

ADJOURNMENT--ROYAL SHOW.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [8.55]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to Thursday, the 9th inst.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 7th October, 1919.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, FIREWOOD HAULAGE.

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What was the total amount received in freight for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1919, by the Railway Department for the haulage of firewood—(a) between Kurrawang and Golden Gate, and (b) between Lakeside and Kamballie? 2, What charges, if any, are being made to the Lakeside Firewood Company for the right to haul firewood over the Lakeside-Kamballie section of the Government railway?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: I, (a) 159,099 tons, freight £10,418. (b) Lakeside and Kamballie, 157,816 tons, freight £15,533. 2, Fourpence per ton. In addition to this a charge of threepence per ton is made for the use of our wagons on the company's line.

QUESTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Blocks mortgaged to banks and poison-infested.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the associated banks are endeavouring to get soldiers to take up blocks which are mortgaged to them, with a view to the soldiers subsequently obtaining an advance under the Soldier Settlement Scheme? 2, Is he also aware that some of the blocks referred to have poison on them? 3, If so, will he advise soldiers taking up land under the foregoing circumstances to obtain a guarantee that there is no poison on the land, or that if poison is present they will be advised accordingly?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, The Controller, Soldier Settlement Scheme, will take all precautions possible. This is now done in every case where an advance is asked on the security of land.

QUESTION—RAILWAY, GERALDTON-CUE, WASHAWAY.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that there is a serious washaway at the 193-miles or thereabouts on the Geraldton-Cue railway? 2, Is he aware that there have been several serious washaways at the spot since the line was constructed? 3, Will he endeavour, during the period of repairs, to have some provision made for the storm waters to pass under the line and save the serious dislocation of traffic and expense of repairs which have been necessary in the past owing to washaways in this locality?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Considerable washaways took place on the Cue line between 179 miles and 195 miles on the night of the 30th ult., and were made safe for the passage of trains early on the morning of the 3rd inst. 2, Washaways have occurred about this mileage on several previous occasions. 3, Additional openings have been placed under the line, and the line has been lowered to allow of the flood waters passing over the rails, similar to the original construction of the line between Cue and Nannine. The Chief Engineer will visit the localities during the week.

QUESTION—WHEAT, GUARANTEED PRICE.

Mr. WILLCOCK asked the Honorary Minister: 1, What is the guarantee given to the farmers for this season's crop of wheat per bushel? 2, Does this guarantee include freight to the port or depot? 3, In the event of the guaranteed price not being realised, who will make up the difference between the guaranteed price and the price actually realised?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, The guarantee price to the farmer for the

1919-20 harvest delivered is 5s. per bushel, f.a.q. 2, No. 3, Any difference between the guarantee price and the price realised will be shared between the State concerned and the Commonwealth.

QUESTION—MINING SURVEYORS.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, The number of surveyors operating in the Hampton Plains and surrounding districts? 2, Does he think the number sufficient, considering the extraordinary number of leases that have been pegged south of Mount Robinson for a distance of over 60 miles?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, I have no definite knowledge. 2, There are so far 37 leases applied for on Crown lands within the area named, and the work can easily be managed by the contract surveyor for the district, who is up there. So far as the plotting shows, there is no overlapping and consequently no necessity for immediate survey. The surveys of the areas within the Hampton Plains boundaries are not carried out by the department.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, FLAT RATE, NAREMBEEN-KONDININ.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has consideration been given to the request for the introduction of a flat rate on produce and goods on the Narembreen-Kondinin section of the Yilliminning-Kondinin-Merredin line? 2, In considering this matter, will he bear in mind the soldier settlement at Wadderin, and the large number of men who are going on to other blocks round about this district?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes.

QUESTION—POTASSIC FERTILISERS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Are any efforts being made to procure supplies of potash for orchardists, market gardeners, and the potato and onion growers of this State? 2, Have the glauconite sand deposits at Gingin been tested to prove their suitability as a potassic fertiliser for agricultural purposes? 3, Will he inform the House—(a) What steps have been taken to work the alunite deposits at Kanowna and Northampton; and (b) Is there a reasonable prospect of these deposits being utilised for fertilising purposes in the immediate future? 4, Will he make every effort to make available this most necessary fertiliser?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: The Mines Department has reported that the latest advice is that 129 tons of alunite ore have been treated, yielding 90 tons of fertiliser ready for use. The present plant is

producing six tons per day, which, in the near future, will probably be increased to 20 tons.

BILL—TRAFFIC.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—PRICES REGULATION.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Commissioner:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment.

That in Subclause (1) the words "may appoint a Commissioner" be struck out and "shall appoint three Commissioners" inserted in lieu.

The work could not be effectually administered by one commissioner. Where price-fixing tribunals have been appointed in the other States, since the Commonwealth price fixing has lapsed, particularly in Victoria and New South Wales, the boards have comprised three members. I do not know of any State in which price fixing is done where the work is being done by one man. It is particularly necessary in this State, where we have a large area to cover and a scattered population, that there should be three commissioners. It is utterly impossible for one man to carry out the work satisfactorily. The only objection I can see to the appointment of three commissioners, would be on the score of the extra remuneration involved. That would be a small thing in comparison with the importance of the work. I hope the amendment will be agreed to.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I doubt very much whether the appointment of three commissioners in lieu of one would really lighten the work which would be burdensome for one person to perform. The idea apparently is that the three commissioners shall sit together. If they have to go round the country it will mean that two or three of the commissioners will have to be sent instead of one. It might be possible to obtain information from the country, of course, without the three commissioners being obliged to go there. I am not opposed to the amendment, but I doubt very much whether it will relieve the work to any great extent. Perhaps it would tend to establish greater confidence in the minds of the public generally, and on this point I would ask hon. members to consider very carefully how any amendments they may suggest will affect the public confidence in the Bill. It may be that one commissioner would not be sufficient, and if it is desired to appoint three, and it will improve the Bill, the Government will not stand in the way.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move a further amendment—

That the following paragraph be added to Subclause 1:—"One of the Commissioners shall be a representative of the Industrial Unions of Workers registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912."

I am not wedded to the wording of the amendment, nor to the question of whether organised labour under the Arbitration Act shall have direct representation on this commission. The amendment does not mean that the unions registered under the Arbitration Act will have the right to nominate a representative, but that the Government in making these appointments should appoint one commissioner who would be representative of the registered unions. I would be satisfied if there was one commissioner at least, who was a direct representative of the wage-earning section of the consumers. That is one of my reasons for moving for the appointment of three commissioners. I want to have a representative on the commission of the big wage-earning section of the consumers. We must have regard to the fact that the wage earners comprise the majority of the citizens of the State, and that the wages of that section of the community are fixed by the Arbitration Court, mainly on the principle of the cost of living. After an award has been delivered the cost of living may go up, but the wage earners still have to abide by the award. I hope the amendment will be agreed to.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am glad the leader of the Opposition does not lay strong emphasis on the exact wording of the amendment. If it is put in in its present form I should feel bound to oppose it, because, unfortunately, it looks as if one political party would have the right to appoint one of these commissioners. We cannot consider any particular class as distinct from the general interests of the community. If we passed the amendment it would not tend to create confidence in the Bill in the minds of the general public. I would be quite willing to assure the leader of the Opposition that one of the three commissioners would not be appointed without reference to him. The wording of the amendment seems to me to be rather objectionable, and I do not think it would be for the good of the Bill as a whole. Perhaps the hon. member would withdraw his amendment in these circumstances.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am anxious that the Bill should not have anything in it that could be construed into giving special consideration to any particular party. The unions registered under the Arbitration Act comprise those connected with the nationalist labourers. When last a vote was taken in the House a considerable number did not subscribe to the politics of what is known as the O.L.P. Even if direct representation were given to unions registered under the

Act it would not mean that it was representation only of those who belonged to the political faith held by those on this side of the House. All the unions are registered although they vote in many different ways. If I have the assurance of the Attorney General that consideration will be given to the representation of the section of consumers comprising the wage earners, I will not press the amendment. I am prepared to accept his assurance in this direction.

The Attorney General: I give the hon. member that assurance.

Mr. MUNSIE: I cannot understand the objection of the Attorney General either to the amendment or the wording of it. Hon. members sitting on this side have been criticised for not abiding by the law of the land so far as arbitration is concerned. Labour conference after Labour conference has affirmed the principle of arbitration. Then what is wrong with allowing that section of the community whose wages are fixed by the Arbitration Court to have a say in appointing one of the commissioners under this measure? That section represents the chief sufferers from the high cost of living. I fail to see any political significance in the amendment, because there are a dozen trade unions registered under the Arbitration Act of this State which are not affiliated with the Australian Labour Federation.

Mr. PICKERING: If the claim in the amendment is to be advanced on behalf of the wage earners, I intend to advocate it also on behalf of the primary producers, who have no Arbitration Court to fix the prices of their products but must accept the prices ruling in the open market. Indeed, the primary producers are likely to be the heaviest sufferers from the operation of this measure, since it has been stated in this Chamber that price control will apply more particularly to local products.

Mr. ANGELO: I hope the leader of the Opposition will withdraw this amendment. The Government have shown a good spirit in introducing this Bill and making its provisions as liberal as possible, and they have already agreed to the amendment of the leader of the Opposition proposing the appointment of three commissioners.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for Sussex has anticipated what I was about to say, and I heartily support his views.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted to stand as Subclause (2):—"One of the commissioners shall be appointed by the Governor as chairman."

This amendment is consequential on the amendment providing for three commissioners.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted to stand as Subclause (3): "Any two of the Commissioners shall be a quorum, and, subject to the next following provision, shall have all the powers and authority by this Act conferred upon the Commissioners."

In discussing Clause 3 the Attorney General touched on the duty of the commissioners. As the Bill stands, it might mean that two commissioners would have to travel into the country to sit for the purpose of hearing evidence. I do not know whether it prevents one commissioner from visiting any portion of the State for the purpose of hearing evidence. My own view is that one commissioner should be permitted to take evidence with a view to making recommendations to the other commissioners on his return.

Mr. Pilkington: What is to prevent a commissioner from getting information in any way he likes?

