports run at  $2\frac{1}{4}$ d. and 3d., whereas Fremantle is 3s. 1d., the 3d. charge being at Geraldton and Bunbury. I hope members who represent those places are listening. In most, if not all, of the ports they lack Fremantle mechanical loading conveniences. Against that, they have a tidal range, as they call it, of from 7 to 10, which for practical purposes is absent at Fremantle. I have every confidence the members of the Chamber will recognise that there is a great anomaly existing here, and that the charges at Fremantle are excessive. Therefore, I ask the House to pass the motion which stands in my name.

Mr. BROWN (Subiaco) [7.40]: I second the motion.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin debate adjourned.

#### RETURN—WAR ELIGIBLES IN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [7.40]: I move—

"That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing the names of the eligibles employed by the Government in all departments, whether married during the war, or single."

I wish to obtain the number of persons still in the employment of the Government who are eligible for active service. It would be very interesting to members to have some intimation from the Premier as to whether there are eligibles in the service or not. I should be pleased to know that there are none, but it is said that there are some so secreted when they should have been taking part in the war which we are engaged in. I really think it is the duty of the Government to show as an illustration to private employers their determination not to harbour anyone who is eligible for the Front. I do not think anyone can expect decided action on the part of private individuals when the Government are transgressors.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier debate adjourned.

Resolved: that motions be continued.

#### MOTION—STANDING ORDER 386a, TO REVIEW.

Mr. STUBBS (Wagin) [7.42]: I move—

"That in view of the different interpretations placed on Standing Order No. 386a, the Standing Orders Committee be requested to review the said Standing Order and, if necessary, recommend an amendment of the same to the House."

I hope the House will agree to this being taken as a formal motion. I feel confident that if the House will agree to it, the members of the Standing Orders Committee can be

shown that there are many anomalies in the Standing Orders. I have no intention to discuss the motion.

Question put and passed.

## BILL—DENTISTS ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th January.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [7.45]: This Bill is for an Act to further amend the Dentists Act. In effect it provides that any person who proves to the satisfaction of the board that he is of good character and has been engaged in work as an assistant to a registered dentist for the past 10 years may require the board to admit him to a practical examination in surgical and mechanical dentistry; and if he pass the examination the board shall be compelled to admit him as a fully qualified dentist. I am opposed to the Bill in its present form, and I wish to give the House the reasons that actuate me in adopting that attitude. First of all the Bill provides for a practical examination only, and by that mere use of the words eliminates the theoretical examination required by the present dental statute. Any person qualified under the Bill before the House would avoid altogether the study of medicine and the study of anatomy. It must be admitted that so far as those subjects relate to dentistry, both are essentials. Further, every dentist should be in a position to recognise certain diseases, particularly diseases of a communicable nature. Some of those diseases exhibit mouth symptoms, and if a dentist failed to recognise some of them, he would be infected himself and might possibly pass that infection on to other persons upon whom he operated at a later stage. How would the mechanical training or the passing of a practical examination avail him here? Obviously a man must be in active practice to advise. He requires something more than mere practical knowledge. The existing statute provides for certain persons being entitled to practice. That statute is known as the Dentist's Act of 1894, and in Part 2, Section 10, hon. members will see the terms under which persons may be admitted to practice dentistry in this State. Every person above the age of 21 years and of good character shall be entitled to be registered as a dentist under this Act who, having observed the rules, shall prove to the satisfaction of the board (a) or (b) or (c) or (d). (a), That he is registered as a dentist in any part of the United Kingdom in accordance with the law for the time being in force there; or (b), that he is at the passing of this Act engaged in any part of Western Australia in practice of dentistry or dental surgery and was duly registered within 12 months from the passing of this Act; or (c), that he has been continuously engaged during a period of not less than four years as an apprentice or student to a dentist and has passed such examination as may be prescribed by the rules.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That would not apply to Victoria.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, I will give later the numbers who have passed through that course here and are at present passing through it. Now (d) has been repealed and by 63 Viet. 23 we have in its place the following—"That he has for not less than four years practised dentistry or dental surgery in some part of Her Majesty's Dominion or in the United States of America and holds such certificate, diploma or degree and has passed such examination as may be prescribed by the rules." Those are the terms under which persons may be qualified to become registered dentists in Western Australia. To show the class of training a dentist is required to go through, other than the practical part, I would like to quote from the rules. A student of dentistry is required to pass an examination in papers containing a series of questions of the following subjects, submitting the answers in writing:—Anatomy of the head and neck, elementary physiology, dental anatomy, metallurgy, and elementary chemistry. That is on the theoretical side. Now on the practical side:—Operative dentistry to comprise gold amalgam or other fillings; the candidate may also be asked to perform or answer questions in regard to any other operations in ordinary practice. Mechanical dentistry: Specimen pieces of the various classes of mechanical work, including crown and bridge work, must be constructed under the supervision of the examiner. The candidate will be required in the practical examination to use his own material, and small instruments; and so on. Further, there are theoretical examination papers containing a series of questions on the following, to be answered in writing:—Materia medica and therapeutics, dental surgery and pathology and orthodontia. There is a number of text books prescribed which show the class of study that is required of this particular apprentice, showing for instance, that the studies are applicable to the dental profession and not to the medical profession. The list of books is given which are recommended to those students who desire to take up that course. So it will be seen that in the course of training, there is the theoretical as well as the practical side. The member for Konowna (Hon. T. Walker) claimed that the Bill was analogous to that authorising managing clerks in lawyer's offices to be admitted to practice the law. It is not so. The first position is that a man who is a managing clerk and seeks by reason of that qualification and others to be admitted as a lawyer is following a legal occupation. A dentist's assistant or other person who is practising dental surgery is following what I call an illegal occupation, in that Section 15 of the Dentists Act lays this down, "That from and after the passing of this Act no person other than a registered dentist or a medical practitioner shall practice dentistry or dental surgery or perform any dental operation."

Hon. T. Walker: Under supervision, that is openly done and is supported by the law.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am coming to that. I want to show that the dental operative is not on a par with the lawyer's clerk, whom we authorise, after the passing of certain examinations, to be admitted. First I say that the one man is following an illegal occupation, secondly I say that the managing clerk meets the public and does the public business, whereas the dentist assistant is in many cases a mere mechanic, while in other cases he is what he would call a qualified person although he is not registered. I know that there is in Perth a number of men who claim to be qualified and who are employed by others, who are qualified, to do their executive work. I have already said that in the Bill the theoretical examination is cut out, that is the examination the ordinary dentist, as an apprentice, is called upon to pass, whilst in the Bill to amend the Legal Practitioners Act the managing clerk is required to pass the same final examination as a law student would be called upon to pass. That is to say, the test of a man is his knowledge and capacity in all branches. Therefore, the Legislature has not allowed managing clerks to be admitted as lawyers without seeing to it that they are competent. The Legislature has dispensed with articles and substituted 10 years' service as a managing clerk, but the Legislature sees to it that those men are qualified. The Bill before us only purports to see that these men who seek to be admitted are qualified from a mechanical point of view, that is to say, they can do the work.

Hon. T. Walker: Do you require that the examinations be made stiffer? We can fix that up in Committee.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: But it does not provide that those men shall pass a theoretical examination. Let me follow that up. I maintain that in dental work a complete knowledge of anaesthetics is required by the practical dentist. A complete knowledge of the many poisons used in dentistry is essential. These poisons, these anaesthetics, have valuable medicinal properties and in skilful and trained hands are used for the benefit of humanity, but in unskilled and untrained hands would be a menace to the community.

Mr. Hickmott: Do the assistants administer anaesthetics?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Some of them may, but I venture to say that a man would be a fool who would submit to an unqualified man administering an anaesthetic to him. There are some fools in the world, too many in fact, and there are many of the gullible public who will permit unregistered men to handle these drugs. I am prepared to admit that there are many operatives, some whom I know, who I believe to be perfectly skilled in this direction, but to say that they are all so qualified would be to make an incorrect statement.

