

ing vote of the mayor. I mixed the two questions, and I am taking the first opportunity to rectify the error.

On motion by the Hon. Minister, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 12th September, 1933.

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

QUESTION—LAND PURCHASERS, PROTECTION.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Have any representations been made to him regarding legislation to protect land purchasers as recommended by the Royal Commissioner (Mr. Justice Dwyer)? 2, Will he consider introducing legislation to deal with the points raised?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter is under consideration.

SECESSION—JOINT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

Extension of Time.

On motion by the Premier, the time for bringing up the report of the joint select committee on Secession was extended for one week.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Works, and read a first time.

BILL — MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.36]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [4.37]: I have no desire to delay the passage of this important measure at so late a stage, but I do feel it necessary to make a few remarks. I crave the indulgence of the House to permit me to do so, for the reason that the Bill was allowed to pass the second reading and Committee stages at one sitting. Having regard to the importance of the measure, and knowing what it means to the future of the State and particularly of the farming industry, I was somewhat surprised at this rapidity in passing. I have a clear recollection of the many promises made during the general election as to the extension of the Act for a longer period than 12 months. It directly affects security of tenure in the farming industry. I appreciate the sympathetic manner in which the Minister for Lands introduced the Bill. With members generally, and Ministers, I appreciate the good effect of the Act during the past two years. At the same time one must express surprise at the making of so many applications under the Act. On that point the Minister did not furnish much detail. I can only conclude that as there has been so little complaint, no hardship or disability has arisen from the operation of the Act during the past two years. I acknowledge that the measure has been of great service not only to primary industry but to the State as a whole. More especially to those who find themselves in the position of debtor under mortgage, the measure has been of considerable benefit, giving protection during a period of stress. As the Minister has pointed out, probably there would have been many foreclosures and much distress had the parent Act not been introduced two years ago. That speaks strongly in favour of the renewal of the Act; but I am sorry that the Government are not pre-

pared—although I acknowledge they have been in office only a brief period—to bring down a comprehensive relief measure co-ordinating farmers' debts and mortgages generally. Not only during the last general election, but for some time previously, there was a demand for greater security of tenure. Throughout the farming districts that demand has been prevalent, not so much from farmers under mortgage to private mortgagees, banks and trustee companies, but farmers under mortgage to the Agricultural Bank. It is somewhat strange that Agricultural Bank clients, constituting something like 75 per cent. of the farmers of Western Australia, have no protection under the Act. It has been said by the late Government, and no doubt by present Ministers, that clients of the Agricultural Bank can well leave their destiny to the consideration of the Government, seeing that the Agricultural Bank is a Government institution. However, I contend that if it is right to bring mortgagors' dealings with private institutions under the Act, it is equally right that clients of the Agricultural Bank should enjoy the same protection. The question of foreclosures by the trustees of the Agricultural Bank may not arise, although they have foreclosed in one instance, which was a very special instance; but under the provisions of the Act I see no reason why the trustees should not be compelled to deal with clients in the same manner as any other mortgagee who finds it necessary to foreclose. I feel sure that the Minister for Lands is sympathetic in the matter of farmers' disabilities and difficulties as the result of unprecedentedly low prices ruling for three years. I hope that before the session closes the Government will take the House into their confidence and seek the co-operation of hon. members in passing a more comprehensive measure, such as will ensure greater security of tenure for a longer period than is the case under the present Act. I have no wish to labour the question, which has been before the country for the past two years. Relief legislation of this nature must be associated with the rehabilitation of the farming industry. We appreciate what has been done by the banks and other financial institutions, and by merchants and of course the Government, to aid the primary producer during a period of great stress: but in view of the knowledge and experience gained during the past three years of unprofitable prices it is not too

early for the Government and the House during this session to shoulder the responsibility of trying to evolve a better and more permanent way out of our difficulties than is provided by present legislation. The renewal of the Act for one year will be much appreciated, and will give protection for that period; but there is great fear, most of it probably unwarranted, on the part of many farmers and other primary producers throughout the State that when prices improve there will be a greater inclination on the part of mortgagees to realise upon their securities than otherwise would be the case. For that reason alone, I think there should be some preparatory measure, something that can take the place of the principal Act when the time arrives for a cessation of its renewal. Not for one moment do I believe that we shall get out of our troubles during the next two or three, or perhaps four or five, years. One can never tell what will happen, of course, if prices suddenly rise. Wool prices have improved materially, and that fact will put our wool industry on the road to prosperity; but it will be some time before the State feels the good effect of that. The same thing applies to the price of wheat. If wheat rises to 4s. or 5s. a bushel, that will not get us out of our difficulties in one year. So I hope there will be no delay, either on the part of the Government or on the part of the House, fully to realise responsibility, in the first place to keep faith with the electors, who were promised that one of the measures to be considered during the first session of the new Parliament would deal with the security of tenure. I do not wish to say anything likely to weaken our credit or interfere with the existing arrangements that have been faithfully carried out in regard to the assistance of industry, but the time has arrived when the farmer who has struggled through the past two or three years and is still in difficulties should be assured that before this session closes there will be brought down some relief which will give him a chance to escape from the troubles in which he finds himself to-day. We should not wait until next session, for that would mean the loss of another 12 months. I hope the Minister will believe there is no party feeling whatever in what I have said. We are only anxious to give him every possible assistance, and I hope before the session closes the Government

will bring down a necessary protecting measure which, as prices improve, will bring us back to a healthier state of finance.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 5th September; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair, the Minister for Employment in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 66 of the principal Act:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) has moved an amendment that in Subclause 2 (a) all words after "statement" in line 2 down to "circumstances" in line 3 inclusive, be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I beg leave temporarily to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. MARSHALL: I move an amendment—