Hon. P. COLLIER: When I discussed this matter with the Solicitor General, that officer thought that if three commissioners were appointed it would be necessary to fix some statutory quorum.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As we have decided to appoint three commissioners, it is certainly advisable to state how many shall form a quorum. As the leader of the Opposition has pointed out, a difficulty arises when commissioners have to go into the country. An hon. member has notified me of an amendment which he proposes to move, but which does not yet appear on the Notice Paper, to provide for the appointment of local boards to obtain information. Such boards, I think, would really be better than having commissioners going into the country to seek information.

Hon. P. Collier: I believe there are such boards in Great Britain.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Unless the amendment to which I have referred is included in the Bill, two commissioners would have to go into the country for the purpose of taking evidence.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Would it be right that people should be asked to submit their books to a local board?

Hon. P. COLLIER: As the Bill stands, it might be necessary for two commissioners to visit distant parts of the State, while the work to be done could really be performed by one. I do not know that such cases would occur very often. However, if this amendment is not carried, no statutory quorum is provided.

The Premier: Why not let the clause go now, and have it recommitment if that is found to be necessary after consultation with the Crown Solicitor?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Very well. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause as previously amended agreed to.

The Attorney General: I undertake to recommit the clause.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Attorney General recommit the clause and I am permitted to deal with any other amendments to the clause, I shall be satisfied. In addition to the one which, by consent, has been postponed, there are others on the Notice Paper. And I understand that on recommitment I can deal with any or all of them. If I am clear on that, we can overcome the difficulty.

The CHAIRMAN: The fact of the clause having been amended will not prevent the Attorney General from moving for the recommitment of the clause, or the member for Boulder or any other member from moving any amendment he likes.

Clauses 4 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Determination of prices.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Is there any provision for the commissioners to make reports to Parliament as to action to be taken, or may the Governor-in-Council refuse to take any action they recommend? Some tangible reason should be given as to why any recommendations are not given effect to and, to this end, the reports should be laid on the Table of the House.

The Attorney General: There is no provision in the Bill to that effect.

Hon. P. Collier: I have an amendment to provide for that.

Mr. PICKERING: There should be provision to fix a minimum price. Whenever there is a dearth of foodstuff, there is an outcry for price fixing; but when there is a glut, there is no comment from the general public. Butter, potatoes, eggs, vegetables and poultry might well come under the provisions of this measure, and yet there is no safeguard.

Mr. Smith: Supposing the consumers refused to buy the stuff, what would the producers do?

Mr. Gardiner: Would not your minimum be the maximum?

Mr. PICKERING: No.

Mr. Gardiner: It would be in nine cases out of ten.

Mr. PICKERING: The member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loghlen) said if the maximum price of potatoes were fixed at £8 a ton, there would be no complaint from the general community, and I am in accord with him. Eggs bring ridiculously low prices at certain periods of the year, and it is impossible to sell them at a profit because of the price of feed-stuffs.

Mr. Smith: What if people will not buy them?

Mr. PICKERING: People will buy them. If the minimum price is fair, it will enable the people to buy sufficient. It would be better for the producer to get a fair minimum than take the risk of the market, as he has to do to-day. I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be added:

"(c) Determine the payable minimum which shall operate during the currency of this Act."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have it on the authority of the Prime Minister, who has been the biggest seller of wheat in Australia during the last four or five years, that the parity price of wheat in Lisbon is 2s. 10½d. per bushel, while we are paying 5s. 6d.

The Premier: Get some from Lisbon.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the intention of the member for Sussex is that we shall get wheat and flour much cheaper, the amendment is worth considering.

Mr. Pilkington: Are you sure that was not a misprint?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was mentioned in two places in the Press. If the Commissioners have power to fix a minimum price, will they bring wheat down to the world's parity of 2s. 10½d.? If so, there will be a considerable saving to consumers.

Mr. Pickering: At what could you land that wheat here?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The freight makes no difference to Australian wheat. We pay no freight, and therefore it cannot be added to the price. If the hon. member's idea is to assist the consumer and reduce the price of bread to one-half of what it is to-day, the amendment is worth considering.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not his idea.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to find out what his idea is.

Mr. GARDINER: This Bill has nothing to do with minima; it has all to do with maxima. The member for Sussex evidently has in mind that unless a minimum is fixed, the producer is not likely to get the result of his production. Gluts are bad because the producer does not get the result of his labour, and the consumer does not get the benefit of the glut. Under this measure, we stipulate the maximum price for a particular article and the minimum does not matter one iota. If a minimum is fixed, it will be the maximum.

Hon. P. Collier: The maximum becomes the minimum, too.

Mr. GARDINER: We cannot fix both minimum and maximum. All we are concerned about is that people shall not pay more than the maximum price. As to the difference between the maximum and the minimum, that will be regulated by the law of supply and demand. In America, they cope with gluts by having receiving stations and putting the balance into cold storage, so that the consumer and producer alike get the advantage. It would take an actuary all his life to find out the payable minimum of production. Can the member for Sussex tell us the minimum cost of the production of eggs and butter? It cannot be ascertained. We would be asking the commissioners to prove something which cannot be proven. It is a different thing to provide that there shall be a maximum price beyond which consumers shall not be charged.

The PREMIER: The member for Sussex wants a minimum price to be fixed, but how can we do that? Suppose the House did fix a minimum price, and the people refused to

buy the commodity. What would happen then? Would potatoes keep? All perishable goods must be sold within a certain time, and all we ask under the Bill is that the people shall trade fairly. It is impossible to do more. I doubt whether the hon. member will serve any good purpose by insisting upon the amendment. It certainly will not help the producer. I admit that the farmer should always get a fair return for his crops, and that it would be useful if we could say that anything he produced should not be sold at anything less than would show him a fair return for his labour.

Mr. PICKERING: During the operation of this measure, prices will fluctuate. Therefore, whilst the maximum might operate in favour of the producer, it is possible that it might operate badly against the consumer. Butter fat cannot be produced at under 1s. 3d. a lb. and potatoes cannot be produced at under £8 per ton. At a conference at Bunbury recently it was demonstrated that it was not possible to market an acre of potatoes under £25, and if one takes an average yield per acre and the cost of digging under the present expensive labour conditions, the increased price of bags, etc., it will be found that a man cannot produce potatoes under £8 a ton. So far as eggs are concerned, I do not see how the price of these could be fixed to a nicety, but we can say that they cannot be sold at a profit at 6d. a dozen. Therefore, if we know that eggs cannot be produced at a certain price and we take every care for the consumer, whenever there is a scarcity, it is only fair and right that the actual cost of products should be assured to the producer. If there is a glut the consumers can so arrange that the market shall be regulated. The scarcity of potatoes to-day is not so much due to themselves, as it is to the lack of imports from the Eastern States. In the course of time, the area under crop under the developmental policy of the Premier, will be much greater than it is to-day, and the time will arrive when steps will have to be taken to look after the interests of the producer in connection with the over production of potatoes. There should be no difficulty in the way of fixing a minimum if there is no difficulty in the way of fixing a maximum.

Hon. T. WALKER: It seems to me the hon. member wants to ensure that excess profits shall not be made and he proceeds to make the Bill ensure that everybody who produces anything shall make a profit. If a profit is not made the things will not be produced. People will not grow things for the benefit of the consumers. The Bill will not regulate the market so that there shall not be a fluctuation. The Bill is not to ensure that everyone shall be guaranteed a profit. The object is to show that there shall not be an abuse of the advantages occasioned by extraordinary circumstances, whereby the people are enabled to make enormous and unjustifiable profits. That may in fact be called robbery. It is to prevent that excess of avarice and the excess

of zeal to take advantage of society at a time of crisis or of extraordinary circumstances. The hon. member wants to say that no farmer shall sell unless he makes a profit. What about having a Bill for that purpose. That is not the purpose of this measure.

Mr. PILKINGTON: The object of the member for Sussex is to prevent producers suffering a loss when there is a glut in the market. The effect of the amendment will be just the reverse. If the amendment is carried and there is a glut, say, in the potato market, so that the price of potatoes goes down to £4 a ton, assuming the minimum price is fixed at £8, what will be the result? The result will be that some producers will be able to sell potatoes at £8 and the rest cannot sell at all. That is the position the producer will be in and it is better for the producer to be able to sell his potatoes at £1 a ton than not to be able to sell them at all. Further, let me point out, not only would the producers as a class be hurt, but the potatoes would not go on the market at all, and the effect would be to raise the price of other commodities.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am in sympathy with the amendment. The hon. member, however, failed to tell us whether he would be as strenuous in his advocacy if it was a question of a living wage for those particular people he represents. All that the hon. member has asked for is to assure a living wage for the potato grower. It may be as the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) points out, that the amendment may defeat itself, but I fail to see that that will be the case.

Mr. NAIRN: The mover of the amendment could only achieve his object if the House were prepared to give a guarantee that articles produced would be purchased by the Government at a fixed price.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Like the wheat.

Mr. NAIRN: Yes. The Government could be made the sole guarantor of any industry that might be determined upon.

Hon. T. Walker: That is scientific socialism, nationalisation of production.

Mr. NAIRN: Unless the House is prepared to protect the grower by a guarantee, there is no way of guaranteeing the minimum to the producer. If we have here 1,000 tons of potatoes, with a demand for only 500 tons, and if, in addition, potatoes from the Eastern States can be landed here at £1 per ton below the fixed minimum, there would be no earthly chance of a remunerative return to the potato grower.

Mr. Johnston: But the moment those potatoes reached here their price would be controlled.

Mr. NAIRN: We cannot make it compulsory that any man should charge more than he desires to charge. The amendment would defeat itself.

Mr. PICKERING: I have never suggested that I am in favour of the measure. I prefer limitation of profits to price-fixing. The statements made by the members for

Swan and for Perth are nothing more than statements, with no supporting facts. Everyone knows the disaster that follows fruit production in this State. Fruit has been sold on the Perth markets at the cost of the case plus freight.

Mr. Munsie: The consumer did not get the advantage.

Mr. PICKERING: Neither did the producer. Surely we can conserve to the producer the right to live in a State where the advocacy of "Produce, produce" is a recognised political cry. We should see that the producers are protected from the fluctuation of the markets. I want protection for the producer.

Hon. T. Walker: Your motive is excellent.