Hon. T. Walker: That is practical work.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not. If the hon. member calls practical work the administering of anaesthetics and the giving of poisonous drugs, then I am lost to know what practical work means. No man can properly administer drugs or anaesthetics who has not been trained in their use. The next point is that the Bill as placed before the House, is unfair

to those who under the present Act, are serving their four years apprenticeship. The law has held out to these men that if they study the subjects I have read and pass examinations and become qualified it is unfair to them that others without that training should be allowed to practice. I have read to the House what the final examination of a dentist consists of and the inquiries that are necessary for that dentist to make to satisfy the board that he is a man who may be safely trusted to handle the public. I wish to give to the House a list of the apprentices and registrations. Since 1899, when the Statute was passed, there have been 32 registered apprentices. Two of those have had their articles cancelled or withdrawn while 16 of them qualified and are now registered as dentists, leaving 14 still to present themselves for examination, and in due course to be registered as dentists. In 1901 there were 38 registered dentists under the Statute and at the end of December, 1917, there were 64.

Mr. Green: How many were there in 1899?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have not the figures.

Mr. Green: Fifty-two.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know whether that is right or not.

Mr. Green: You can take my assurance that it is right.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Of the 64 it is only fair to say that 11 are absent from Western Australia on service with the Australian Imperial Forces. It has also been stated to me that a number of would-be apprentices are now studying to pass the preliminary examination. There is an English examination to be passed before other subjects can be taken up. A number are now engaged in studying for that and will then take up the other. The House is aware that the member for Kalgoorlie has on the Notice Paper a number of amendments which he proposes to submit, and which I take it are submitted on behalf of the Dental Operatives' Society, because a copy of these amendments is in the hands of every member of Parliament, and he should know by this time just what those amendments seek to do. Those who have copies by them will also see on the Notice Paper a list of the suggested amendments. In effect those amendments will make a new Dentists' Bill altogether of a very different kind. As the member for Kanoona rightly says those amendments may, if the House pleases, be tacked on to his Bill. First of all I hope that quite apart from any personal views I may have on this matter, it is part of my duty as Attorney General when a measure altering the Statute law of the country comes before the House, to give hon. members information from all sides. I may say that I received deputations from the Dental Board, the Deontological Society, the Operatives' Society, and from some other gentlemen who do not belong to the Operatives' Society, and who really belong to the class known as unregistered dentists. So that I have heard practically every side of the case. I am not prepared to say that there is not a good deal to be said in respect of the various aspects which have been put

before me. First of all let me take the Dental Board. I placed before the Dental Board a number of the statements made by the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) and it will simplify my address a good deal if I read the statements which have been made in reply. I shall give in the statement, first, short paragraphs from the hon. member's speech, and then briefly the Dental Board's reply. Mr. Walker said—

Yet the Dental Board in this State have so closed themselves that they will not admit skilled men into the profession, preferring to continue to enjoy an absolutely close preserve.

The Dental Board's reply is this—

The aggrieved persons have been illegally practising for the last 10 years, whereas they could have been registered as dentists in four years through the proper channel. The proposed amendment in effect is to give these men an opportunity to be admitted to the ranks of the profession by an easy method regardless of their qualifications.

The member for Kanowna's next statement was—

They (the board) have refused admission to the men, skilled and accomplished men, whilst admitting other of lesser accomplishments, merely for a whim or because in some way or other it suited their interests. And the board by their methods of examination . . . can by their very tests exclude persons they do not want in the ranks.

The board's reply is—

The board characterise this statement as not correct; the board's examiners are impartial, and it is the practice of the board to appoint two dental examiners, viz., one dental member of the board, and one outside dentist, also one medical practitioner. The board has recently given proofs in writing in rebuttal of similar charges to the Colonial Secretary, and to his satisfaction.

Mr. Walker's next charge was—

The public are in the hands of skilled operators (i.e., unregistered dentists). They are qualified now. They are the actual men in charge; they do everything from drawing a tooth to turning out the latest brand of teeth. They also do everything with regard to the treatment of patients.

The reply of the board is—

The statement is untrue. The board is of opinion that these men are doing dental work illegally. If they wish to be registered they must serve articles and pass their examinations. This test to such intellectual people should be comparatively easy.

The next charge is—

The present system of admission into the profession is by serving articles after passing a preliminary examination, and this Bill does not prevent that course being now followed. I know of a case of a man who attended a University course in England, and because of his health was unable to complete his final examination and came

to Western Australia. Unless that man was willing to serve his articles here, although he had reached the stage of his final examination in a University of the Old Land, still he cannot be admitted to the dentistry profession in this State.

The board's reply is—

The board would point out that a dental student can qualify in from three to four years at any one of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons, or Universities in Great Britain; qualifications which this Board accepts.

The hon. member's next charge is—

There is an evil in making a board such as this supreme and above the law.

To that the board reply—

The board is not above the law, and has to comply with the conditions laid down by the Dental Act.

The member for Kanowna then says—

An examination in practical and surgical dentistry.

And the board replied—

The board's examination consists of two parts, namely, theoretical and practical, and the Board is of opinion that no dentist can be considered competent unless he has a thorough knowledge of the theoretical as well as the practical side of dentistry. The board desires, in this connection, to refer to its letter to the Principal Medical Officer of the 8th February, 1917.

The board concludes its communication to me in these terms—

The board would welcome any commission of inquiry into its methods of administering the Act, and of conducting examinations. It may be pointed out that of 64 dentists enrolled at the present time eleven are serving with the A.I.F. Whilst a shortage may exist at the present moment, due to their absence, it is only temporary. It might as well be argued that men having an insufficient knowledge of medicine should be registered as doctors, for the reason that a number of medical practitioners are now serving at the Front, thus causing a temporary shortage in the ranks of properly qualified medical practitioners in this State.

As I have said, in addition to these representations from the board, I have had on several occasions representations made to me from the dental operatives.

Hon. P. Collier: They have not been writing, have they?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They have sent some literature to me as a member of the House. I have had quite a lot of letters from them. I must give them every credit for the remarkable way in which they have presented their case. They certainly throw themselves open to the retort made by the Dental Board that people who have so much knowledge of the world as to present their case in this fashion should have no difficulty at all in passing the examination of the board.

Hon. P. Collier: Their case loses nothing in the manner of its presentation.

Mr. Green: This proves that they are intelligent men.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have said so. I informed hon. members that I would

give very briefly the case of the dental operatives. I will not read all the letters they have sent to me, because they appear also to have been sent to practically every hon. member. In one of these letters they have summarised their points quite shortly. They submit that their amendments—and these are the amendments of the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green)—are chiefly necessary for the following purpose:—First, to safeguard the public by preventing unregistered persons from performing any dental service upon the human subject.

Member: They think that safeguard is necessary.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In that regard they support my objection to the hon. member's Bill. Secondly, the operatives say that these amendments are necessary to make the requirements for registration compatible with the conditions in this State, and thus ensure a sufficiency of dentists to meet the public demand in the future; third, to ensure candidates for the profession an impartial and competent tribunal. I do not like the word impartial. Fourthly, they think the amendments are necessary in order to register those engaged in dentistry in Western Australia for five years prior to the passing of this amendment subject to a thorough examination in surgical and mechanical dentistry. These gentlemen of the Mechanical Dental Operatives and Assistants Association very largely agree with the views I have put forward in combating the Bill of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker).

Hon. T. Walker: All that you have combated can be amended by the insertion of one word, to which I would raise no objection.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Quite so. These operatives wish to open the door a little too wide.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Altogether too wide.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Perhaps a little too wide, but wide enough to admit themselves to the ranks of the dentists. Whilst I have spoken in one way of these people, let me tell hon. members another thing I had made a note of, and that is that as soon as they are within the ranks, they will close up the ring fence once more and start off as they did in 1899.

Mr. Green: Not under these amendments.

Mr. Foley: That is the weak point in the amendments.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: One of the points raised by those who advocate either the Bill or the amendment is that it is very difficult for any young fellow in Western Australia to get the necessary training for him to pass the examination required by the board.