That after "by" in line 1 there be inserted "striking out 'deemed to be a rogue and vagabond in the meaning of this Act, and shall.'"

If those words are struck out I will then move to insert the words "and by." Apart altogether from whether Section 66 of the principal Act imposes unduly severe penalties on some convicted offenders, it must be admitted that to attach to anybody convicted under the Bill before us the stigma of being a rogue and a vagabond for the term of his natural life is going a little too far. In the first place the Bill should have been a special one, standing alone, and making no reference to Section 66 of the Act. For having been convicted of some of the offences dealt with in Section 66 of the Act, men are outrageously deemed to be rogues and vagabonds for the rest of their lives. If such a man should again fall foul of the law and be a second time convicted, this record, standing against him of being officially deemed a rogue and a vagabond, means that his sentence will be greatly increased. I want to be assured that nobody who may be convicted under the Bill when it becomes law will have to carry the stigma of rogue and vagabond for the rest of his

life. That is the purpose of my amendment. Let me give a case in point: A respectable young fellow was caught playing two-up. Incidentally, the Prince of Wales played two-up while he was in Australia, and presumably had he been caught he would have suffered, as this young fellow did. However, the man to whom I allude was advised by the police not to oppose the charge, and in consequence he pleaded guilty. He was convicted under Section 66 of the principal Act, and so for the term of his life he is officially deemed a rogue and vagabond. Doubtless some members of this Chamber have played two-up, and I suggest that had they been caught at it they would have been convicted and for the rest of their lives would have carried the stigma of rogue and vagabond.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the proposed amendment, for it is quite outside the scope of the Bill. I rule it out of order.

Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.

Mr. Marshall: I move—

That the Committee dissents from the Chairman's ruling.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Chairman reported the dissent.

Mr. Marshall: I claim that the ruling is contrary to the Standing Orders, none of which conforms to it. There are several headings under which an amendment can be introduced. For instance, an amendment must be within the Title of the Bill, must conform to the order of leave to introduce the Bill, and must come within the scope of the measure itself. Let me base my case upon a ruling given by the late Hon. T. Walker, when Speaker of the House, on a motion to disagree with the Chairman's ruling moved by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) himself. Let us see whether the present ruling carries weight. The Chairman ruled the amendment out because it does not come within the scope of the Bill. It cannot be suggested that the amendment is not relevant to the Bill. The object of the Bill is to amend Section 66 of the Police Act, and my amendment also seeks to amend that section. Hence the amendment is within the order of leave. The Bill is designed to bring under Section 66 certain additional offences, and my amendment merely seeks to restrict the severity of the punishment for the offences contained in the

Minister's Bill. I submit that the scope of the Bill enables us to discuss the whole of Section 66. An endeavour to decrease the severity of the punishment cannot make the amendment out of order. An ex-Speaker, the late Hon. T. Walker, ruled in favour of an amendment on all-fours with mine. The Minister for Works had introduced a Bill to amend the Traffic Act and had confined the Bill strictly to the amount of fees to be charged on certain vehicles. The member for Fremantle moved to amend certain fees, and the ruling was that the amendment was in order. According to "Hansard" of 1926, page 985, the then Speaker said—

Any amendment moved amending, not the Bill under consideration before the Committee—

My amendment would amend the Bill—

but the principal Act would be out of order, but my attention has been drawn to the fact that this amendment, moved by the member for Fremantle, amends a section which is included within the scope of the Bill, and itself amends the principal Act. Clause 7 of the Bill amends Section 10 of the parent Act, and therefore Section 10 of the original Act presumably is before the Committee. In that section the whole subject dealt with is fees.

The position on this occasion is precisely the same. We are already considerably restricted in any desire to amend Acts and, if our liberty is to be further restricted, we shall be silenced entirely. We are at least entitled to discuss and amend that portion of the Act which the Bill is designed to amend.

Mr. Latham: Standing Order 277 reads—

Any amendment may be made to a clause, provided the same be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, or pursuant to any instruction, and be otherwise in conformity with the rules and orders of the House: but if any amendment shall not be within the title of the Bill, the Committee shall extend the title accordingly and report the same specially to the House.