Mr. PICKERING: If there is anything to be passed on at any time it is passed on to the producer. I hope members of the Country party will have the courage to support the amendment.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The principle advocated by the hon. member has been recognised by the House in the guaranteed prices of wheat during the last few years. The producer will be on a poor wicket if, whenever there is a scarcity in his products, a maximum price is fixed, while we are not prepared to give him the protection of a minimum price in times of glut. We could the better secure increased production and decreased prices by fixing minimum prices that will ensure a living wage, than by preventing a local man at any time getting a big price for his commodity however scarce it may be, or however high the cost.

Hon. T. Walker: Why not go in for nationalisation of industries?

Mr. JOHNSTON: We are prepared to accept that in certain directions which meet with our approval. That has always been the policy of the Country party, and it is borne out by our attitude towards the State Implement Works. It is not proposed that the maximum price of every commodity should be regulated. If the suggested power is given to the Government, they may exercise it only in regard to a few of our staple products. Regulation of the prices of food-stuffs should be in the direction of giving a producer a living wage as well as preventing the community from being exploited. Let us give a fair deal all round. If the farmers had had the right to charge a fair price for potatoes at all times, we should not have had the deplorable shortage or the extortionate prices that exist to day. I will support the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The amendment introduces the key to the whole question of price fixing. What we are concerned about is to ensure to the consumer that he shall get the commodities at a reasonable figure, taking into account the cost of production and of marketing. The mover of the amendment can attain his object in a different way. Fixing the minimum price would not give the producer here the guarantee of a market for his product. When we fix a minimum which will enable a

grower in the Eastern States to send his potatoes here, he will flood our market with them, and it must be remembered that the housewife will not pay more for local potatoes if the imported potatoes are as good and cheaper.

Mr. Johnston: The price would be controlled as soon as the potatoes reached here.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We think the producer is as much entitled to consideration as is the consumer. We have given evidence of that in regard to wheat. The potato is an entirely different proposition, the difference being that wheat can be held and the world's market price demanded for it, but potatoes cannot be held indefinitely. It is very easy to urge production, but we should ensure to the producer a certain market. The hon. member, instead of moving this amendment, ought to say "If you want the producer to produce it is essential that the Government should find a market and cut out the man standing between the producer and the consumer." Sheep-men know that in many cases the producers are in the hands of agents to such an extent that they dare not ignore the wishes of the agents. This applies to a lot of commodities. I want to be able to relieve the producer from the control of anyone who would compel him to accept a market to the advantage, not of himself, but of the middleman. So successful has this proved in respect of wheat that the system is to be continued. We require to apply the same system to other commodities. We should first of all give the producer an opportunity of exporting an exportable commodity, and in addition we should find local markets for non-exportable products. We should encourage production by providing markets. It would be unwise, however, to introduce a provision which would prevent a commodity coming into the State, even though there is here a market for it. Let us bring the producer nearer to the consumer.

Mr. GARDINER: Practically in all cases food consists of perishable products. If we fix the minimum price for potatoes, eggs, butter, or anything else which deteriorates with keeping, what will happen? The minimum for potatoes may be fixed at £5 a ton, and the people may refuse to buy at that price. What will the producer do in the matter? He may presently wish that he had been able to get £1 per ton for his produce rather than lose the lot. If the member for Sussex had said that between the producer and the consumer there shall only be a certain percentage of profit, I would have agreed with him, but when he says that there is to be a minimum for that which is perishable, he is talking nonsense. The middleman will make the profit every time. The public cannot be forced to buy produce if they do not so desire. There is no system by which markets can be regulated, and the producer must take what he can get in the market. If the minimum is fixed the producer will be in a worse position than he is in to-day.

Mr. HARRISON: I am in sympathy with the member for Sussex in his object, but I am afraid the amendment will not give him what he desires. Take the case of mutton, alone. If the amendment is carried and mutton must not be sold at a certain minimum price, what is to become of the surplus sheep? There is no cool storage at present provided that would cope with all the requirements in this direction, and growers might have to sell their fat sheep as stores, or allow them to starve.

Mr. PICKERING: The member for Irwin might have been a little more courteous in his remarks. I am surprised that he does not take a greater interest on behalf of the producer. The fact that foodstuffs are of a perishable nature makes it all the more necessary that we should assist the producer. The member for Avon asks what we should do with our surplus sheep. If there is no market the sheep cannot be sold. Provision however, is being made for freezing works to cope with such a difficulty. I do not suggest that the price of mutton should be fixed at such a figure as to affect its consumption by the public, but I suggest that the price put upon it should be that which would suit both the producer and the consumer. The population of the State can only consume annually a certain quantity of foodstuffs, and, as long as the minimum price is reasonable, the public will absorb as much as they want.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—Contravention of prices and rates:

Mr. MUNSIE: I should like some information from the Attorney General upon these words—"evidence that the foodstuffs or necessary commodities forming the subject of the proceedings were sold or offered for sale." The price of butter may have been fixed at 1s. 6d. per lb., and a purchaser may have been charged 1s. 8d. in a shop. He may have had a receipt from the shopkeeper to prove the purchase. Would that receipt be accepted as evidence of a contravention of price?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The object is to avoid trivial offences being set up. If the defendant in a case had given a receipt for so much money for certain goods, and that description answered to the description of the goods set out in an order, it would not be open for him to say that the receipt he gave was for some other kind of goods. That is one instance of the kind of evidence that would be conclusive under this clause.

Hon. P. Collier: What about the man who sells second grade butter instead of first grade?

Mr. MUNSIE: The Commission may fix the price for first grade butter at 1s. 6d. and for second grade at 1s. 4d. A consumer may ask for a pound of first grade butter, and pay 1s. 6d. for it and only obtain second grade butter. He may also get a receipt for

the purchase. Would this transaction be a breach of the law under this Bill? The clause says that the purchaser who has been overcharged can get a refund, but it would be impossible to prove that a person had been overcharged.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not a question of overcharging in this case.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11—agreed to.

Mr. Willcock called attention to the state of the House. Bells rung, a quorum formed.

Clauses 12, 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Declaration of secrecy:

Mr. MUNSIE: The leader of the Opposition has on the Notice Paper an amendment dealing with publicity. How will this clause affect that matter? Does the obligation of secrecy apply only to the commissioners? Or does the clause mean that all evidence given before them must be kept secret?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is the intention.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In view of the amendment I have on the Notice Paper proposing a new clause to stand as Clause 6, I would ask the Attorney General to postpone the consideration of this clause until my proposed new clause has been dealt with.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The proposed new clause is not necessarily contradictory to this clause, but it deals with the same subject. I move—

That consideration of Clause 14 be postponed until after the consideration of the proposed new clause to stand as Clause 6.

Motion put and passed; the clause postponed.

Clause 15—Penalty:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause (1) the words "two hundred" be struck out, with a view to the insertion of other words.

I propose to move for the insertion of a penalty of £1,000, in place of £200, my intention being to endeavour to restore the penalty imposed by the Act of 1914. It is quite possible that firms doing business in a very large way may come within the purview of this measure, and it is quite conceivable that in some circumstances it would pay such a firm to commit a breach of the measure and submit to a fine of even £200 for the sake of the profit to be made by breaking the measure. The penalty ought to be made substantial, and the £1,000 would be a maximum.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not going to oppose an increase in the penalty, but I rather doubt whether it is advisable to go to the extent of £1,000. In a case

where the penalty is very heavy, a jury may refuse to convict, being unwilling to trust the judge to impose such penalty as he thinks fit. I think a penalty of £500 would be sufficient.

Amendment put and passed, the words struck out.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move a further amendment—

That the words "five hundred" be inserted in lieu of the words struck out.

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

Clause 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Duration of the Act:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I oppose this clause, which is the same thing as moving that it be struck out. I am aware that the Attorney General contends that this legislation is of an experimental nature and therefore should be enacted only for a period of 12 months. But if at the expiration of 12 months the circumstances of the State are such that Parliament thinks the Act should be repealed, it will be an easy matter to do that. We know that the consumers of this State lost a very considerable sum because of a similar clause to this having been embodied in the Act of 1914. On coming up for re-enactment, that measure failed to secure the consent of both Houses of Parliament, the consequence being that there was no regulation of prices at all in this State during the first half of 1916—that is, until the Federal Government stepped in and took over the business of price fixing. During that half-year some traders in this State took advantage of the absence of any restriction to increase their prices to an unjustifiable extent. The Commonwealth, on stepping in during July of 1916, fixed the prices which were in existence on the 1st July, 1916, without making any attempt to reduce such as were excessive. In connection with war measures, we have introduced a new principle by making it necessary for those Acts to come up for reconsideration each year. The principle is not a good one, especially in legislation of this character. It will be easy for Parliament next year to consider the matter in connection with a measure for repealing the Act, if necessary. If the conditions of trade become normal in a year's time, it will not be obligatory on the Government to enforce the provisions of the Act. They need not apply the Act to any portion of the State. Therefore, in the interests of the consumers, and having in mind the manner in which the public suffered because of a similar provision in the 1914 Act we are justified in opposing this clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I hope the clause will be retained. Provision is made for the measure to remain in force until the 31st December, 1920, which is 15 months hence. The only justification for introducing this Bill is that the times in which we

are living are abnormal. We have not sufficient experience or knowledge to put before Parliament a Bill which it would be advisable to pass as permanent. No other British dominion of which I am aware has made permanent a measure of this nature. It is regarded in all parts of the British Empire as a measure which may do good in the extraordinary circumstances existing after the war, and that is really the only justification for bringing it forward. It is only right to adopt a limitation for experimental legislation. Such limitation has been adopted in nearly all the war measures, and in connection with the Roads Acts and portions of the Health Act.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	15
Majority for				2

AYES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Draper	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Durack	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Hardwick
Sir H. B. Lefroy	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Roche
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

Clause thus passed.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd September.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [7.55]: It is a considerable time since the Premier moved the second reading of this measure. I wish to bring under the notice of the House several points so that members may realise how we stand with regard to handling wheat in this State in comparison with the position in other States, and more especially in South Australia. The question is—should this wheat pool be continued while we have a quantity of wheat in the State and not shipped? I think every member will agree that it is advisable to continue this pool. The second question is—what is the best

method of handling the new season's wheat? For some years past we have acquired the wheat with the aid of trained men, who had been for years with the old acquiring agents and who had been largely absorbed by the co-operative company which has been operating our wheat for the last two years. Judging from last year's results, it would not be possible for Western Australia to do better than further engage those men to continue the work. It has been stated in another place that South Australia is able to and would handle our wheat at $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel less. I have some facts to prove that the contrary is the case, and to show the conditions under which our acquiring agents operate as compared with those in South Australia. If the wheat is taken direct from the farmer's wagon, the acquiring sub-agent gets a remuneration of $\frac{5}{8}$ d. If the wheat is temporarily stacked and then trucked to the depot, the acquiring sub-agent receives $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel. Of last year's returns, the major portion was sent direct from the farmers' wagons to the truck and the depot, namely, 4,534,000 bushels as against 2,894,291 bushels temporarily stacked, proving that the price paid to the sub-acquiring agents was considerably under $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel. Provision is made for a charge of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. for roofing, screening, protecting, and caretaking. This expense was not incurred in Western Australia last year except in one instance—at Kellerberrin. Only one stack was covered and cared for in this way, a stack consisting of 26,000 bags and the cost to the State for the covering and the protection of that stack was £81 5s.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We were working under an exceptional season.