Mr. Lambert: That practically applies only in one instance.

Hon. T. Walker: Nonsense.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: They told me that in other parts of the world, where there is a university, there is attached to this university a lecturer who lectures on subjects appertaining to dentistry. These young fellows are required to study, but there is no such provision for them in Western Australia. I asked the board that question. I said,

"How is it that these young fellows, apart from reading and being apprenticed in your various surgeries, acquire the general knowledge that is necessary to enable them to pass your examination?" They replied, "First, by study; secondly, by lectures which are given in the Government dental hospital on practical surgical work. In the Government dental hospital a qualified dentist supervises and directs the whole of the work, and some of the work is performed by these young fellows who are learning their profession."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Where is that hospital? I have never heard of it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know where it is. Every dentist to whom I have spoken to seems to have known its whereabouts. The board informed me that the dentists took it in turn to give their services free of charge at the hospital. There are honorary dentists in the same way as there are honorary medical men who give their services at the Government hospitals.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have never heard of this dental hospital.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I know it is somewhere. The operatives have said that they wish "to ensure candidates for the profession an impartial and competent tribunal." I hold that the only inference to be drawn from this remark is that the dental operatives contend that at present there is no impartial and competent tribunal. Under the Dental Act the Dental Board is not elected by the dentists of Perth, though I was until quite recently under the impression that this was so. When I came to look into the matter I found that the Dental Board was elected by doctors and dentists, and as there are some 200 doctors against 60 dentists, the doctors very largely prevail.

Mr. Lambert: That is one of the anomalies of the Act which should be knocked out.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That should operate in safeguarding the public in that the dentists would not get things all their own way.

Mr. Green: How many make a quorum?

Mr. Lambert: Medical men should not have a say in this matter.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Why?

Mr. Lambert: Why should they have a say?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I understand that the reason for associating doctors with dentists in the formation of the Dental Board was to prevent the board being formed from the very few dentists who were in existence when the Act came into operation, and to prevent the formation of a close corporation around which the dentists might erect a ring and prevent anyone else from entering it. The safeguard in the Statute is the introduction of medical men, who outnumber the dentists by four to one. The whole body, therefore, elects those members who are required to serve on the board. The board consists of three medical practitioners and three dentists, and any three members shall form a quorum.

Hon. T. Walker: These may be three doctors.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Possibly. The members of the board hold office for three

years. There are also provisions for revisions and vacancies, and the like.

Mr. Foley: When do these dentists attend the dental hospital, and in what direction does it lie?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot answer that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is none.

Mr. Green: It does not exist as a students' hospital at all.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: A deputation from the Odontological Society waited on me. There were four gentlemen altogether, and one of them was Dr. Wilson, who has been established in Perth for a long time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is one of the dentists who attend the Perth Public Hospital.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: These gentlemen told me that these lectures were given by registered dentists at the Government dental hospital and I made a note of it at the time. The point I wish to make is that it is a very difficult matter for us, a body of 50 men, to say whether the statement regarding the administration of the Act by the Dental Board is correct or not. Because, if it is correct, if there is partiality and if the tribunal is incompetent, then most certainly every member of this House will want to amend the Act in such a manner as to obtain an impartial and competent tribunal. The next question is, shall the Bill stand as it is, or are we to have the amendments of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker), or those of the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green), which are expressed in such concise form that they almost constitute a Bill of themselves? I submit to the House that the wisest thing to do is, not to thrash the Bill out clause by clause in Committee, but to appoint a select committee to inquire into the measure and the amendments and the matters pertaining thereto.

Mr. Green: That means the end of the Bill for this session.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. Those members who are appointed a select committee will call evidence from the Dental Board, from the dental operatives, and from any others connected with dental practice. This being a serious matter, I would, if necessary, allow the parties interested to appear before the select committee by counsel. The committee, having heard all these gentlemen have to say, would be in a better position to advise this House whether the Bill is necessary or not, and, if it is necessary, what form it should take, and what amendments, if any, should be made in it. I am opposed to the Bill in its present form, and it requires a great deal of investigation to ascertain whether these amendments, or any of them, are necessary, and also to refute or to sustain the charges levelled by the operatives against the registered men. Surely some inquiry is necessary before one can arrive at a conclusion. Although I myself have had the privilege of being interviewed by four deputations from the various gentlemen concerned, I hardly yet have come to a conclusion what is the wisest thing to do. To my mind it all depends upon whether these charges—

Hon. T. Walker: There are no charges.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not charges made by the member for Kanowna.

Hon. T. Walker: Not even by the other people.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Oh, yes. Whilst one party expresses such views as those conveyed by the amendments, it is impossible for any hon. member to come to a satisfactory conclusion without detailed evidence. We cannot take the Bill as a whole. Even after my interviews with all these gentlemen I cannot make up my mind on the measure. The investigation should be by way of select committee. I suggest to the House, not with the object of shelving the Bill, but with the object of giving every facility for either opposing or rejecting or amending the Bill in a proper way, that the House should appoint a select committee.

Mr. Green: Will the Attorney General give a promise that the Bill shall be dealt with this session?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the House appoints the select committee to-night, which there is no reason why the House should not do, I see no reason why the select committee should not make their report in a week.

Mr. Lambert: If we are to amend the Bill on anything like decent and careful lines, the select committee cannot do their work in a week.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then the committee should say so. But if the amendment is to be done in a summary way, either by way of amending or rejecting, it could be done in one day. I see no reason why the whole thing should not be done in a week. None of the deputations that waited on me lasted more than three-quarters of an hour. The whole story could be told in that time. But it must be heard from the different aspects. The select committee should be of an investigating order. No member of this House can form a competent judgment on the amendments placed before us, without the knowledge which, I submit, could be acquired by a select committee.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [8.35]: I support the Bill as it stands with a view to securing, in Committee, the amendments which I have placed on the Notice Paper. The existing Act, under which we are working, was introduced, in the first place, in 1894. Since that date there has been only one amendment of the measure, on the 16th December, 1899. When we come to consider that our whole Act is confined within the space of seven pages, whilst the similar legislation of Victoria, for instance, consists of 30 pages, and was, besides, passed in 1913, we must recognise that the time is ripe for amendment of this most important measure of ours, which so closely touches the health of the people. Our Act, although passed in 1894—24 years ago—was based on an Act passed in Victoria in 1878—40 years ago. The present Bill, therefore, so far as modern dentistry is concerned, might well be relegated to a collection of curiosities comprising, say, portions of the Cross, and such fragments of the Ark as may be discovered



by our soldiers in Palestine. That represents the value of the measure at the present day. Strange to say, the only amendment made in that Act, which amendment was made in 1899, had for its object the buttressing of the powers of the dental board, then already very strong. Upon that occasion, at the request of the dental board, a certain deletion was made in the original Act. Let me read, for the information of hon. members, the deleted section, No. 11—

If any person is refused registration under this Act, the board shall, if so required, state in writing the reasons for such refusal, and such person may appeal to the Minister, who may make such order as to him seems just after hearing such person and the board.

The main purpose of the amendment Act of 1899 was the deletion of Section 11. That is an astonishing position. How ever the dental board managed at that particular period to sway such an enormous influence over the deliberative Assembly, as to abolish a wise precaution of that nature, is more than I am able to understand. But I believe that in matters of dentistry, and generally in matters which did not closely affect members of this Chamber, measures at that time failed in many instances to receive the attention and the thought which they now receive at the hands of this House. Let me point out that Victoria has brought its Dental Act up to such recent date as the 6th December, 1915. Section 54 of the Victorian Act, it will be seen, includes a provision similar to that which was deleted from our principal Act by the Amendment Act of 1899. Let me read Section 54 of the Victorian Act—

If any person is refused registration under this part, the Board shall, if required by him, state in writing the reason for such refusal; and if the reason is that the certificate held or obtained by him is not such a recognised certificate as above defined, such person may appeal to the Governor in Council, and the Governor in Council may, after hearing the board, dismiss the appeal, or order the board to recognise such certificate, and such order shall be duly obeyed.