I am not concerned with the argument submitted by the member for Murchison as to whether the words should be retained in Section 66 of the Police Act, but I am concerned about the ruling of the Chairman. We should be careful not to put on record rulings that later we may regret. The Bill itself provides for no penalty, but the offences stipulated must be connected with the preamble to Section 66. I may be quite agreeable to the Bill save for the punish-

ment provided in the preamble, and therefore I submit there is a connection between the preamble and the Bill. The Bill as it stands could do little harm seeing that it provides for no penalty, but it is the stigma mentioned by the member for Murchison that we must consider. I cannot believe that the Chairman of Committees was right in ruling the amendment out of order. The Bill would be useless but for the preamble to the section providing that every person who shall commit any of the stipulated offences shall be deemed a rogue and vagabond.

Mr. Sleeman: I am in a peculiar position because I favour the object sought to be attained by the member for Murchison. Still, I am not in the Chair to dictate my likes or dislikes or rule in accordance with them. I am there to administer the rules of the Chamber. If the dissent is upheld, no one will be more pleased than I shall be. The Bill, however, was introduced to provide penalties for people making certain false statements.

Mr. Latham: What are the penalties?

Mr. Sleeman: Under Section 66 one penalty is that the guilty party shall be deemed a rogue and vagabond. I do not agree with that, but the Bill should not have been introduced to include the paragraphs in Section 66.

Mr. Speaker: That has nothing to do with your ruling.

Mr. Sleeman: No, I mentioned that in answer to an interjection. If the amendment is allowed, what will it mean? It will mean wiping out 12 subsections of Section 66 of the Police Act, and removing from all the individuals covered by those sections the stigma of rogue and vagabond. It was never intended that the Bill should do that. It was not intended that it should remove the stigma from people who wilfully expose themselves in public places, or any buildings or public resorts, or from people who are found in possession of house-breaking tools, etc. In my opinion, the member for Murchison is out of order in endeavouring to remove the stigma from these particular people. If he wishes to prevent that stigma attaching to the persons referred to in the Bill, he should bring down an amendment to Section 66 of the Police Act with that object in view, and I will give him all the assistance I can. As Chairman of Committees I was unable to accept his

amendment, as I contend it is outside the scope of the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Murchison has moved to strike out certain words, not from the Bill, but from the parent Act. The Leader of the Opposition has referred to Standing Order No. 277. It is as follows—

Any amendment may be made to a clause provided the same be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, or pursuant to any instructions, and be otherwise in conformity with the Rules and Orders of the House; but if any amendment shall not be within the title of the Bill, the Committee shall extend the title accordingly, and report the same specially to the House.

Where the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Murchison are making a mistake is in respect to the difference between the title of the Bill and its scope. Whilst under Standing Order 277 it may be permissible to amend a clause, and then amend the title in conformity with that amendment, it is not permissible to alter the scope of a Bill. The member for Murchison quoted at length a ruling given by the late Speaker, Mr. Walker. I disagree entirely with the interpretation placed upon that ruling, into which I have looked most carefully to-day. On that occasion the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Lutey, ruled against an amendment introduced by the member for Fremantle. The Speaker ruled that the Chairman's ruling was wrong, not so much because the amendment was not within the scope of the Bill, but on a question of fact. That Bill dealt with fees, and the amendment moved by the member for Fremantle also dealt with fees. The late Speaker, Mr. Walker, ruled against the Chairman on a question of fact. That matter, however, does not enter into the argument. This Bill proposes to insert two new subsections, 2(a) and 2(b), into the Police Act. The intention of the Minister is that the persons coming within those paragraphs shall, in accordance with Section 66, come within the definition of rogues and vagabonds. I take it the House has endorsed that principle, because the second reading of the Bill has been carried. Whilst the Committee, being technically a different body, can reverse the decision given on the second reading, by striking out the clause embodying these proposed new subsections, it is not within its power to determine that other persons mentioned in Section 66 of the Police Act, who may be guilty of other offences, shall not be deemed to be rogues

and vagabonds. It must be obvious, as the Chairman of Committees pointed out, that if this amendment were carried it would mean the deletion of 12 subsections of Section 66 of the Act, and would remove from all those persons concerned in those subsections the stigma of rogue and vagabond. To effect such a purpose it would be necessary to bring down a special Bill. In view of what I have said, I have no alternative but to uphold the Chairman's ruling, and to rule the amendment out of order.

Dissent from Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Marshall: I move—

That the House dissents from the Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any seconder to that motion?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I second the motion.

Mr. Marshall: I do not desire to elaborate on the ruling which you, Mr. Speaker, have just given. My contention is that your ruling and that of the Chairman of Committees is wrong. My amendment deals concisely with the punishment for offences. If there is anything wrong with it, or anything that is distasteful to the Minister or members of the Government, it is the Minister's job to bring down a Bill that will not interfere with the punishments that are administered for other crimes.

Mr. Latham: It is evidently misplaced.