Mr. HARRISON: That is true, but there is a flat rate of 2d. per bushel for handling wheat in South Australia? That State is quoted as lower than ours and I wish to prove it is not lower. The cost for issuing certificates is $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel, and for inspection, travelling expenses, supervision, contingencies, losses, liabilities, and the performance generally of all other duties and obligations of the agreement, $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel. For actual checking of sample and verifying depot, tally notes at depots the charge is $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel; so that the total in one instance will be 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and in the other 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel. If that is true, and I claim it is true, we may look at the South Australian agreement. Clause 29 of that agreement reads as follows:—

Subject to the provisions of Clauses 31, 32, and 33, the remuneration to be paid by the Minister or the Government to the Government agent for performing the work and duties under this agreement (other than is provided in Clauses 6a and 34), shall be at the rate of 2d. per bushel of wheat received and delivered according to the direction and instructions of the Minister and in accordance with the terms of this agreement. Provided, however, that if the Government agent shall receive, un-

der this agreement, less than two millions bushels of wheat as his proportion, as provided in Clause 30 an additional one-eighth of a penny per bushel shall be paid to the Government agent by the Minister. Provided further, that in the case of wheat delivered from farmers' wagons at the principal stacking centres the commission to be paid by the Minister to the Government agent shall be $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel.

That flat rate of 2d. per bushel may be added if the agents acquiring do not each of them obtain two million bushels. When we consider that in South Australia there are nine agents operating it will be necessary for them to have at least 18 million bushels there before those nine agents can get two million bushels each. Therefore, the chances are that on a large proportion of the wheat acquired in South Australia they will have to pay another one-eighth of a penny to the acquiring agents. I do not wish to delay the House by quoting a mass of figures, but when we consider that we have a quantity of wheat in stock from last season it is most necessary that we should continue the pool. According to the Minister's statement when he introduced the Bill, the balance of 1917-18 crop was 1,912,466 bushels, while the estimate of the 1918-19 crop on hand is 6,462,800 bushels. It is therefore imperative that the Pool should be continued until the old stocks are lifted, and I maintain that the acquiring agents who have done so well for us in the past should be entrusted again to act for us in the future. The arguments one can adduce in favour of the acquiring agents are that they are co-operative in their nature, and that if any profits accrue from the handling those profits will go to the growers. With regard to the old acquiring agents in this State, only one firm, namely, Dalgety & Co., are permanently established here, and carry on other business besides wheat handling. Other acquiring agents simply handle wheat and have no other interests in the State, and the money they make out of the handling of wheat goes to other parts of the Commonwealth or elsewhere. Any profits that can be made through the handling of our wheat should be retained in our own State. It is also essential, so far as the wheat growers are concerned, that we should save to the wheat grower all the value we possibly can, so that he may be able to produce wheat to a further extent, and if he is given the advantages of this handling in the future we hope not only to handle the wheat guaranteed by the Government but also our own wheat, at a later stage when the Pool ceases to exist. With the experience gained during the period of handling, while the guarantee has been given by the Government, and while the handling has been carried on under Government supervision, we trust to be able to get for the farmers in the State a higher value than we had before the Pool came into existence, and we hope to retain for the growers of wheat a greater advantage through their becoming their own direct salesmen not only in the State but in other

parts of the world. If we can do that it will be of advantage not only to the growers but to the whole of Western Australia, and if the House agrees with the statements which I have made, that we are handling wheat much better than any of the other States, I trust it will pass the second reading of the Bill and put it through Committee, so that the agreement may be entered into without delay. One portion of the Bill provides that the payment for bags used shall be one of the first charges from the proceeds of the sale of wheat certificates. It is not my intention to deal further with the Bill at the present juncture, and I trust it will be passed through all stages as early as possible.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.6]: I do not know whether there is any use taking up the time of hon. members in discussing the Bill. There is no doubt that a contract has already been let to carry out the work. Arrangements, I believe, have already been made with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., for the purpose of handling wheat again next year. If such is the case why is there any necessity to discuss this matter as to whether the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., shall handle the wheat or not. An undertaking was given last year that no arrangement would be entered into by the Government with regard to the handling of wheat for the 1919-20 season until Parliament had first considered the matter. I am not going to say that the Government have signed a contract, but I believe a contract is already prepared, though it may not yet be signed. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., have already submitted the conditions under which they will carry out the handling next year. I was going to say silence gives consent, but it is recognised that when this Bill is passed the Government will agree to the conditions set out by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. There is nothing to the credit of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., for what they did last year in connection with the roofing in of the wheat. If credit is due to anyone, it is due to the Railway Department. We had an exceptionally dry season at the commencement of the year, and the position was that on account of the increased activity on the part of the Railway Department in handling the wheat there was no need to roof in the wheat as had to be done on a previous occasion. If we had not had dry weather at the commencement of the year, and if the season had been similar to the previous one, we would have had to pay a considerable amount for the temporary roofing of the wheat at the various sidings. This year the cost of temporary roofing has been saved by reason of the season which we have had. I do not know whether the Government intend to continue the Pool in the future or not, but I do know that the Federal Government have been trying through the Prime Minister to impress upon the farmers of Australia that the Prime Minister and his

Government are the only ones who have assisted the farmers in connection with the pooling of the wheat. When we come to realise the position, it will be found that the States have done the greatest share with regard to the financing of the wheat. It is true that the Federal Government, in conjunction with the States, have stood to the banks in connection with the advance of money on wheat. I am pleased to know that there have been no losses, but we cannot say what the future has in store for us. We are told that so far as Europe is concerned there is no chance of selling wheat to those markets. The Prime Minister has stated that trading with Europe for some time to come will have to be done on credit, and we have been further told that Australia cannot afford to give credit, and that the wheat buyers of Europe therefore will be likely to go to America, because America is in a position to give credit. Therefore we can conclude from that that the European markets have been lost to Australia for the time being.

The Premier: You must not be sarcastic.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not sarcastic. We have it from the Prime Minister that America is in the position to supply the markets of Europe on credit.

Mr. Troy: I would not take the Prime Minister's word for anything.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have to take it, and I want to say that so far as the European markets are concerned, according to the evidence given before the Commission which dealt with this question, those markets used to pay a higher price for our wheat than did England. Many cargoes of wheat were diverted to the European markets on that account. France, Spain, and Italy—I am speaking now of the pre-war period—used to pay a higher price, and it frequently happened that a ship was diverted from the ports of England to those continental markets on that account. Indeed, the Prime Minister tells us that the European markets have gone for some time to come, because they are not in a position to pay cash. Therefore the only market we have to look to is England.

Mr. Pickering: That is what Mr. Hughes says.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know whether Mr. Hughes is stating an untruth or not. We know, however, that the treasures of the European nations are depleted, and that they must trade on credit. Therefore the Prime Minister's statements in that connection may be correct, and we may have to fall back on England in the future. In that case, is there not a possibility that wheat will be reduced in price and that we may have to accept a lower rate than we have been receiving during the past few months?

Mr. Pickering: Are you going to fix a minimum for it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was looking after the interests of the farmers, because the Prime Minister also said that the

world's parity was 2s. 10½d. per bushel. I wish to see the farmers get something more than that. The motive of the several Governments in forming the pool was to see that the farmers got better than that. I notice that the wheat guarantee has been increased. The Premier told us that next year's guarantee will be 5s. less railage. Now we are informed that it is 5s. 4d. less railage.

The Premier: No. It is 5s. at the siding. The advice I got is 5s. less freight.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Last year it was 4s. 4d. less freight. This year it is approximately 1s. more, so according to the estimate we are guaranteeing the farmer 5s. 4d. a bushel. If, last year, it took 5s. 2d. a bushel to pay the Government for all the wheat acquired, this year it is going to take 6s. 2d. a bushel.

Mr. Harrison: A large percentage should go to the ship.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But that is the price f.o.b., that is what it will cost the State Government if the estimate is correct. I hope the Premier in replying will inform us how much the Commonwealth Government intend to pay if the wheat does not realise 6s. 2d. per bushel. I expect it will be but a very small proportion, and that we shall find the Commonwealth Government have so arranged it that the loss will fall on the States. The Commonwealth Government know that the States must come to them for assistance in obtaining the money to pay for the wheat, and so they throw the greatest risk of loss on the States. Then the Commonwealth Government go about the country trying to dope the farmers with the cry, "We have done everything for you while the State Governments have done nothing." The Commonwealth Government have done nothing whatever for the farmer in regard to the Wheat Pool. The State Governments have taken the responsibility, yet the States get no credit either from the farmers or from the Commonwealth Government. Our share of the wheat held at present has been sold to the British Government at 5s. 6d., and the British Government if they make any profit on that price have to share it with the Australian Government. That, we are told, is a good deal. If I were acting on behalf of the farmers and were offered 5s. 6d. f.o.b. Fremantle, to be delivered in London, and if I realised that a few hours sail from London the price of wheat was 2s. 10½d., I should not worry very much about the profit likely to be made by the buyer; I should jump at the 5s. 6d. In all probability if the British Government were to sell their wheat to Europe they would get only 2s. 10½d. No doubt that statement has been made in an endeavour to convince the farmers of Australia that something extraordinary is being done in the interests of the Australian farmers. I do not believe the British Government pay 5s. 6d. for wheat in Australia if it is worth only

2s. 10½d. in Lisbon. I believe it is bluff to lead the farmers of Australia astray.