Thus it is seen that the position of the dental board as now constituted in this State is in the highest degree autocratic. I am not impugning the integrity of the board, but I do contend—and in this respect I agree with the Attorney General—that the method of election of the board is such as should not commend itself to this House. My reasons however, are altogether different from those which have been advanced by the Attorney General. Let me point out that although the doctors, as mentioned by the Attorney General, are in a preponderating number so far as the election of three medical men is concerned—and with the election of the medical men, under the Act as it stands today, without amendment. I have no quarrel—they can only elect three members of the board. The total number of the dental board is six, and the registered

dentists between them are able to, and do in fact, elect the other three members. The most glaring anomaly, in my opinion, however, is that three form a quorum. Seeing that the medical men are not so keenly interested in the affairs of the board as are the three members representing the registered dentists, it is only reasonable to suppose that at meetings of the board the medical members would frequently be quite willing to leave matters to the decision of the fraternity representing the registered dental people. Then, what would be the position? One can easily imagine special circumstances, say that the three representatives of the registered dentists alone attended a meeting of the board, when they would absolutely control the business coming before the board at that meeting. The great difference between the dental board of Western Australia and the boards exercising similar functions in the Eastern States, is this: the representatives of the registered dentists on the Western Australian dental board are men who are in practice, men who have a personal interest in making the business a hard and fast one. We know enough of human nature to know that whilst the majority of our registered dentists may be animated solely by a spirit of altruism, there may be a substantial minority who do not wish to have their business cut into by the entry of other men into the dental profession. In Victoria, on the other hand, the members of the board are University professors, men not in practice, men whose interests do not lie in the direction of keeping other men out of the profession with a view to avoiding their competition. So much for that phase of the subject. Next, let me say that under the existing legislation the dental requirements of our people are not met. After all, we, as the deliberative Chamber of this State, are not interested particularly in seeing that the rights of the registered dentists are conserved, but rather in seeing that the people of Western Australia, whom we represent, are enabled to get the fullest attention and the widest service that can possibly be secured to them in the way of dental science. Let us take Eastern States figures and see how Western Australia is, in comparison, served in the matter of registered dentists. Queensland, with a population of, in round figures, 680,000, has 243 dentists, or one dentist to every 2,800 people. In Victoria there are 967 dentists, or one to every 1,400 people. New South Wales has 1,538 dentists, or a dentist to each 1,200 people. In Western Australia, with a population of 308,000, we have only one dentist for 5,000 people. So the position is that in Queensland, a State that can very well be compared with our own because of its vast magnitude, they have twice as many dentists as we have in proportion to population.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not advertise that too much, or they may come over here.

Mr. GREEN: That is exactly what has been happening. The young fellows in Western Australia, who by reason of certain difficulties which I will point out, have not been passing as registered dentists, and in consequence we have had to draw our supplies from the Eastern States. As a patriotic West Australian I

want to see the young fellows of this State given an opportunity for entering the profession.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I agree—if they are competent.

Mr. GREEN: Before I finish I think the hon. member will be satisfied that what is proposed is entirely desirable, eminently fair and directly in the interests of the people of the State. The Attorney General gave us some figures in regard to the number of dentists in Western Australia at the present time. With a view to securing reliable information on this point, I asked the Premier certain questions in the House at the beginning of the present session. I asked how many registered dentists there were in the State, and the reply was, "Fifty-two in 1899." That is going back 19 years, and things in Western Australia have moved considerably during that time. I also asked what was the number of dentists on the register in December of last year. Bear in mind that in 1899 the population was somewhere about 180,000, while last year we had 303,000, or an addition of 70 per cent. In 1899 we had 52 registered dentists, and in December of last year there were 64 on the register, 12 of whom were out of the State fighting with the colours. The democrats whom I represent desire to see fair opportunity given to those whose labour has been exploited by the registered dentists in this State, dentists who are not ethical dentists at all. One has but to turn up the "Sunday Times" any week and find page after page devoted to such exhortations as, "Come to the Golliwog Dental Institute and get your tooth tugged out for half a crown. Full sets top and bottom from two guineas." Some of the biggest dental businesses in this City are run and controlled by men who have never drawn a tooth and who are not able to draw a tooth. They merely exploit the work of the unregistered dentist. How can they do it? Because our Act provides that if there is one registered dentist on the premises—

The Attorney General: The Act does not provide that; that is how it has been interpreted.

Mr. GREEN: If there is one registered man on the premises there can be a dozen unregistered men, so long as they are qualified to do the work. As democrats, we ought to give our support to those who are striving to see that the able unregistered men are not exploited by proprietors who apparently seem to think it necessary to rely as much, if not more, upon newspaper advertisement, as upon the quality of the work turned out. When it comes to the medical and dental professions, it is very undesirable that they should be boosted through the daily Press as if they were frauds of the type of Doan's Backache and Kidney pills. The cost of these glaring advertisements is a direct charge on the consumer, the man who desires to have his tooth pulled. I trust that when the Government do bring in a consolidating measure, it will contain some provision aimed at this indecent advertising of what should be a very high and honourable profession.

The Attorney General: I agree with you in that.

Mr. GREEN: Since 1899 to the present time, a period of 19 years, the number of dentists who have signed on in their articles in Western Australia, served their time and passed the examining board, is no more than 16. If ever there was an indictment of the insufficiency of the present Act in relation to the requirements of the people of the State, it is to be found in this record. I am not concerned with the requirements or interests of the profession. My first thought is that the people of the State shall be decently catered for by the dentists. At present the country districts are absolutely neglected. One can go to a comparatively thickly populated centre such as Meekatharra, or to any of a number of large agricultural centres, and find it is impossible to have a tooth drawn at those places. The local people requiring the attention of the dentist have to take a week off from farm or mine and travel down to Perth to get the trouble fixed up.

Hon. P. Collier: The blacksmith does it in some districts.

Mr. GREEN: There is a provision enabling a man to have his tooth removed if he is farther than 10 miles from a practising dentist. But the drawing of a tooth is only the beginning of dentistry. And the drawing of a tooth which might be of use to the lucky possessor, is a matter for consideration. A tooth should not be parted with lightly. In the United States of America, great stress is laid on the care of the teeth. When I was in that country I was struck with the fact that practically every American made periodical visits to the dentists. The people there are interested in cheap and good dentistry. Some of the finest dentists in the world graduate from Harvard and other American Universities. In certain of the American States, no dentist dares draw a tooth without written confirmation from another dentist that the tooth should be drawn. I quote that, not because I think that such legislation is likely to find favour here in the near future, but to show that in America the care of the teeth is regarded as being of prime importance in maintaining the health and efficiency of the people. There is no dentist on the Murchison goldfields. The unregistered dentist might well say, "Here is a chance to set up in business." It seems to him there is an opportunity to go on the fields and make a few pounds. But if he decides upon this enterprise, it is necessary that he shall take with him a registered dentist as a cover. One registered dentist in Perth has five of the best operatives in the State, none of whom is registered. Yet those five might well challenge any registered man to take his place alongside of them in a trial. So satisfied is the proprietor of the dental establishment with those five men, that he goes away and leaves them under the protecting influence of a registered dentist, a giddy young gentleman of 82 summers, whose business is simply to sit somewhere handy and not go off the premises.

Mr. Johnston: Cannot those men pass the necessary examination?