Mr. Marshall: The Minister admits that my amendment is in order, because the Bill, being an amendment to an existing statute, is brought down in such a way as to permit of such an amendment being moved. I would rather see one of those persons who have committed some of the bad offences referred to in the Police Act go without the stigma of rogue and vagabond attaching to them, although I would not do that voluntarily, than see one individual, who had perhaps innocently secured employment for himself, have this stigma attached to him. There are two sides to every question. Although my amendment might release from this stigma persons to whom it should very rightly be attached, I would much rather see that than have it attached to the other class of people whose interests I am seeking to protect. In contradistinction to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I contend that my amendment is in order.

Mr. Speaker: I have no intention of going further into this question, except to say I trust members will record their votes on the question whether the amendment is in order or not, in accordance with the Standing Orders, and not on the question whether offences and penalties come into the matter at all. I am not concerned as to whether the Minister was right in bringing down the Bill in this way, nor am I concerned with what the offences and penalties are, for I do not even know what the 12 offences are that are covered by the subsections of the Act which have been referred to. All I am concerned about is to give a ruling in accordance with what I believe to be a proper interpretation of the Standing Orders.

Question put and negatived.

Committee resumed.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 66 of principal Act:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That proposed subsection 2 (a) be struck out.

Later I shall move the amendment appearing on the Notice Paper.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I have read the amendment on the Notice Paper, and have no objection to it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I can see no occasion for strengthening the Police Act in the direction proposed. The administration of the law in respect to those in receipt of sustenance is being carried out in much the same way to-day as it was two years ago. The previous Government were able to protect the revenues of the State, and the same protection can be afforded to-day. Of course, there have been frauds, and these are not limited to men on sustenance. Because we discover frauds in respect of other individuals, we do not ask for an amendment of the Police Act in order to give the Government greater power to deal with circumstances that may arise from day to day. We try to improve the administration and profit by experience gained. The Minister for Employment has been very active in bettering the conditions of sustenance workers. He has devoted himself closely to changing the methods of payments to the men and an alteration from the former system of utilising local governing bodies

with reference to work for men on sustenance. Much has been done in that direction that is creditable to the Minister, but when it comes to the amendment to the Bill before us, I must differ from him. He has not had sufficient experience regarding the operations of his own administration to really enable him to decide that the provisions of the Police Act are insufficient for the protection of the revenue of the State. I desire the Minister to have a little more experience. I have been a member of Parliament for a long time and I have often seen mistakes made because of the early application of individual opinions where more mature experience would have avoided those mistakes. It is no function of Labour to amend the Police Act; we do not usually rush in to do such a job. We try to administer the law in a better way than our political opponents. If they find the Police Act sufficient for their purposes, we always contend that we go one better. We have been particularly careful regarding the handling of the Police Act and the administration of the Police Department. We feel a greater responsibility to humanity than the average political entity. That is the function of the Labour movement, which was not created for the purpose of passing stiffer laws for the police to apply. On the other hand, the Labour movement was formed to make conditions such that our people did not come within the purview of the law, but that they did, if others could find the law sufficient to protect the State and do justice to individuals, we could always go one better. We have always closely applied ourselves sympathetically to consider the welfare of the State and of the individual, and to administer the laws, as we found them, to do justice to all without the necessity of stiffening them up to give the police great powers. As the member for Murchison said, to extend the objectionable term "rogue and vagabond" to human beings merely because they did things that they would not dream of doing were it not for the existing social system, is going too far altogether. Under our rotten social system we are driving people to desperation. Under it, people are suffering privation in the midst of plenty and that, because they are forced to do things, they are to be declared rogues and vagabonds, is a proposal I shall not support. I appeal to the Minister. The Labour movement stands on a much higher plane than that sort of thing. The mo-

ment should not stoop to such an amendment to the Police Act before the Administration has had time to find out whether, in fact, the Act is not sufficient to meet the circumstances of the position. Members of the Labour Party contended that a Minister was required to devote the whole of his time to this work. We have got what we wanted. Surely, with more time for the devotion of the whole of his energies to this problem, the Minister can overcome the difficulty. He can do it by way of administration, without attempting to amend the Act for all time. It must be remembered that this is not emergency legislation; it is a permanent amendment to the Police Act, one that will reflect no credit on the Government.

Amendment (to strike out proposed subsection) put and passed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That the following new subsection, to stand as Subsection 2A, be inserted in lieu:—

2A. Any person who, by wilfully making any false statement or representation—

- (1) as to any sum or sums of money in his possession or power; or
- (2) as to any property real or personal then owned by him; or
- (3) as to any sum of money then receivable by him by way of income, gift, or allowance; or
- (4) as to any sum of money received by him as salary or wages over any period; or
- (5) as to any employment in which he was engaged over any period; or
- (6) as to any sustenance relief received by him over any period; or
- (7) as to the number of persons then dependent on his earnings; or
- (8) as to the financial position of persons then dependent on his earnings,

obtains or attempts to obtain under any scheme or the relief of unemployed destitute or indigent persons any work or employment or any benefit in money or money's worth either for himself or for any other person.