Mr. Nairn: The Prime Minister would not bluff!

Mr. Munsie: No, certainly not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I believe the credit for the great improvement in the handling of the wheat during 1919 is due to the members of the Royal Commission which dealt with the question. Prior to the sittings of that Commission the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and the officials of the wheat scheme were fighting like cats and dogs. The wheat scheme officials could do nothing right in the eyes of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., fancied that they could run the whole show far better than could the Government officials. So clever did they think themselves that they had the audacity to say that the Government should hand over the whole concern to them, even to the banking. The only fly in the ointment was that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., had not the money to put up the security; had they had it they would have taken over the whole of the wheat business. It will be a good thing when those people can do it for themselves.

Mr. Harrison: The asset will be just the same.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I admit that. Before any such undertaking can be successful the Government must get out of it altogether. While we have compulsion, as at present, it is far better that persons so influential that they can compel the Government to hand the wheat over to them without any competition, and they can almost set down the conditions on which they intend to handle the crop—

Mr. Harrison: They would not do that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have come pretty near to it. I think it is far better to let them have the entire control. Then the responsibility will rest entirely upon themselves. At present it is not difficult for any firm which is supposed to be co-operative, but which is not, to handle the wheat while they have the Government at their back. If the Government would stand behind me as they stand behind the Westralian Farmers I would start industries in the State.

Mr. Nairn: Cornish pasties!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government do all the financing, while the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., make all the profits. I am sorry, not only for the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., but for the State in general, that the crop last year did not come up to expectations, but was slightly less than that of the previous year. We expect this year 12 million bushels, or two millions more than was handled last year. If those expectations are realised, the Wheat Pool will be a splendid thing for the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., this year.

The Honorary Minister: Take shares.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is not the man who takes the shares who gets the benefit. It is true they pay seven per cent. on the

shares held. No matter what profits are made over the handling of the wheat, the farmer who is alive gets no benefit from those profits.

Mr. Troy: And they are no good to him when he is dead.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is really an insurance premium. Each man is compelled by law to send his wheat to the one firm, on the understanding that if any profits are made he shall share as a co-operator.

Mr. Hickmott: What profits would he have got from the old agents?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He would not have got anything during the last four years, because the Government have had to stand the responsibility.

Mr. Hickmott: But it shows that they made large sums.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The farmer will get nothing. The State could handle the wheat at least a farthing a bushel cheaper, and on the settlement of each pool that farthing would go directly into the pockets of the farmers. The money paid out by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and the profits they make—which are approximately a farthing a bushel—are placed in bonus shares which can be realised on the death of the farmer. The farmer would get it while he was alive if the State handled the wheat, instead of the family getting it if the Westralian Farmers handled it. We did not hear a grumble about the handling of the wheat last year from one end of the State to the other. It was shown clearly that, if the Royal Commission did nothing else, they warned the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., to keep their mouths closed in the future, and they did so very tightly. Previous to that there were endless complaints about everything that was done. There was a motive in that, and that was to get hold of the whole concern.

Mr. Munsie: They had a motive for their growing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I believe that everything has been settled up in such a way that the wheat will be handled again by the same parties who handled it last year. I hope this will be as successful from the point of view of the Government as it was last year. I warn the Government, however, if they are in office next year, and if they intend to bring in legislation next year, to provide for a permanent Bill, not to forget to insert a clause to prevent black legging on the part of any farmers. We have been told by one of the directors of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., that there are farmers in the State who would black leg if the pool was not made compulsory for every farmer. Before the pool can be successful it must be availed of by every farmer. I ask the Government not to forget the advice which has been tendered by one of the leading lights of Perth, a farmer himself, a director of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and a manager of some insurance company.

Hon. P. Collier: He is fairly well specified.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This gentleman said it was advisable in the best interests of the farmer, and of the State, that any legislation which was brought in with regard to making the pool permanent should provide that black legging was prohibited. No farmer should be allowed to sell his wheat to any other person. During the last few months I see there has been

a good deal of controversy with regard to the people of the State being unable to obtain clean wheat.

Mr. Harrison: Not if they go the right way about it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The action of the Wheat Board, by which it was impossible for the people to procure clean wheat, should be prevented in the future. There is no doubt that there has been a prohibition upon the people so far as clean wheat is concerned. If anyone wanted to buy wheat for his own use he could not obtain any other kind than that which had been damaged by weevils.

Mr. Harrison: They ought to get first quality wheat.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The only person allowed under the Wheat Pool to sell clean wheat in small quantities is the farmer who keeps a store himself.

Mr. TROY: That is open to abuse.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He can sell wheat over his own counter if he likes, in order to carry on his business.

Mr. Nairn: Could they have disposed of the weevily wheat otherwise?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It could go through the mill. Some of it was too bad to go through but would do for pigs or poultry, and should be sold at a reasonable price to people who have pigs or poultry. The poultry farmers were unable to get any wheat for a long time, and that which they could get the fowls would not touch. The Wheat Marketing Commission visited a large store at Katanning where a drapery and grocery business was conducted. The proprietor said that his place was alive with weevils, owing to the fact that he could not get clean wheat with which to supply his customers. He found it impossible to purchase it. He could have bought sound wheat and kept his premises clean, but the Wheat Board refused to allow him to do so. This prohibition has been continual. I have heard that there is now an opportunity to get clean wheat in certain cases only. We ought to be able to get the best of wheat. There is good wheat grown here and we should have an opportunity to purchase it.

Mr. Harrison: Last year's wheat is in excellent condition to-day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am pleased to hear it. There is no doubt, so far as this State is concerned, that those who had the handling of the wheat in this State—I am speaking of the Government officials—are entitled to praise for the work they have done. No State in Australia, according to Press reporters, has handled its wheat so well, and in every instance the officials concerned have been honest in their dealings. The Wheat Board has carried out this work honestly and fairly in the interests of the farmers of the State.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [8-37]: I support the measure, as I did last year. I do not think the House has any cause for complaint respecting the manner in which the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., handled last year's harvest. Whilst I assume, with the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., will again be given the contract for the handling of the wheat, I see no reason for objecting to this. If not a truly co-operative

body, they represent the majority of the farmers of the State. This cannot be said of any private institution which has handled the wheat in the past. There are one or two objections I propose to take with regard to the handling. It was laid down last year—if not in the Bill it was clearly expressed—that the actual payment which had to be made by the agents for work done at a siding must be paid to the persons who actually did the work. The Royal Commission which dealt with this question showed that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., had been guilty of sweating, that they had sublet contracts at the sidings, and that those contracts in turn had again been sublet, with the result that the men who did the work at the sidings did not receive the payment they should have received.

Mr. Harrison: We did not hear anything of the kind last year.

Mr. TROY: Yes, it occurred at my own siding. A neighbour and I sent some wheat to the siding. We proposed first to truck the wheat direct to Geraldton, but the man in charge of the siding said he had taken the contract and desired the work of receiving. I said that the price was below that stipulated by Parliament. Apparently this man was not satisfied with the price; with the result that my neighbour's wheat and my own, running into nearly 2,000 bags, was placed on the ramp, and there was no one to receive it or deal with it for nearly two weeks. I had to go to Geraldton and see Mr. Christie, the representative of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and I told him that I held him personally responsible. I lost a few bags of wheat and I am going to claim for them. I had put the wheat at the siding and have not been credited for some of the bags. My experience of the last contract was that the handling of the wheat was not paid for at the price provided for by Parliament. I strongly object to any organisation that is being paid to engage in certain work having the power to sublet it to another agent and for that agent in turn to have power to again sublet the contract, so that the men who actually do the work are paid too little for it. I hope when an agreement is entered into for the next harvest, that the Minister in charge will see that the intention of Parliament is carried out, and that the people who do the work receive the payment provided by the agreement. I am not impressed by the remarks of the Prime Minister at Bendigo. He was making an impassioned appeal to his constituents, and to the farmers particularly, because he stands in awe of them as a result of the recent election at Echuca. His party went out and fought the farmers, but failed miserably. Even Senator Lynch and others, who pretend to take such an interest in the farmers of the Commonwealth, at the Echuca electorate did all they could to defeat the candidate put up by the farmers. Mr. Hughes has so often stressed his interest in the farmer, that it has become nauseous. This is what we have gathered, at all events, from the reports in the Press. I place no credence whatever upon his statement that the parity at Lisbon is 2s. 10d. Portugal is a small country and the people are by no means rich. Apart from the fact that the British Government may have given certain credits to Portuguese territory,

there is not very much involved in the trade relations between the two countries. Mr. Hughes made no reference to the fact that Australia has been selling wheat to Scandinavia, Denmark, Switzerland, and Spain. To-day Spain is a wealthier country than she has been since the time when the Spanish nation controlled the Spanish Main. Japan is also a buyer of wheat, as well as Java and Cape Colony. Sales could have been made in these countries, and Mr. Hughes could have told the farmers at Bendigo what the parity was in Scandinavia, Holland, Switzerland or France, instead of giving the parity at Lisbon.

Mr. Nairn: You do not trust Mr. Hughes altogether?