Mr. GREEN: I will come to that presently. They are doing all the work; that is the point. If one of those unregistered gentle-

men decided to tour the Murchison, he would require to take with him some ancient registered dentist comfortably ensconced in a cushioned motor car. That is the law. If that unregistered operative was registered, he would be able to open up a business on the Murchison in less abnormal circumstances, and people there who now have to part with their teeth because they cannot take a week off to come to Perth, would be able to get their teeth attended to on the spot in accordance with the rules of modern dentistry. Frequently from 5s. to 10s. is charged for the extraction of a tooth. Let me quote a case which happened in Geraldton. There was a gentleman of my acquaintance who opened a surgery there. He was an unregistered man doing the biggest part of the business of a reputable firm and he wanted to branch out for himself. The charges for the drawing of teeth there had been 10s. 6d., but the cost came down to 2s. 6d. I can produce a receipt to show that five teeth were drawn in Geraldton and the charge was 7s. 6d. per tooth. The teeth were those of a child, there were seven of them and two dropped out; they were milk teeth. The dentist touched them and they dropped out. That is the kind of deal people get in this country from registered dentists simply because they make the profession a close preserve. These men control the key of the situation and say, "You shall not go through the door because if I let you in the magic circle my business will be gone." If the existing Act provided against incompetence I would not be speaking here now opposing the worst provision of the Bill. But the present Act does not provide against incompetence. A young fellow after two or three years practising might be employed by a registered dentist, while the dentist is down at Cottesloe Beach. I have such a case in mind. The person in question was a comparative youth, but there is nothing in the Act to prevent that youth practising. I might quote a few concrete examples of the position as we find it in the metropolitan area to-day. The Metropolitan Dental Company have four registered men and two unregistered men in their employment. Braham Bros. have five unregistered men and one registered man, the proprietor. Ralph Potts has one unregistered man and one registered man. At Kalgoorlie Boileau has one registered man. He himself came under the original Act, and I am not going to say anything about his attainments. But even this gentleman with his limited knowledge finds it difficult to get to his office on account of gout, and he has to entrust the business to an unregistered man. In Geraldton there is one registered dentist, Mr. Kempthorne, and one unregistered. In Katanning there is one registered man, Mr. Watson, and until recently there was an unregistered man there, too.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Quote the places that have registered men.

Mr. GREEN: Which places have I not quoted?

Mr. Lambert: Do you mean to infer that the Metropolitan have unregistered operators

in their place; if you do it is absolutely untrue.

Mr. GREEN: If the hon. member were not interested in this business we might be at some difficulty to find why he displays so much heat over the question.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We know where the heat is.

Mr. GREEN: I do not wish to be unfair.

Mr. Lambert: I can defend myself.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member is an authority on everything. Be that as it may the position is that we have to go to the Eastern States in order to get assistants because of the lack of dentists in this State. An important section of our population, the school children, are not having their teeth examined, and if the proposals I suggest are carried out it will mean that Australia, in common with America and Great Britain, will have the children's teeth examined and will also have them treated. During the time my children have been attending school and my eldest boy is 17 years of age, they have only been examined on one occasion so far as their teeth are concerned, and a slip of paper was given to us notifying that we had to have certain matters attended to. To go to the Metropolitan Dental Company to have this work done would have cost from £10 10s. to £15 15s.

Mr. Lambert: And that institution is a credit to any city.

Mr. GREEN: The position is that the children have not been attended to and the teeth are seriously defective.

Mr. Munsie: They sent word to my children to have two teeth stopped, and it was found that they were milk teeth.

Mr. Lambert: That is often the case.

Mr. GREEN: Let me quote from the statement made by Mr. C. Dodwill Wallis, L.D.S., England, school of dental surgeons to the borough of Worthing in 1912. He stated that 902 children under the age of eight years had been examined by him during the school year ended July 31st, 1912, and a great number of them had defective teeth. In Australia the children are in a worse position because of the absence of time. Of the total mentioned, 880, or 97½ per cent., had teeth which required attention: only 2½ per cent. having teeth which were sound and free from decay. It is absolutely necessary that some provision should be made whereby the number of dentists at the disposal of this country should be sufficient to deal with the teeth of the children of the State. We find also that the soldiers in camp are in the position that at the present time, owing to the scarcity of dentists they are unable to have full attention given to their dental troubles. In many cases soldiers are losing their teeth where they should be treated. If there ever was a period in a man's life when he desires to have full use of his own teeth, it is when he is going to fight the battles of his country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would the treatment be any cheaper if the dentists were unqualified?

Mr. GREEN: There would be competition; a combine exists at present. The unregistered dentists in this town feel so warm about the treatment they have had that when they get into business teeth will be made at something like a fair cost. The question has been asked why unregistered dentists in this State should not pass an examination. Let me point out at once that the unregistered man has to pass a theoretical examination at the present time. One of the subjects is anatomy. That is essential, but in this State we have no school of anatomy nor a Chair at the University where a student might become conversant with anatomy. In order to study anatomy it is necessary to assist at operations, but this is out of the question in Western Australia. The leader of the Opposition pointed out that in 19 years only 16 men had passed examinations in this State. That is because these men have had wealthy parents behind them. They have been able to go to Universities in the East, where there are Chairs for dental surgery. What is the position in Victoria? Let me quote section 63 of the Victorian Act. Not only is there a dental Chair at the Melbourne University but it is obligatory on the part of the dentists who have apprentices to release the young fellows from attending the clinics at the University. The Victorian Act of 1915, Section 65, provides that—

It shall be the duty of every dentist who has an apprentice to allow such apprentice a reasonable time for the purpose of attending any lectures and gaining any hospital practice which is prescribed as part of the course of study of persons desiring to be registered as dentists, and such duty shall be deemed to be a condition of the contract of such apprenticeship, and the failure or refusal to allow such reasonable time shall be a breach of such contract of apprenticeship.

What is the position here? There is no such place at which a student can attend. Even in Victoria with all these provisions for examination, with a university close at hand, and a school for dentistry at their back door, so to speak, it was necessary to provide for the passing of dentists in order that they might practice. The amending Recording Bill of Victoria is dealt with in the amending Bill of the 15th November, 1910, and this forms part of the consolidated Act. Clause 13 of this Bill says—I wish hon. members to pay particular attention to this clause, because it has to do with one of the amendments I intend to move—

Notwithstanding anything in this or any other Act, any person who has attained the age of 21 years, and who has practised dental surgery or dentistry in Victoria for a period of at least three years—

My amendment provides for four years, immediately prior to the commencement of this Act may on application within six months thereafter to the Dental Board, and on proof that he has so practised, and on paying the prescribed fee, be entitled to have his name recorded by such board.

Mr. Lambert: But he was not allowed to call himself a dentist.

Mr. GREEN: Not any more than the hon. member is able to call himself a dentist, though he is able to exploit the unregistered dentists.

Mr. Lambert: Do not be unfair.

Mr. GREEN: I say that the hon member is able to do this.

Mr. Lambert: I never exploited you.

Mr. GREEN: I know the hon. member too well. What we wish to do is to consider this Act in a reasonable manner.

Mr. Johnston: Apparently that right only lasted for six months.

Mr. GREEN: It still exists. This recording clause of the Bill was passed, because there was a dearth of dentists in Victoria at the time.

Mr. Lambert: There was nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then a man who has done two years and three months would be blocked.

Mr. GREEN: The line must be drawn somewhere.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The board want another Act in order to go on again.

Mr. GREEN: There is no provision in my amendment for shutting the door, as is stated by the Attorney General.

Mr. Lambert: Look at the last amendment.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member can give the House the benefit of his wisdom when he rises to his feet. My amendment provides—

That prior to the passing of this Act, notwithstanding anything in this or any other Act, any person who has attained the age of 21 years, and is of good character, shall, upon paying the prescribed fees, be entitled to be registered as a dentist under the Act, who (a) prior to the passing of this Act (1) has been recorded by the Dental Board of Victoria,

Before a man could come to this State and takes advantage of that provision he must have practised since 1907, and will therefore be a thoroughly competent man. The amendment goes on—

(2) and has been engaged in the practise of operative dentistry in Western Australia for the period of five years, etc.

That would enable men who have been practising in Victoria since 1907 to come to this State and help us to provide against this dearth of dentists.

The Attorney General: You do not suggest that this section of the recording Bill should be adopted here?

Mr. GREEN: I suggest that advantage should be taken of it.

The Attorney General: You do not mean that this Bill should be adopted here?

Mr. GREEN: No, I do not.

The Attorney General: It would not suit you.

Mr. GREEN: No.

Mr. Johnston: In six months the door would be closed again.