The amendment covers all the offences that the Minister referred to in his second reading speech. Those offences constitute a grave abuse of the public purse in the work of providing employment for those out of work. The Minister assured members that the amendment of the Act was necessary, and my object has been to prevent the amendment from going beyond the lengths he indicated as necessary. I sympathise with the objection that has been taken to individuals

found guilty of these offences in times such as the present, being termed rogues and vagabonds, and that objection could be met by adding to the end of the second subsection a proviso to the effect that no person convicted under Subsection 2A and 2B shall be deemed to be rogues and vagabonds, but shall be otherwise amenable to the penalties provided in the section of the Act. The amendment meets the objections raised during the second reading debate, and will carry out the intentions of the Minister who has declared that, as the result of experience, the amendments are absolutely necessary. To that extent, therefore, I am prepared to assist him.

Mr. LATHAM: The amendment does not meet with my approval any more than the provision that has been struck out of the Bill. There is no need for this class of legislation. There is not the necessity for it now that there was two years ago. I know that effect has been given to the policy of the present Government regarding the provision of work for a certain period and sustenance for another period. I consider there is sufficient means by which the State can be protected without the need for this legislation at all. As the member for Guildford-Midland pointed out, this is not legislation of a temporary character. Apart from the Constitution and the Interpretation Acts, the two most permanent enactments on the statute-book are the Criminal Code and the Police Act, and I am surprised that the Minister should amend the Police Act merely to deal with emergency conditions. There is no justification for it. I remind the Minister that some day he may regret having placed such a provision on the statute-book. The powers he seeks to provide for the police will be a permanent part of the Act and the legislation may be used in a way he may not contemplate. Let me remind the Minister of what is happening in Ireland to-day. Under the Crimes Act, which De Valera denounced from one end of Southern Ireland to the other, De Valera is now availing himself of the powers conferred by that Act and is using them against those who were formerly members of the Government. The same thing could be done in Western Australia. Would anyone ever have suggested that the provisions of the Alien Restriction Act would have been used for the purposes for which they are used to-day? Would they have thought that the Act would have

been used to prevent Britishers from landing in Australia?

The Minister for Lands: Did you say Britishers?

Mr. LATHAM: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: In what way?

Mr. LATHAM: They are subject to an education test in any language.

The Minister for Lands: Do you say Britishers are treated that way?

Mr. LATHAM: Undoubtedly they are.

The Minister for Mines: But why are Britishers subject to that legislation?

Mr. LATHAM: The Act is used to prevent them from landing in the Commonwealth at all.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, because they are undesirables.

Mr. LATHAM: My memory is very good and if the Chairman will permit me—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think we had better get back to the amendment.

Mr. LATHAM: In answer to the Minister, I would remind him that the men I have in mind were those who came out to start a hat factory.

The Minister for Employment: You know the indentured labour question entered into that matter.

Mr. LATHAM: But the fact remains that action was taken under the provisions of the Alien Restriction Act, and it came as a surprise to many people to know that the Act could be used in that way. I warn the Minister for Employment that he will not be in his position forever, and the administration of the Act may not always be in the hands of a Labour Government. For my part, I will not make a man a rogue and a vagabond and subject to 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour simply because he used any of the means indicated in the amendment to obtain work so that he might provide for his wife and family.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Even thieving and stealing!

Mr. LATHAM: I did not say that; I referred to the offences indicated in the amendment and in the clause in the Bill. Surely it is more desirable that a man should obtain work by almost any means so as to provide for his wife and family, than to have them on sustenance. Surely he is then a better citizen. I appeal to members not to allow this legislation to

go through. If the Minister makes it emergency legislation perhaps I will support it. The very ruling given by the Speaker proves that the Police Act never should have been amended in this form.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have no intention of supporting the amendment; neither will I support legislation of this type being included in the Police Act. I do, however, feel there is an obligation on my part to attempt to modify the Bill if it should be decided to put it on the statute-book. The Minister, when replying to the second reading debate, did not actually charge members with being desirous of protecting dishonest people, but he imputed that those who spoke against the Bill were so desirous, or had some intention of assisting an individual in his endeavour to be dishonest towards the Treasurer of the State. I believe that in connection with the cases quoted by the Minister something might be done to prevent a repetition of them. At the same time I do not want him to imagine that he alone has a monopoly of honesty of intention. I am still prepared to assist him, but the Bill goes too far; it really punishes the honest person if he attempts to obtain employment. That person would be liable, on conviction to be deemed a rogue and a vagabond and may get any part of 12 months' imprisonment with or without hard labour. I do not endorse the attitude adopted by some of those people. As a matter of fact I know of one instance where a boy, whose mother is one of the wealthiest women in the State, approached the department to get relief. The mother is a particularly miserable type, and nurses the belief that when she shuffles off she will be able to take her wealth with her. She sent her boy to get relief from the State. I do not endorse that kind of action. The amendment of the member for Neildlands is loosely worded. For instance, the first paragraph refers to a person who wilfully makes a false statement as to any sum or sums or money in his possession or power. That may refer to a person who at the time is holding money belonging to somebody else. The amendment will accept it as being his own property when that may not be so. Any person may be entrusted by somebody else with cash and at the same time the person holding the money may have occasion to seek relief.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is not what the amendment means at all.