Mr. TROY: No. I have grave suspicions about him. The member for North-East Fremantle stated that America had much wheat to sell and could only sell it by giving extended credits to the countries with which it desired to trade, such as Italy, Germany, and Austria. If America has wheat to spare—and I believe she has—it will be completely absorbed by those nations which now require more wheat than ever—I refer to Germany and Austria—because they have produced nothing during the past few years and have no stocks in hand. If America has a balance of wheat, all that balance will be required to feed the 100,000,000 of Germans and Austrians. Therefore, we need not fear the competition of American wheat with ours. The world's supply of wheat is so short that the Americans, having given extended credit to Germany and Austria, will find all their surplus wheat absorbed by those countries. We could also have given extended credit if that brilliant business man, our Prime Minister, had not sold our wool at 1s. 2d. per lb. We should have got millions more for our wool had we received the proper price for it. The reason why we are not in a position to give credit is that we have at the head of Australian affairs a man with a capacity for advertising himself and a capacity for sacrificing the best interests of Australia. I give the Premier of Western Australia this credit, anyhow, that had he been in the same position as Mr. Hughes, he would have made a far better deal for Australia. But that little mountebank has done this country no service; he has merely sacrificed our interests. Now he pleads passionately to the farmers at Bendigo, that Europe being bankrupt, he got the best price possible. He did nothing of the kind, in fact. I do not think we need be much concerned about any risk the State takes on the present harvest, seeing that the Australian harvest as a whole is not going to be very large this year. In New South Wales there is a very bad drought, and I doubt whether the harvest of that State will produce sufficient for the requirements of New South Wales itself. The seasons in Victoria and South Australia are indifferent. The same thing applies to Queensland. In a good season New South Wales produces 40 million bushels of wheat, but this season she will not produce sufficient for her own requirements. Apparently Western Australia is the only State with a good season, and this country is therefore taking no risk at all in providing the amount guaranteed for the coming harvest. I am not prepared to say what this State should do in the future,

even though the late leader of the Government has proposed a guarantee for five years. I do not suggest that the present Premier should take that risk. Last year arrangements were made under the Wheat Marketing Scheme for the farmer to buy his bags from the merchants, the bags to be a charge against the product. I hope a similar arrangement will be made again. Last year's arrangement proved entirely satisfactory. No risk whatever is involved to the Government, because the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., can easily deduct from the payment the amount due for bags. I am not going to quarrel with the fact that the Government have given the contract for handling to the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. I do not know that in a country where we advocate co-operation and want to get the best return from production, to whom else the Government would give the contract. I do not think that even the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin), if in the position of the Premier to-day and in charge of this Bill, would take any other course.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I should give the contract either to the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., or to the State.

Mr. TROY: Since I believe in co-operation, or for that matter in nationalisation—which is practically the same thing, the difference being only one of degree—I have no fault to find with the Government in that respect. I am also very pleased that a measure of this kind, providing for a wheat pool, receives so much support in this House. I am glad to find even the farmers converted to the idea, because the pool represents one of the great principles initiated by the Labour party, just as that party initiated the Industries Assistance Board, the Commonwealth Bank note issue, and the Trans-continental railway. I have a very vivid remembrance of the farmers of Western Australia taking great objection to the original introduction of the present measure. I heard them say, "The Government are going to finance on us, they are going to use our money; we could have done much better with private buyers."

The Honorary Minister: That cry came only from a small section with loud voices.

Mr. TROY: I am glad that the farmers have changed their views, and that the principles for which the Labour party stand have made good in Western Australia and are now supported by the general community. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Charge for cornsacks supplied in 1918-19 extended:

Mr. HARRISON: Do the last words of this clause, "and the provisions of the said section shall apply," mean that the provision shall continue?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. HARRISON: Do I understand that bags not paid for out of last season's crop can be paid for out of this season's crop?

The Premier: That is so.

Mr. HARRISON: Does the clause also apply to this season's crop?

The Premier: It does not. That is not necessary.

Mr. HARRISON: It seems to me that the word "apply," at the end of the clause, should be struck out, and "continue" inserted in lieu.

The PREMIER: Cornsacks can be provided, and will be provided, without that.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. F. E. S. Willmott—Nelson) [9-0] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is but a short one, its object being to amend certain provisions of the existing Act. The Bill we had before us last session applied to the whole State, and provision was made for the road boards to act as vermin boards in the South-West division. An amendment was made in the Council which confined the operations of the Bill to the South-West division of the State, and a further amendment confined its operations to a portion of the South-West division. Although that portion is mainly in the South-West division, there is another portion of the territory which should be comprised in that division, and was intended to be so comprised, but was omitted. Over that particular area the road boards have no jurisdiction to act as vermin boards. That is one of the amendments required. The district extends from Bluff Point to Gum Creek Well in a straight line. The portion omitted cannot be dealt with under the existing Act. A further amendment is that Part IV. of the Land Act shall apply. It was originally intended that it should apply. It deals with the election and formation of boards. A further amendment is to deal with the holders of land adjacent to the rabbit-proof fence. For instance, three holders of blocks adjacent to the fence, A, B, and C, desire to make use of the fence. There is a half chain reserve on either side of the fence kept open for the use of repairers and others. It has come to light that there are cases where A and C link up with the fence, but B, whose block is rendered rabbit-proof by the action of A and C, refuses to pay anything, although he gets all the benefit of the rabbit-proof fence, and of the fences of his neighbours. That will be remedied if the Bill passes. A further amendment substitutes for the words "Minister or board" other words giving the Minister or board power to appoint inspectors to carry out the Act. It was declared last session that the words were sufficient, but it has since been found that they are not sufficient. It is desired to give the Minister or the board power to appoint inspectors. South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand have adopted a similar provision, in fact Western Australia is the only State which has not such a provision. One other amendment deals with dead rabbits. A large number of rabbits are killed and sent down from outside the fence.

This amendment will legalise that action. I need not stress the importance of the Bill, for it is obvious to all hon. members who take an interest in the question. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—MENTAL TREATMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [9-5] in moving the second reading said: This is a small amendment of the existing Act, which was passed in 1917. It is to make some additional provisions which escaped notice when the Act was passed. The object of the existing Act is to enable members of the Australian forces suffering from shell shock, or other injuries necessitating mental treatment, to escape coming under the Lunacy Act or being subject to the stigma of lunacy. Under the existing Act of 1917 the soldiers were permitted to be received into certain institutions, or received as lodgers in licensed houses, without being declared to be lunatics. The stigma of lunacy was avoided, but no provision was made in regard to their property. Under the Lunacy Act, 1903, the Master in Lunacy has the control and management, subject to the orders of the Court, of all property of persons declared to be insane or declared by the court to be incapable of managing their own affairs. Before a soldier's property could be taken care of by the Master in Lunacy an order would have to be obtained by the court to the effect that the soldier was incapable of managing his own affairs. The object of the Bill is to avoid that necessity. Under the Act of 1917 members of the forces can be received for medical treatment into a hospital for the insane, or a reception house, or a licensed house, and they can also be received to board or lodge with certain persons authorised to take charge of them. The Bill provides that in the case of any person received into any of these licensed institutions for the purpose of being boarded or kept, the Master in Lunacy can look after that person's property without any application to the court to declare the soldier incapable of managing his own affairs. Western Australia was the first State to pass an Act of the nature of the Act of 1917 and it was in consequence of our having passed it that the Federal Government communicated with us and pointed out that it was desirable to extend the provisions of the Act so as to apply to the control of property. That is the sole object of the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Munsie in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Addition of new section of the principal Act:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Does this apply to a soldier suffering from shell shock but who is still maintained in his own home amongst his own relatives? Is such a man to be deemed incapable, and will his affairs have to be managed by the Master in Lunacy instead of by the soldier's own relatives?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: A soldier only comes under purview of the Act when he is received into a home to board subject to the regulations, or where he is received for treatment in a hospital for the insane, a reception house, or licensed house. A man, living with his own people and not subject to the regulations, would not come under the Act.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Would not it be possible for an injustice to be done to the dependants regarding the estate of a soldier suffering from mental disorder? The clause will give power to the superintendent to manage the estate and make provision for the soldier's board and lodging. There is no stipulation limiting the amount that may be charged for the accommodation provided. The dependants should be protected.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Such a man would be received under the Act of 1917, and this Bill provides that the Master in Lunacy may take charge of his property without an order from the court.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He would deduct the cost of board and lodging.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Master in Lunacy has power, under the Lunacy Act, to apply the estate of anyone who is insane towards his maintenance.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What is the amount allocated?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think there is a fixed scale.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When a soldier returns from overseas, he is dealt with by the medical officers of the Defence Department. These officers might declare him an incapable person, and take steps to put him in a home, as provided by the Act. The man might be temporarily suffering from shell shock, and his relatives might be averse to having him placed under the Lunacy Act. Meanwhile the soldier is in the army, and his relatives would not have any say whatever in the matter. He could be declared an incapable person, and the Master in Lunacy could take control of his estate, irrespective of the relatives' wishes. If a man were discharged, and his relatives desired that he should be taken care of, it would be a different thing. I have heard of soldiers being sent to the Woolloomooloo sanatorium without their parents being consulted at all. In fact, in one case they were not even informed. The same would apply to lunacy. The control of the man's affairs would have passed from him.

Mr. Pickering: Would not he be reinstated if he recovered?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, but once a man comes under the Lunacy Act, God knows when he will get away from it. I have letters from Stromness complaining that, when the doctors visit that institution, they merely pass by without examining the patients. No doubt these men were mentally incapable when they returned, but they have now recovered, and they find it difficult to get out of the institution. If a man is quiet and takes no notice of things,

he is permitted to remain in the institution. If he is noisy, the doctors consider him mad; otherwise he would not be noisy. If such a man remains with his parents, it would be wrong to take away the control from them.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The power is not compulsorily vested in the Master in Lunacy. That official can act only by direction or order of the court. If the relatives of the soldier pointed out the circumstances to the court, no doubt an order would be made that the relatives should look after his property. The Master in Lunacy is stipulated in case there is no one else to act. Some soldiers' memories are not too good and, unless they have relatives, their property is liable to be neglected. This power is merely for the Master to take charge in cases of necessity. I would refer the member for Forrest to Section 138 of the Lunacy Act, which stipulates that the estate of an insane person shall be applied first to the payment of his debts, then to the repayment of expenses chargeable to the estate, then to his maintenance, and to the maintenance of his wife and children, and so on.

Hon. P. COLLIER: One can understand that there might be circumstances, under which it would be advisable to give the Master in Lunacy the power to manage the estate of a person in one of these institutions. It might have been as well to have allowed those cases to take their ordinary course. These was a strong sentimental objection to anyone, who had become unbalanced through service at the war, being declared insane, but now we are extending the law to place such persons, not entirely on the same footing as others who have become insane, but to declare them incapable within the meaning of the Lunacy Act of 1903. This will give the Master in Lunacy power, if necessary, to manage their estates. If a man has no near relatives to do that, it might be of advantage. I am not sure that the institution provided for returned soldiers is all we could wish it to be. Most of them are at Stromness, not all; the violent cases having been removed to the Claremont hospital, where there is proper accommodation to manage them. I should like to know what chance those men have of getting out once they are sent to Stromness. Many of them are not insane in the ordinary acceptation of the term. They are merely unbalanced, and in many cases a period of rest, peace, and calm restores them to their normal condition. After all I have heard, it would be well if the select committee now sitting inquired into this matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have not power to inquire into the Stromness institution.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am sorry that was not included. Some men, who have recovered sufficiently to be released, are being detained beyond the time necessary.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The doctor stays an hour to an hour and a-half a day.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am sorry that the doctor merely walks through such an institution, and does not make anything which can be described as an examination. He must rely upon the reports that are made by the officer in charge. I have heard of men who have been in Stromness for several months, but have never been examined by a medical officer or even spoken to by one. This makes it all the more necessary that there should be frequent and careful ex-

aminations of patients there, because of the circumstances under which they have entered the institution. I also know of cases in which the Master in Lunacy has exercised his powers in connection with the properties of patients at the Claremont institution, the result of which has not been of benefit to the patients concerned. If, however, it is wise that we should confer this power upon the Master in Lunacy in connection with the properties of hundreds of patients in the Claremont institution it is probably also necessary to confer the power upon him to handle the properties of our mentally affected returned soldiers and sailors.