Mr. GREEN: So far as that man was concerned, but not so far as the Victorian recorded dentists were concerned. They would

always be eligible to come to Western Australia under my amendment. It would not be necessary for them to pass an examination.

The Attorney General: Do you propose that those dentists who are called recorded dentists in Victoria, but are not entitled to practise there, should be entitled to practise here?

Mr. GREEN: They are entitled to practise there.

The Attorney General: But they cannot call themselves dentists.

Mr. GREEN: That is true, but they practise there.

The Attorney General: Do you propose that they should be allowed to practise here?

Mr. GREEN: If they have been resident in the State for four years.

The Attorney General: They could then label themselves as dentists in Western Australia. I only want to know what it is you mean.

Mr. GREEN: That is so. The position is that they would have practised in Victoria. They are practising in that State and are doing all that a registered dentist could do except to hang out their shingle to show that they are dentists.

Mr. Lambert: That is just the point.

The Attorney General: Would you consult one of them?

Mr. GREEN: Yes. Already we have to consult them in this town. We have to consult unregistered dentists who are not recorded and who have not passed an examination. Apparently the Attorney General has no objection to my other provision.

The Attorney General: I have a strong objection to the recorded article.

Mr. GREEN: That was good enough for a State which found itself in trouble. The practice has been repeated in New South Wales. They have recorded dentists from Victoria in that State although they have a University at hand.

Mr. Lambert: For a very different reason.

Mr. GREEN: I wish the hon. member would not interrupt: I cannot make out what is the matter with him.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member will have an opportunity of addressing himself to the Chair later.

Mr. GREEN: I know of one authenticated case in Western Australia. This is the case of a well known man who was the best mechanical dentist in Perth.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Did he say this of himself?

Mr. GREEN: No. I have never interviewed this man myself, but this is the tribute paid to him by his colleagues. He has been in the State for 14 years but had no opportunity of practising in surgery. He was like a clerk who is pretty good at the typewriter and whose employer thinks it is a good scheme to keep him on at that work. He was a very capable man in the room in regard to mechanical dentistry.

Mr. Pickering: Do you call these men mechanical dentists?

Mr. GREEN: He was a very smart man but because of his ability he was not taken away from his mechanical work, and had, therefore no opportunity of getting into the surgery. He sat for his final examination no less than five times.

Mr. Lambert: What is his name?

Mr. GREEN: I will submit the name to the hon. member.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you mean to say, if he was desirous of becoming more efficient, that he would continue to act as a clerk for 14 years? You say he was kept out of the surgery against his will.

Mr. GREEN: I do not say that he was kept out of the surgery entirely against his will, but he was a good mechanical dentist and was well paid for his work, and was kept on in that branch of the work at the wish of his employer.

The Minister for Works: He was content, then?

Mr. GREEN: He was so ill-content that he tried for seven years to pass his final examination and found it almost impossible to do so.

The Minister for Works: Was the examination too hard for him to pass?

Mr. GREEN: No opportunity was afforded him of passing an examination in anatomy. It is impossible for anyone to pass in anatomy because there is no Chair at the University providing for that subject. The trouble here is that the dentistry business is largely run by dummyming, and the amendment which I propose to move in Committee will entirely remove that from our midst.

Mr. Lambert: When you make a statement of that kind you should say in what direction dummyming is being used.

Mr. GREEN: Let me say in conclusion that the work at present is being done by these men for whom I am pleading. They are educated men, and some of them have received several degrees in the Old Country. One is astonished to find that unless they have actually obtained a diploma from Great Britain, no examination that these people have passed leading up to it is taken into consideration by this Dental Board. Any apprentice in the Old Country, if he has served four years apprenticeship in the Motherland, which we are now assisting, and in connection with which we are playing such a worthy part from Australia, is treated by this Board as if he had come from Patagonia. This is a state of affairs which should not any longer be tolerated. Men should be obliged to pass an examination in dentistry, it is true. Let the Board also put these men through any practical examination dealing with anaesthetics. The dentists are dealing with anaesthetics all the time, and in one surgery that I know of there are five dentists doing this, while an old gentleman of 82 summers is airing himself on his verandah all the time.

The Attorney General: What is a practical examination in anaesthetics?

Mr. GREEN: It has to do with the use of poisons and anaesthetics.

The Attorney General: That is not practical work, but only theoretical work. Do you not think they should know something of the practical side?

Mr. GREEN: Not one of the men with whom I am concerned would have any objection in that regard.

The Attorney General: These gentlemen tell me that they do not object to a theoretical examination. Do you?

Mr. GREEN: Not so far as anaesthetics are concerned.

The Attorney General: You do not call it a practical examination only?

Mr. GREEN: I have no desire to quibble with the Attorney General. I would like to be clear in this matter, if I can only quieten the imper-

tinent garrulousness of the hon. member on my left. Evidently he is afraid that my case is appealing to the good sense and sympathy of other hon. members. Let these men be examined in any dentistry work that they have been doing day after day either in the mechanical, or the surgical side, and let this examination be made as stiff as may be desired from the point of view of practical demonstration. Under a provision such as this we will not have to draw upon Victoria, about which both the Attorney General and myself are so much concerned. We will be able to help the young fellows in this country. There were two young fellows in Kalgoorlie, the Queally boys. They went to Kalgoorlie to practice and worked for a dentist there in order that they might pass their examination, but their mother found that she had to put her hand in her pocket and give several hundred pounds to send these young men out of the State, so that they might pass their examination in Victoria and thus dodge this dental board which has been such a bane to Western Australia. I trust that the Bill will pass the second reading, and that my amendments will be carried.

The Attorney General: Before you sit down, are you in favour of the appointment of a select committee?

Mr. GREEN: I prefer that the Bill should go through the Chamber. I prefer that this House should decide.

The Attorney General: I shall oppose the second reading unless you agree to the select committee.

Hon. T. Walker: The member for Kalgoorlie has nothing to do with the second reading.

Mr. GREEN: The Attorney General evidently thinks he is in a position to put the lash on me. I ask him not to hold a gun at my head.

The Attorney General: I am not doing anything of the kind. I understood from you, personally and otherwise, that you were in favour of the appointment of a select committee.

Mr. GREEN: Not personally.

Hon. T. Walker: I am responsible; the member for Kalgoorlie is not responsible.

Mr. GREEN: I do not wish to be involved in a cross-examination just now.

The Attorney General: Your attitude towards the appointment of a select committee will influence my vote on the Bill. I will vote against the Bill if you will not agree to the appointment of a select committee.

Mr. GREEN: Let me tell the Attorney General my personal ideas on this matter. I have no intention of trimming. I do not suppose what I say will influence the Attorney General, or modify the attitude he takes up. I admit the Attorney General wants to be fair. I say frankly—I do not want to tell a lie, and I do not suppose the Attorney General wants me to tell a lie—that I would prefer the House should deal with the Bill. I consider that in the past there has been too much of this referring to select committees. But, if the Attorney General puts the gun at my head and says, "There is nothing for it but a select committee," then, if he gives me an assurance that the select committee's report will be brought before this Chamber during the current session, I will agree to a select committee.

The Attorney General: I cannot guarantee that, but I will do my best to facilitate it.

Mr. GREEN: I will accept that.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [9-33]: I quite recognise the probability that some people, in

view of the fact of my being indirectly engaged in this business, may be unfair enough to say that my connection with dentistry may possibly sway my judgment on this Bill, or may alter the information which I feel it is my right to give to the House. I desire to assure the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) that I can take just as unbiassed a view, and just as clear a view, of the necessities and requirements of Western Australia in the matter of dentistry, as can he or any other member of this Chamber. Let me mention, in opening, that the first word I heard of the necessity for amendment of the Dental Act was a letter which reached me from the operatives, asking whether I would introduce an amending Bill. They gave me the names of certain gentlemen eligible for registration as dentists in this State. My own name was included in the number. I wrote back stating that whilst I recognised the necessity for an amendment of the Dental Act in certain directions, I personally had no desire to become a registered dentist. I also stated that any amendments of the Dental Act which I would favour would not, I thought, meet with my correspondents' approval.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That looked very significant.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes. I do not wish to lash myself into a high degree of heat in connection with this Bill, because, so far as I am personally concerned—members may take this statement for what it is worth—I will endeavour to the best of my ability and knowledge to give the House any information which I may possess on this subject, with a view to facilitating the removal of any anomalies to be found in the Dental Act at present. The member for Kenowna stated that the dental board was a close corporation—inferred, of course, that the dental profession in Western Australia was a close preserve. On the other hand, we find that every student who has registered with the dental board of Western Australia has eventually been registered as a dentist by that board. The dental board of Western Australia has never yet failed a student who recorded himself as a student with that board.