Mr. MARSHALL: But it would appear to be so from the way in which it is worded. It is my intention to move an amendment to which I should not imagine there would be any objection. So long as an individual can prove that any money that may be in his possession is not his own, he should be protected. I move an amendment on the amendment—

That in paragraph 1 after "money" the words "being his personal property" be added.

The paragraph will then read—

Any person who by wilfully making any false statement or representation (1) as to any sum or sums of money, being his personal property, then in his possession or power

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The amendment makes an effort to overcome the objection raised by members last week. Members stated they did not want an all-embracing clause under, which the different complaints could be made. If we wanted it to protect the revenue we should then put in specific reasons. The amendment is a gesture in that respect. All the cases that were mentioned have been covered by the amendment. It says definitely the class of person who will be charged under the measure. It is all very well for members to say that it is the Labour Party's business to see that the revenue is protected, but it is the Labour Party's business to legislate for all the people of the State, and to see that the legislation introduced is uniform. The instances that I gave when introducing the Bill, of attempts to obtain money by dishonest means, were actual not hypothetical.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And before you are many years older you will have many more such experiences.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Then I shall endeavour to cope with them. We have now to make provision by which the money that is available to assist those in want shall not go into the pockets of those who are not in want.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You can do that by administration.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Had I been able to do that I should not have had to ask the House for this authority. It is not likely that a Minister would ask Parliament to give him authority to take action if he already had the power to do so by other means. Previous Minis-

ters authorised prosecutions but found that those prosecutions could not be instituted.

Mr. Latham: Both you and your predecessor secured convictions.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, in connection with sustenance.

Mr. Latham: I thought you said there had been no convictions under the Police Act.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I said that action had been taken. I remind the hon. member that I also said that a recommendation was on the file for an alteration of the law in the direction in which I propose to change it now, and the hon. member replied that he was aware of that and that the department did not go on with it. Later he said prosecutions had been lodged.

Mr. Latham: We misunderstood each other.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I am glad the hon. member admits that. If a man commits fraud in an attempt to get work, representing money, which should go to a person in want, there is at present no power to punish him. I have given the Chamber numerous instances of that kind. I am not anxious to send anyone to prison, but I am anxious to obtain this authority. If, as asserted by the Leader of the Opposition, this is only a temporary phase, then when the depression passes there will be no operation of this authority, because sustenance will not be operating. I am prepared to accept the amendment of the member for Nedlands. Neither have I any objection to the amendment on that amendment moved by the member for Murchison.

Amendment on the amendment put and passed.

Mr. MARSHALL: I agree with what the Minister has just said; but, still, the Bill punishes a person for merely obtaining work, punishes a person who must labour to obtain either cash or commodities. Surely the Minister will not contend that a person prepared to work for cash or commodities should be convicted as a rogue and a vagabond. Such a stigma would be life-long. The punishment is too severe for the offence. The member for Guildford-Midland attributes the introduction of the Bill to inexperience on the Minister's part but I attribute it to hastiness; the Minister has not fully considered the effects of his action. Even with the amendment of

the member for Nedlands, the clause goes further than is necessary to secure what the Minister desires. I move a further amendment on the amendment—

That in paragraph 2 (a) the words "or attempts to obtain" be struck out.

Even without those words the provision will be drastic enough. The amendment merely limits the operation of the clause to a person who attains his objective. Under the clause as it stands, the man who attempts by a white lie to obtain work is to be deemed a rogue and a vagabond for the term of his natural life. Surely it is enough to punish a man for obtaining work without punishing him for unsuccessfully attempting to obtain it.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The amendment on the amendment is inadmissible. If it were carried, a man could attempt to defraud the revenue as often as he pleased, and if caught in the attempt could simply laugh at the law. The attempt must be prevented as well as the complete act. I am about to test the sincerity of some hon. members who have criticised the Bill. I am prepared to agree to the addition of a proviso to the following effect:—"Provided that persons convicted under Sections 2 (a) and 2 (b) herein shall not be deemed to be rogues and vagabonds." We shall now see where certain hon. members stand.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. MARSHALL: The Minister said he was willing to provide that the term "rogue and vagabond" should not be applied to any offender under the Bill. Perhaps he thought by that means to secure my support for the measure. I say emphatically I would not accept the provision, even on that condition.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I knew that.

MR. MARSHALL: Under the amendment as it stands, a man need only attempt to commit an offence and he will be punished. That is my objection to it. There have been in Western Australia instances of men employed in high offices under the State and robbing the Treasury and the taxpayers of many hundreds of pounds; yet no one has dared to prosecute those men. We have had members of Parliament securing benefits that have cost this country £72,000, yet nobody has prosecuted. Again, an ex-Minister

is known to have collected travelling expenses far beyond what was due to him, but he has not been called to book.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know that that has anything to do with the amendment.