Mr. PICKERING: It may be very essential that the Master in Lunacy should have the power that it is proposed to give him under this Bill. A patient may not have any relatives to look after his property, and in any case it would be better that the Master in Lunacy should do the work.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Broun—Beverley) [9-37] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to amend the PEARLING Act of 1912, an Act which was assented to on the 1st April of that year. It amended and consolidated the existing Act relating to pearls and pearl shell fisheries. At the time the Act was passed it was considered that it contained all the provisions necessary for the satisfactory control and regulation of the pearling industry. In practice it has been found that there are certain defects in the Act, hence the amending Bill now being brought forward. The pearl shell industry in Western Australia is a most important one. Western Australia produces more than half the pearl shell used in the world. The world's production is a little over 2,000 tons a year, and out of this Western Australia produces something like 1,400 tons. During the War the production of pearlshell in this State unfortunately decreased. Prior to the war the industry was expanding from year to year, until 1913, or two years prior to the war, the number of persons employed in the industry was 2,663. At that time there were more white employees connected with the industry than ever before. In 1909 there were 148 white people employed in it, and in 1914 this number had increased to 279. Since the war the number has dwindled down to 79. After the outbreak of hostilities many men who were engaged in the industry volunteered for active service, and this accounts for the paucity of the numbers of those who are left. In 1913-14 the maximum production of pearl and pearlshell was reached, and the value of the output was, for pearls £84,000, and pearlshell £237,000, a total of over £300,000 for the year. The year after war broke out the value of pearls discovered was £12,568, and the value of the shell recovered was £117,433. Last year pearls to the value of £46,116 were recovered, and pearlshell to the value of £180,310 was

exported. In order to assist pearlers during the war the Government guaranteed certain advances on pearls and pearlshell. It was necessary to do this because there was very little opening for the disposal of shell from Western Australia, and prices dropped considerably. The Government feared that the effect upon the industry would be so disastrous as to be fatal. The banks made the advances while the Government guaranteed the money. In consequence of the State guarantee, buyers increased their prices. The first guarantee was made in 1917 when £125 per ton was guaranteed for Broome shell, and £8 a ton for Shark Bay shell. On the advice of their experts the Government guarantee on Broome shell was subsequently increased to £146. Buyers again increased their prices, and there was very little demand for Government assistance. In all, the Government guaranteed £11,953, of which £2,680 has been repaid. A big proportion of the shell for which the guarantee was given has now reached the Old Country, and when it is sold the Government will be recouped so that there will be very little owing. It may be necessary for the Government to consider the question of guaranteeing a little longer an amount per ton for the shell produced. At present the prospects were never brighter for the industry. During the last few days we have received a telegram from the inspector who says that a considerable quantity of Broome shell has been sold for £215 per ton, which is very satisfactory. There are very good prospects before the industry, and we hope before long to see the number of licenses increased and more capital put into it. We also believe that the output will soon be greater per annum than at any time in the history of the industry. I do not think it is necessary to say anything further in regard to the measure, but I will shortly explain the clauses in the Bill so that hon. members may better understand the measure when it reaches the committee stage. Clause 2 is an amendment of Section 5 of the principal Act. The amendment is necessary to define the limits of tropical waters adjacent to Western Australia. The area so defined may be said to include all that water as shown upon the ordinary map of Western Australia, but extending as far South as just below Shark Bay only. Clause 3 gives greater power to the licensing officers to make inquiries in connection with applications for licenses and more particularly with ship licenses. Clause 4 amends Sections 13 and 15 of the principal Act. These amendments are consequential. Clause 6 is a new provision which deals with the removal of a "ship" license as from one "ship" to another. Under the principal Act a ship license may be transferred as from one person to another, but there was no provision for the removal of a license as from one "ship" to another. If a boat was lost or destroyed an owner was not allowed to transfer the license. The Bill makes provision that that may be done. Clause 7 amends Section 42 of the principal Act which provides for the closure of portions of pearlshell areas, and a penalty is provided for a contravention of any such order. Clause 8 amends Section 60. That section prohibits unlicensed persons north of the 27th parallel of South latitude from selling pearls to a licensed dealer and similarly no licensed dealer

shall buy from an unlicensed person. In practice, however, it has been found that an unlicensed person may deliver to a licensed pearl dealer, for sale, pearls, and a licensed dealer may receive these and subsequently sell them. The clause will prohibit that. Clause 9 relates to pearls being sent out of the State. The amendment aims at the more direct supervision of dealings in pearls and the suppression of illicit pearl dealing. At the present time pearls may be exported or sent out of the State without restriction as regards a notification to the inspector. The clause will not apply, however, to what might be termed second-hand pearls, namely, pearls previously exported, or to pearls found outside Australian waters adjacent to Western Australia. Clause 10 relates to section 64. At the present time while that section provides for the registered place of business of a licensed dealer, Section 58 provides that no pearl dealer's license shall be granted or transferred to a person who is licensed to sell intoxicating liquor under a publican's general, wayside house, Australian wine and beer or Australian wine license. It does not prohibit the sale of pearls at a registered place of business which is portion of other business premises. Except in the case of banks it is thought that the registered place of business for pearl dealing should be apart from other business premises; hence the amendment. Clause 11 provides for the agent of a pearl dealer to be licensed. Under existing conditions a pearl dealer may, by registering certain places of business, employ unlicensed persons to deal in pearls on his behalf. A pearl dealer licensed at Broome may register places of business in the pearling centres as far south as Shark Bay, and under the one license employ several persons to deal on his behalf. That is considered undesirable. The amendment provides for the licensing of all agents or deputies. Clause 12 amends Sections 84 and 88. By Section 74 of the principal Act all "pearl fishers" are to be employed under agreement in the prescribed form which must be read and explained in the presence of a superintendent and attested by a superintendent. In Sections 84 and 88 the words "inspector" and "magistrate" appear, and as their use leads to confusion, it is considered that they should be deleted and the word "superintendent" substituted. Clause 13 provides the fees which are to be charged. The scale is identical with that chargeable under the Merchant Shipping Act. Clause 14 amends Section 94 which provides for the search of premises, but not of persons or effects. In dealing with matters connected with illicit pearl dealing, it frequently becomes necessary that a person or his effects be searched, but under existing conditions an inspector has no statutory power to act in that direction. The amendment will overcome that difficulty. Clause 15 provides for the issue of beach combers' licenses. In the past beach combers did not pay anything. At the present time persons cleaning, cutting or working pearls are not required to be licensed. Several persons are so employed north of the 27th parallel and it is considered desirable that the operations of those persons be placed more directly under departmental supervision. For the more efficient supervision of the industry it is considered desirable that all persons dealing in pearl shell north of the 27th parallel should

be licensed. The clause is intended to prohibit the purchase of pearl shell from persons who do not hold one or other of the pearling licenses under the Act. It is proposed also to widen the powers of inspectors in regard to inquiries from licensed pearl dealers. Clause 16 provides an amendment to strengthen the hands of inspectors, making inquiries. The amendment by Clause 17 is necessary to bring the whole of the section in the Act into line. Clause 18 amends Section 104, and provides for the making of regulations with regard to the limitation of the amount of money which may be lawfully carried or kept on any pearling ship. There can be but little doubt that a considerable amount of whatever illicit pearl buying takes place is carried on at sea, whilst the pearling vessels are being operated. In an endeavour to minimise the practice it is considered desirable that action as indicated in the amendment be taken. Clause 20 provides for the increase of the pearl dealer's fee from £10 to £50. The object of the low fee was to encourage the smaller buyers. Experience, however, has shown that few, if any, small men participate in pearl dealing. So far as we know there is no objection to the increase, the number of licenses in existence is only 13. Clause 21 amends the sixth schedule. In the interests of all concerned, it is considered that the carrying of a dinghy should be made compulsory. Clause 22 sets out the scale of fees to be charged under part 3 of the Act. When the Bill is in committee if hon. members desire any further information I shall be pleased to supply it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—ANZAC DAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 2nd October.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (East Fremantle) [9-55]: Personally, I have no objection to the Bill. There is no doubt as the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Underwood) stated, that other days could be mentioned as suitable, but I do not think that any would be more appropriate than Anzac day. It was the first time that the Australian troops went into action and made themselves famous throughout the world. I think, however, that the list of public holidays in this State should be reviewed. Many will realise that a large number of persons who are termed casual workers have to lose payment for those days on which they are not permitted to work. Consequently they are not able to take part in the enjoyments which are provided in the same manner as those who are engaged in the Public Service and other institutions. I know of one public holiday that we could well do without. Perhaps I will be considered disloyal if I refer to it. I cannot help thinking, however, that the King's birthday as a holiday should be abolished. It was a surprising matter to me, when I first came to Australia, to find that it was observed as a holiday out here. In England it is never regarded as a holiday, nor yet the Prince of Wales' birthday. I remember on one occasion when I returned to England from Australia I was in London and I wanted to see a cousin of mine who was employed in

the Government offices at Whitehall. It was the Prince of Wales' birthday, and I was walking about all day not knowing where to find him. Towards four o'clock in the afternoon, however, I considered it advisable to ask whether the Government offices were open. The person I asked expressed surprise when I told him that on account of the Prince of Wales' birthday I expected the offices to be closed and he wanted to know what part of the world I had come from. I did not know any better. But he got a greater surprise when I told him that in Australia the King's birthday and Prince of Wales' birthday were public holidays. Something should be done to limit the number of public holidays in this State. There is actually one public holiday on the first June, and another public holiday on the 3rd June; so that, as the Public Service Act stands, the two first Mondays in June can be claimed as public holidays. I would not mind public holidays so much if everyone were put on the same basis in respect of them. Before granting special holidays under the Public Service Act, the Government should seriously consider that such action tends to the claiming of the same holidays in business establishments. Now, the probability is that half of the employees in a business establishment are so called "casual workers," whose pay ceases immediately the establishment closes. From this cause a great deal of hardship is entailed on such "casual workers." At all events, we ought to have a day to commemorate the splendid work of our soldiers in this war, and personally I know of no better day for that purpose than Anzac day. Accordingly I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Munsie in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Schedule to 48 Vict. No. 9, Section 64 of 1904, No. 41:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Now that we are adding another day to the list of Public Service holidays, we should consider whether we might not take away one that already exists.