Mr. Holman: But the student wants £250 behind him.

Mr. LAMBERT: It can be done for much less than that.

Mr. Holman: If you have the money you can do it.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not concerned with whether or not a sum of £250 is required in order that a student may be articulated. If it were so, that would have no bearing on this Bill, because in view of the men seeking registration to-day we would be foolish to believe the statements of the member for Kalgoorlie, that as the result of the admission of those men into the dental profession either dental charges in this State would be decreased or the efficiency of dentistry in this State would be raised. It would be futile to expect such results from the admission of the men seeking registration at present.

Mr. Holman: How do you carry on your business? By hired tools?

Mr. LAMBERT: How does the hon. member carry on his timber secretaryship?

Mr. Holman: By good work. By just as good work as yours.

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member carries on his business by hired, paid tools.

Mr. Holman: They are well paid.

Mr. LAMBERT: Does not the hon. member pay the typist in his office? What has the hon.

member to cry out about? I am not finding fault with that. The whole crux of the matter is that from the dental profession of Western Australia twelve registered dentists have offered themselves for service with the A.I.F. Most of those twelve dentists are, I believe, out of the State at the present time, serving on various battlefields in Europe and elsewhere. Then again, 18 apprentices who were more or less proficient in mechanical or surgical dentistry also volunteered; and half of that number are at present serving their country. To my mind it follows that what these dental assistants seeking registration really require—I will deal with the anomalies in the Act afterwards—is that while these registered dentists are away at the Front, they may enter at the back door, by an amendment of the Dental Act, and thus establish themselves while these registered dentists are on military duty.

Mr. Green: Has not an equal proportion of the rest of the population gone to the Front as well? Has not the State lost the corresponding portion of the population also?

Hon. T. Walker: That is all nonsense. I introduced a Dental Bill, containing practically those provisions, before war was declared.

Mr. LAMBERT: Admittedly the member for Kanowna did introduce a Dental Bill before the outbreak of war, but that Bill was infinitely more restrictive than the existing Dental Act—infinitely more restrictive.

Hon. T. Walker: Nonsense!

Mr. LAMBERT: If the hon. member wishes to see the provisions of that Bill, here is his own draft of a Dental Bill.

Hon. T. Walker: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. LAMBERT: But it is. The hon. member can read it. It is his own draft. The hon. member has stated that the dental board is a close preserve. If I felt that the board had been unjust to any one man who submitted himself for examination, I would be as quick as the member for Kalgoorlie to take exception to it. But when we learn that the dental board of Western Australia has never failed one student since it was constituted, I think it unfair—to say the least of it—that the dental board should be described as a close preserve.

Hon. T. Walker: Has it admitted men from Victoria?

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes. It must do so under the Act.

Hon. T. Walker: Has it refused to admit any?

Mr. LAMBERT: It possibly may have refused, for certain reasons, dentists with certain qualifications. Just in the same way a registered dental surgeon of Western Australia could not practise dentistry in any Eastern State.

Mr. Johnston: There is no reciprocity.

Mr. LAMBERT: There is no reciprocity between any of the States of Australia. Thus Western Australia is exactly on a par with all the other States of the Commonwealth.

Member: We want to widen the profession in this State.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes; but there is no reciprocity. As regards the Dental Act of Western Australia, it is the simplest and the easiest in the Commonwealth to get through. While I make that statement, I want to be perfectly fair and to add—

Mr. Holman: Provided you have the dibs.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know about that. What I want to add is that the other States are fortunate enough to have dental colleges affiliated

with the respective universities. After the student, who must have passed his preliminary examination, has passed through a four years' course at the dental college, and become a registered dentist, or a Bachelor of Dental Science as it is termed, he can practise dentistry anywhere in the British Dominions. But in this State we are on a par with the position of the other States before those States were fortunate enough to be provided with dental colleges.

Mr. Green: Have we a dental college here?

Mr. LAMBERT: No; there is no dental college here. Our examination is simpler and easier than that of any Eastern State. Whilst I state that, it is also fair to state that much the better course is to go to the Eastern States or to America to take a course in dentistry. That is far better than qualifying as a dentist in Western Australia. The member for Kalgoorlie mentioned that young fellows frequently go to the Eastern States to study dentistry. I can quite understand it. If they go over there and pass their final examination after four years, they are qualified to practise dentistry throughout the British Empire; whereas if they go through their course in Western Australia they can practise only in this State, and not elsewhere. I think the suggestion of the Attorney General is a somewhat reasonable one—that if any good is going to be obtained from amendment of the Dental Act in any shape or form, it must be as the result of a proper and thorough preliminary investigation. No good purpose can be served by rashly amending the Dental Act. I quite acknowledge the existence in that Act of certain anomalies, which can be rectified. But there is no prospect, practically, that those anomalies will be rectified either by the Bill as introduced by the member for Kanowna, or by the amendments suggested by the member for Kalgoorlie. Those two hon. members desire the Dental Act to be amended so as to admit some ten or twelve dental mechanics working either at mechanical or surgical dentistry.

Mr. Green: I am told there are 20.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not think there are a dozen, as a matter of fact.

The Attorney General: I, too, was told 20.

Mr. LAMBERT: This puts the whole show away. After we have registered that dozen of men, after we have amended the Dental Act so as to facilitate their entry into the dental profession, they propose to ask Parliament to enact the following:—

No dentist shall authorise or permit any person who is not registered as a dentist to perform any dental service except he be registered as an apprentice in the books of the dental board.

That is infinitely stronger than the existing Act.

Hon. P. Collier: They are going to bar every body else.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes. As soon as ever the door has been opened for them to get in, they are going to slam it and bolt it.

Mr. Johnston: And brick it up.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes; make it a good deal more secure than ever it was. Once these men are admitted, they are going to try to ensure that no man shall henceforth go into a dental surgery or perform a dental act in Western Australia unless he is registered with the dental board of Western Australia.

Mr. Green: Are there any apprentices?

Mr. Holman: Tell us how you can act by proxy to-day.

Mr. LAMBERT: I think the member for Murchison might leave the personal element out.

Mr. Holman: You are working a business, anyhow.

Mr. LAMBERT: It appears to me as absolutely the most unfair suggestion that I ever heard given in this Chamber.

Mr. Holman: Because you work it yourself.

Mr. LAMBERT: The member for Kalgoorlie can see the Bill provides for the apprentice; a man serving his apprenticeship, they are going to admit. They are seeking to come in at the present time and they will go so far as to admit an apprentice. What a generous thing on their part. These 10 or a dozen men who are here to-day are trying to take an advantage of the position, while the registered dentists are away. The fact remains with the exception of the desire of the member for Kanowna it was never suggested that there was any anomaly in the Dental Act. There was never a Dental Operatives Association until a few weeks ago in this State. There are about a dozen registered dentists serving at the Front, and while there are 18 dental mechanics away at the war, these men remain behind. Some are single and fit young men and some have actually got married since the war began.