MR. MARSHALL: Yes, it has. Before we prosecute men in humble positions, who by making false statements attempt to obtain work, we should prosecute those others who, holding high office, have robbed the country of thousands of pounds. There was another man in a high position who got away with £500 of the taxpayers' money and was never prosecuted. Let us prosecute these high officials before we start on the unfortunate wretch who tells a story in order to secure employment. As for the Minister's proposed amendment, I had already intended to move in the same direction were it not that I was afraid it would be ruled out of order. If the Minister can get his amendment accepted by the Chairman, I will vote for it; but I will be no party to prosecuting a humble working man for the making of a false statement in an attempt to obtain employment, when far more serious offences committed by those in high positions go unpunished. Possibly scores of cases could be quoted in which Governments have refrained from prosecuting, merely because the offenders belonged to the privileged class. I hope my amendment on the amendment will be agreed to.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister suggests that if we do not strengthen the law, people will continue to make false representations with a view to obtaining work and payment at the expense of others more deserving. But take the prosecutions under the Land Tax and Income Tax Act. We have such prosecutions almost every week. There was one big land-owner, one of the wealthiest in Australia, who evaded taxation to the tune of an enormous sum. True, he was brought to book, but he was not declared a rogue and vagabond, neither was any special law passed to prevent a recurrence. Frequently the courts have to deal with people who have made false declarations in order to avoid taxation; people in a position to pay, people of wealth, wrongfully withholding money from the Treasurer who might use it for the general well-being of the community. There is no question of amending the Police Act to deal with such people: they are simply prosecuted and fined. We do not want what is provided in

the Bill, and I appeal to the Government to drop the measure. The Minister, by close administration, will find ways and means of penalising those who do dishonest things—as they would do even in the face of the proposed law. The Minister, as he gains experience, will find he can punish offenders under the existing law. For instance, sustenance workers have left their work without permission, and have been penalised by being deprived of all relief for a given time. The Minister to-day has ample power to check wrongdoing of this kind. The Minister, speaking of one case, said that no penalty could be imposed, but I make bold to suggest that he found a way of penalising the offender. After all, it was not a very grave offence, and the fact that the offender was discovered and branded on the department's books as one unworthy of further consideration should be sufficient. I will vote against the Bill on every occasion, for I do not believe in it, and I urge the Government to withdraw it.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Some members seem to have a new conception of ethics. The member for Guildford-Midland said it was our duty to see that our people were not brought within the purview of the law.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I did not.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: That is a new idea for the representative of any party to propound. He spoke of a man who had been penalised for evading payment of income tax and said no law was introduced to deal with his case. Why? The hon. member supplied the answer. The existing law was sufficient to deal with him, but is not sufficient to deal with the cases mentioned in the Bill.

Mr. Stubbs: Cannot you alter the form to be signed?

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: No, the object of the Bill is to make the form one required by law. Although the member for Guildford-Midland said it was possible to deal with these cases, he did not show how.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Means are always found to penalise crooks.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The hon. member spoke of the inexperience of other people. He has had years of experience, but he suggested nothing constructive to ensure that the revenue of the State

would be protected. He raised the point that an offender would be declared a rogue and vagabond—

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is not correct, and you know it.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: And when that ground was cut away, he raised other windmills simply to knock them down again.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I said definitely what I thought.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The member for Murchison said we ought to alter the law to provide that, if a man attempts to steal, he is not guilty of a crime.

Mr. Marshall: There is no such word as "steal" in your Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Only when a man actually steals is he to be guilty of a crime.

Mr. Marshall: I will give you "steal" directly.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If we base our laws on principles of that kind, I do not know where we shall end. To adopt his suggestion would be tantamount to telling people that they might attempt to defraud the revenue with impunity. Members have urged that the offences set out in the Bill constitute no great crime. When a man has £8 a week going into his home and he fraudulently obtains Government work, thus depriving people in need of the work, it is a serious crime.

Mr. Stubbs: Making him a rogue and vagabond?

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: It is a crime, and we should have authority to prevent it. We wish to find employment for the people out of work, for the people who have no money going into their homes. When a man with a lot of money going into his home obtains, by false representation, Government work, which is limited enough, he deprives people in actual want of that work. Yet members hesitate to give the Government authority to prevent his taking or attempting to take the work under false representation. It is stealing the right of others to live, and there is no worse form of stealing.

Mr. Doney: Is the attempt to take it quite as big a crime as the actual taking?

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Attempting to steal is a misdemeanour.

Mr. Doney: Attempted murder is not as serious a crime as actual murder.

Mr. Patrick: The attempt is as serious in every case.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Why alter it in this instance?

Mr. Patrick: I did not say it should be altered.

Mr. Doney: I was merely putting the question to the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Attempting to commit an offence, no less than the actual act, has to be provided for in order to protect the public funds.

Mr. STUBBS: The Minister has said it is impossible under the existing law to obtain a conviction against a person who makes a false declaration regarding work he is seeking to obtain. A few years ago a man of my acquaintance was charged with having made a false declaration regarding improvements effected to farming property in his name. He told me his case, and I believed that he had signed a document under a misapprehension. He was committed for trial in the police court, and his trial in the Criminal Court extended over three days. The jury found him not guilty. Would it have been fair to brand him a rogue and vagabond? Surely the same law that permitted him to be prosecuted could be invoked in the cases mentioned in the Bill!