The Attorney General: It cannot be done in this Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I suppose not. If we go on for ever adding at one end, without cutting off at the other, the list will some day be unconscionably long. Under Section 64 of the Public Service Act there are the following Public Service holidays: New Year's day, Good Friday, Easter eve, Easter Monday, Christmas day, the 26th December, the anniversary of the birthday of the Sovereign, Foundation day, Proclamation day, and also any days which the Governor may appoint and which shall be notified in the "Government Gazette" as public holidays. And we know that very seldom a year goes past without the Government granting a few days additional to that list in the Public Service Act. Now that

the policy of "Produce" is abroad in the land, now that we are being exhorted on every side to work more and longer and harder, I want to see more work done by reducing the number of public holidays. This would be in accordance with Mr. Hughes's policy. I should like an assurance from the Attorney General that if we cannot delete a public holiday in this Bill, he will consider the advisability of bringing down an amendment of the Public Service Act for that purpose.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am surprised that this Bill contains no provision for every returned soldier in the Government service being paid in respect of this holiday. We know the invidious distinction between the wages staff and the salaried staff in respect of holidays: the latter are paid for certain holidays, while the wages men are not paid.

Hon. P. Collier: But the wages staff get 12 days.

Mr. WILLCOCK: A soldier on the wages staff would not be paid for Anzac day even if he helped to make that day.

The Minister for Works: The Government will give the hon. member's suggestion very full consideration.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is surprising that the Government did not give the matter consideration when drafting the Bill. If there is anyone who deserves a paid holiday on Anzac day, it is the soldier who fought in the war. Actually, as the Bill stands a public servant on the salaried staff who was not in the war at all would get paid on Anzac day, while a returned soldier on the wages staff would not.

Mr. Jones: I would make it compulsory for the private employer to pay the soldier for that holiday, too.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I also favour that. I am prepared, at all events, to move an amendment to the effect that every returned soldier in the Government service shall receive one day's pay for Anzac day. However, I suppose such an amendment could not be moved without a message from the Governor.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The point raised by the hon. member opens up a very important phase of the holiday question. The men on the wages staff in the Railway Department and other branches of the Public Service get 12 paid holidays in the year. The salaried staffs get a fortnight's holiday and most of those other 12 days as well.

Mr. Rocks: And they work 38 hours a week.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not nervous as to how the returned soldier in the service of the State will get on in respect of Anzac day, for the power and influence of the R.S.A. will practically compel payment for that day; but I am concerned about all those returned soldiers who are in private employment, only a very few of whom will find Anzac day a paid holiday.

The Minister for Works: We cannot deal with that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Unfortunately, no. Parliament has no power to compel a private employer to make it a paid holiday. The great majority of the married returned soldiers will look with apprehension on a so-called holiday for which they are not to be paid. I do not see what we can do about the holiday for the returned soldiers not in the State service. We ought to do everything possible to make Anzac day a real holiday for all soldiers, but I am much afraid that those in private employment will have to go without their pay if they take the day off. It should be noticed, too, that the effect of the Bill will be to give another paid holiday to about 14,000 men, not returned soldiers, in the Public Service.

Mr. PICKERING: In my view something ought to be done for the returned soldiers on the land. Most certainly they ought to be allowed to participate in the holiday, but I do not see how they are to be paid for time lost.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not within the purview of the Bill to attempt to compel private employers to pay their employees for Anzac day. I cannot give to the House any pledge in regard to the payment of wages men in the service of the State for Anzac day. The leader of the Opposition was on safe ground when he declared that we had too many holidays already. Another unsatisfactory phase of the question presents itself when different sections of the community do not agree as to holidays, the banks celebrating one day, the Public Service another, and the Supreme Court a third. The whole question of public holidays is now being considered by the Government. I believe that the number of holidays ought not to be increased.

Hon. P. Collier: It is 14 years since the present list was drawn up.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Anzac day being made a public holiday it is desirable that one of the other holidays should be sacrificed to make room for it.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT APPLICATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd October.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [10.30]: I find that this Bill meets with the general approval of those engaged in shipping. My attention has been drawn to the point that, not only should the property of deceased sailors who leave no dependants be transferred to the State revenue but likewise the amount of fines or forfeiture of wages imposed while the men are away from the port of Western Australia. It appears that this runs into a fairly large sum, though it will not be very great for Western

Australia at present, owing to the dearth of oversea shipping. Still, this money is being paid in in the same way as the property provided for in this Bill. I hope the Attorney General will look into that phase of the question and, if possible, include the amount of fines and forfeiture of wages. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—SLAUGHTER OF CALVES RESTRICTION.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 2nd October. Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Prohibition of slaughter of female calves in districts:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is not there a possibility of the object of the Bill being defeated by the limitation of six months?

The HONORARY MINISTER: When a heifer calf has reached the age of six months, it is more profitable to sell for dairy stock than to the butcher for slaughter.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—TRADING CONCERNS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd September.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannana) [10.35]: It seems remarkable that at this late hour the Government should bring down a Bill to establish certain undertakings as trading concerns, after some of them have practically outlived their usefulness. So far as I have been able to ascertain from the public accounts for last year—this year's have not yet been submitted—each and every one of those concerns, with the exception of the Busselton butter factory, which is not mentioned in the last public accounts, shows a loss.

The Premier: No, the metropolitan sale yards do not.

Mr. MUNSIE: I find that the Kalgoorlie abattoirs show a credit of £21 but, with that exception, the whole of them show a loss. The Government refrigerating works, Perth, show a loss of £124. The Government now wish to place these works under the Trading Concerns Act. If it had not been for the wool, the Government refrigerating works in Perth would have been pulled down three years ago. Not only will these works show a loss of £124 next year but, if the conditions of the Trading Concerns Act are ap-

plied to them, they will show a loss of nearly £1,000.

The Minister for Works: If the loss is there, it is better to show it and know it.

Mr. MUNSIE: The conditions of the Trading Concerns Act are not fair. It is not fair to place such a concern under that Act as the Act stands at present. I oppose this Bill and the attempt to bring these concerns under the Act. The Trading Concerns Act provides that the capital expenditure on the works must be taken into consideration. If we take the capital cost of the Perth refrigerating works and allow, as the Act provides, interest on that capital, how much loss will be shown on the absolutely dilapidated and worn out stores as they exist to-day?

The Minister for Works: If we have them under the Trading Concerns Act, we can deal with them as a trading concern.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister could have found many other business undertakings to bring under the Act. This has been a business undertaking ever since its establishment. Why should it be brought under the Trading Concerns Act now that it is old and worn out and cannot possibly pay? There is no right to bring the whole of these concerns under the Act.

The Minister for Works: We have the right to do so to ascertain their position properly and to deal with them properly.

Mr. MUNSIE: Why did not the Minister include all the trading concerns now classed as business undertakings? In my opinion the Government have picked out certain concerns which for years, ever since their establishment, have shown a loss, and placed them under the State Trading Concerns Act in order to prove next year that the State trading concerns are a bigger failure than ever.

The Minister for Works: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is what this Bill will bring about, whether the Minister intends it or not.

The Minister for Works: There was no such intention.

Mr. MUNSIE: It is intended to prove that these concerns are not a success, and it will be used as an argument against the Government entering into any other State trading concern, to show how much they have gone behind. Last year the Government Refrigerating Works showed a loss of £124. In regard to the Government markets, the authorisation was completed years ago for pulling them down, and now the Minister wants to bring them in as a State trading concern. The building in which they are is old and dilapidated. Why pick out these items, which last year showed a loss of £338? When this concern is brought under the State Trading Concerns Act it will show a loss of £3,000.

The Minister for Works: I would not say as much as that.

Mr. MUNSIE: If we take into consideration the interest on capital expended on the Perth markets I feel sure they will show a loss of £3,000, which is not right. Last year

the metropolitan abattoirs and sale yards showed a loss of £454. If there is any item that has been scheduled for years past as a business undertaking that is more entitled to be kept under that heading it is this particular concern.

The Minister for Works: It will be all right.

Mr. MUNSIE: Then why bring it under the State Trading Concerns Act, unless for the purpose of discrediting State trading concerns? The Premier, when an hon. member was speaking in opposition to the Bill, interjected that the object of bringing these items on the schedule under the State Trading Concerns Act was that they were competitive institutions.

The Premier: So they are.

The Minister for Works: You misunderstood him.

Mr. MUNSIE: Here again we have two Ministers contradicting each other. What other institution is the metropolitan abattoirs and sale yards in competition with? I do not know of any private firms in competition with them. The Abattoirs Act was introduced to give them complete control over undertakings of this kind. With what other private concern are the Kalgoorlie abattoirs competing? The Government have an absolute monopoly there. The markets are probably the only concern which is a competitive one, because there are other markets in Perth. I trust the House will oppose the Bill. I do not think it is giving the State trading concerns a fair deal to pick out five items like this, four of which are shown on last year's public accounts to have made a direct loss, and they have done so ever since I have been in the House. The total loss shown on these items last year was £895. I hope hon. members will throw out the Bill, unless the Minister gives a better reason for introducing it. In my opinion he gave no sound reason for its introduction, and only said that it was in order to get a better idea for the control and management of these concerns. I think, however, that the reason I have given for its introduction is the correct one.

On motion by Mr. Lutey debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—ROYAL SHOW.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [10.48]: I move—

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

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.49 p.m.