Mr. Green: Cut that out.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am stating what is an absolute fact. Undoubtedly there is a desire on the part of these persons to become registered and establish themselves as dentists at the present time, when they admit there is a lack of dentists in the State. Possibly they think they can fill the demand. How will they fill the demand. It is admitted that at the present time these men are employed, they are undoubtedly all doing dental work, but this I desire clearly to impress on the House, as far as dentistry is concerned, 75 per cent of the dentistry that is performed to-day is of a manufacturing nature. No matter how clever a man may be as a surgeon dentist, I do not suppose there is one registered dentist in the State who does any work of a mechanical nature, he employs a mechanical dentist to do that. Take the Metropolitan Dental Company, which I suppose is the best example of dentistry here. Some of the operatives there hold the highest degrees that any dentist could hold in any portion of the world; some have come from Harvard which is one of the leading dental universities in the world. They have men working in the laboratory making artificial teeth and that obtains in every dental practice, but so far as doing surgical work is concerned, that is done by qualified surgical dentists. If the member for Kanowna desires an amendment of the Dental Act I think he should convince the House that if these men are to be admitted they shall have some reasonable qualifications so as to safeguard the public interests. As was pointed out by the Attorney General it would both be indirect and undesirable to admit men who have to handle anaesthetics; it would not be safe from a public point of view. It is not so much the drugs, the Attorney General can get that out of his mind. But with the use of general anaesthetics it may be dangerous and tricky in the application. By having an examination we would insert a safeguard, for the public must be considered. I am prepared to say if an operator had the necessary qualifications I think he should be entered on the registry of the dental board. The great trouble in this State has been not so

much that these men have not studied dentistry. The entrance examination has blocked a considerable number. If it is the desire of the House that the educational standard should be lowered, well and good, but it is not for me to indicate on what lines it should be lowered. I am prepared to believe that it is quite possible to have good surgical and mechanical dentists and to lower the standard to allow them to become apprentices. As far as the anatomy of the mouth is concerned, I will concede to the member for Kalgoorlie that it is essential to gain a knowledge of the anatomy of the mouth. I think the licentiates of dental surgery in the Eastern States should be admitted here. They are not allowed at the present time. Before the dental colleges there were affiliated with the university they created what they called the licentiates of dental surgery. If there is a desire to have more dentists, if there is any suggestion that there are not sufficient dentists to meet the requirements of the State, we might go so far as to meet that. Only dental surgeons practising in the Eastern States should be allowed to come here and practice dentistry.

Mr. Thomson: Why not give our own men a chance?

Mr. LAMBERT: Give them a chance by all means if they can pass the standard that would be considered a safeguard for the public but it is not right to allow wild and untruthful statements to be made.

Mr. Green: Are they not doing the work?

Mr. LAMBERT: All are employed at the present time, but as far as dental practice goes, in any portion of the world it will be found that 75 per cent is work of a purely manufacturing nature. The member for Kalgoorlie knows that practically not one-fiftieth of the work is done in the dental surgery, it is done in the laboratory. The men are admittedly doing the work, but because these men with the application of local anaesthetics can take out a few teeth and replace them with a few false teeth, that is a different thing from allowing these men to use the word "dentist" and for all time hang themselves out as dental surgeons. A dental surgeon is a man with a practical knowledge of dental surgery. In every portion of the world, even in Victoria where they have had a recording Bill, these dental mechanics, not for the reason stated by the member for Kalgoorlie, were registered under the Bill. That was the biggest disgrace they ever had in Victoria. There was a compromise, and it was that these men were allowed to be recorded by the dental board of Victoria and the general public then knew that if they wanted these men they were not going to a dentist, but to a recorded mechanic who had been practising dentistry in some form or other for three years before the passing of the Act. What the member for Kalgoorlie desires, and he goes much further than the member for Kanowna, is that these men should rank exactly as the highest and most inefficient men coming from Harvard or the leading universities of the world.

Mr. Green: But they are doing the work.

Mr. LAMBERT: There is a big difference between answering a lot of stupid inquiries and dealing with absolute facts. At the present time we have in the State 14 students who are registered by the dental board as students who are serving their time in one place or another and what inducement is there for the students who are studying at the present time to go on if we



admit unregistered men as suggested by the amendment by the member for Kanowna. I am trying as far as my knowledge serves me and my ability goes to give the facts to the House and I hope I have made the information distinct, fair and clear. There are 14 what may be called students studying at the present time and they have to be considered. There are men who have gone to other portions of the world to study dentistry for a certain number of years and have been admitted as registered dental surgeons. As was pointed out by the Attorney General, if any one of those men will just pass the preliminary examination and apply for registration as a student, he can then go anywhere among the hospitals, and any of the honorary surgeons will give him every assistance and tuition.

Mr. Holman: Tell us how he is to pass the preliminary examination.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is not so very hard. It is for the House to say if the preliminary is too hard. Originally in Victoria the educational standard was the ordinary civil service examination. In this State it is practically a junior University examination. While there are not here the facilities for gaining the necessary knowledge the House would be justified in very earnestly considering some of the details in connection with the working of the present Act. I have some knowledge of the working of that Act, and to be fair to the Dental Board I must say they have tried to administer the Act in a thoroughly impartial manner. In examining students they have given them every possible latitude; in many instances have extended sheer generosity in allowing them to become registered as dentists. The fact remains that they have never yet failed one student in Western Australia. At present we have 64 dentists on the register. If the House thinks there are not sufficient dentists in the State, I do not say that we should open the door to unqualified men, but I say there is a way to get over the difficulty. In Victoria and New South Wales there are dozens of licentiates in dental surgery, thoroughly capable men.

Mr. Brown: They are wanted over there.

Mr. LAMBERT: Possibly they are, but the member for Kalgoorlie seems to think we might get some of them over here.

Mr. Holman: Why cannot the unregistered men start for themselves?

Mr. LAMBERT: They can do so to-morrow. If the member for Kalgoorlie wants to start in his own constituency I will be very pleased to sell him a practice. If the member for Kalgoorlie can convince us that by an amendment of the Dental Act we can get one more dentist in the State or improve the efficiency, or lower the fees, or provide for the 18 lads in the dental corps, there would be some excuse for his amendment. It would be an absolute disgrace if the Bill went through excluding those 18 lads serving with the dental corps.

Mr. Green: You wish to keep those soldiers out for ever.

Mr. LAMBERT: Nothing of the sort. Every man that was eligible to serve in any capacity was liberated when he expressed a desire to go to the war. The suggestion put forward in the hon. member's amendment is altogether unfair. To ask the House to amend the Act in a direction affecting only half a dozen men in Perth, and then to close the door in the manner suggested by the operatives, is positively comical. If we are to have an amendment of the Dental

Act I hope the Attorney General will take note of the men who are serving at the Front and who have been entirely overlooked by the member for Kalgoorlie and others clamouring to have the Dental Act immediately amended.

The Attorney General: Are those 18 men students, or registered dentists?

Mr. LAMBERT: There are 12 registered dentists away at the Front. Then there are 18 dental mechanics, half of whom are away at the Front while the remainder are serving either at the Base Hospital or at Blackboy Camp.

Mr. Green: You would keep them out for ever.

Mr. LAMBERT: Nothing of the sort. From the personal point of view I do not care a rap one way or the other. I urge that if there is to be any amendment of the Dental Act, it should be in the direction of the educational facilities, allowing students to be recorded as students. We have this clamour for the registration of the few men who have stayed behind and are profiting to a much greater extent than the member for Kalgoorlie would care to admit. There are others to be considered before those men. I will support the appointment of a select committee. If that is not agreed to I will vote against the second reading, in the hope that the Attorney General will introduce an amendment to the Dental Act, giving the greatest possible freedom to those who desire to join the ranks of dentists in this State.

Mr. Green: On a point of explanation. During the course of my remarks, by a slip of the tongue, I used the word "Metropolitan Dental Company," when I should have said "metropolitan dental companies" who, I declared, were exploiting the unregistered dentists. I do not wish the impression to go forth that I was singling out the "Metropolitan Dental Company." Mr. Kaufman runs his business in an admirable manner, and I do not wish it to be thought that I was making a personal attack upon him.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10-14 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 14th March, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

### SELECT COMMITTEE, RABBIT PEST.

Extension of Time.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [4.40]: I have again, on behalf of this select committee, to ask the indulgence of the House for a further extension, to this day week. The committee