The Premier: The Crown Law authorities say no. Do you know more than the Crown Law authorities?

Hon. N. Keenan: The Crown Law authorities are right.

The Premier: What is the use of labouring a point like that?

Mr. STUBBS: A man who signs an incorrect declaration should not be declared a rogue and vagabond. Does the Premier stand for that?

The Premier: That is another point. You are arguing that you know more than do the Crown Law authorities.

Mr. STUBBS: I am not. I agree that an offender should be punished, but there is a big difference between the punishment that a first offence should carry and declaring a man a rogue and vagabond.

Progress reported.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's amendment to amendment No. 3 made by the Council.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—SOUTHERN CROSS SOUTH- WARDS RAILWAY.

Second Reading—Amendment.

Debate resumed from 7th September on amendment by the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) that the motion "That the Bill be now read a second time" the word "now" be struck out, and the following words added to the motion, "When the Government have submitted to Parliament a report upon the area of unused or only partially used land within reasonable carting distance of existing railways, and also a scheme for the more complete utilisation of such land."

MR. LAMBERT (Yilgarn-Coolgardie—on amendment) [8.0]: I should like your ruling, Sir, as to whether the amendment moved by the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) is in order. It seems to me to be altogether outside the scope of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already allowed the hon. member to move the amendment. It is in order.

Mr. LAMBERT: The wording of the amendment is extraordinary. I do not know what the hon. member is driving at. I could understand it if he were imbued with a desire to effect the postponement of the second reading, with some definite relevancy to the Bill itself, but I cannot understand his attempt to encompass the whole of the policy of the Government with respect to future railways. If this amendment is relevant to the Bill, then I am in a fog as to what relevancy really is. Is it the hon. member's desire to get from the Government their attitude towards the utilisation of land held alongside existing

railways? Does he want a declaration from the Government as to their policy respecting land within reasonable carting distance of existing railways, that is not being utilised? But what that has to do with the Bill I am at a loss to know. I am sorry the hon. member should be guilty of introducing foreign matter into the discussion. His amendment is totally foreign to the Bill. If he had desired a declaration of policy from the Government, he could have brought the matter forward in a different way, so that the merits or demerits of any suggestions he might have to make could be properly and usefully debated. I am surprised that he should have brought the matter up in this way. I do not know how far it is permissible for me to deal with the merits of the Bill itself.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. LAMBERT: I hope the hon. member will see fit to withdraw the amendment. When dealing with another Bill that was before the House, many members had grave reason to doubt the expediency of authorising the construction of another railway, but the Bill and the proposed route of the line were debated upon their merits. I have no desire to move, Mr. Speaker, that your ruling be disagreed with. One might as well bow to it, as no useful purpose would be served by moving to disagree with it. Now that the hon. member has ventilated the matter, I hope he will withdraw his amendment. Under a Bill that will be brought down shortly to co-ordinate the railway and other services, the whole question of transport over the railway system and outside the scope of that system, will be discussed. I regret that in connection with a railway Bill, having such outstanding merits as this one, and being one the necessity for which is acknowledged by every person who knows the possibilities and the production of the district, such an amendment should have been introduced.

MR. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore — on amendment) [8.3]: I oppose the amendment. I am at a loss to understand the attitude of the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in endeavouring to get behind the Bill in this way. If he wants to oppose the second reading, surely there is another way in which he can do so. The method by which he proposes to scotch the

measure now does not appeal to me. The other night he drew attention to the financial position of the railways generally, and their bearing on the financial position of the State. He painted a doleful picture and referred to the losses the railways were making. He said how wrong it would be to add to that loss by constructing further railways. A reference to the annual report of the Commissioner for the year ended 30th June last indicates that the loss on the railways, after paying interest, sinking fund and working expenses, amounted to something like £175,000. Some four or five years ago the loss was approximately half a million, but that has gradually been reduced year by year until last year it was in the vicinity of the amount I have just stated.

Mr. Marshall: You forget that we are neglecting our permanent ways. They are in a frightful state of disrepair, due to the economies that have been instituted during the last two or three years.

Mr. FERGUSON: If they were not in a working condition, the Commissioner would not allow his trains to run over them.

Mr. Marshall: Oh, no!

Mr. FERGUSON: Although the loss of £175,000 represents a fairly large sum, it is nothing compared to the value the railways are to the State. Western Australia is dependent for its existence upon agricultural, pastoral and mining production. If it were not for the railways, these industries would not be in existence, and but for them Western Australia would be as nothing. The loss of £175,000 represents no more than 8s. per head of the population of the State.

Mr. Marshall: It amounts to more than that to the people on the goldfields, who are called upon to make up the deficiency by way of high freights over long distances.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FERGUSON: This Bill provides for the construction of 28 miles of railway. If the loss on that railway averages anything like the loss on the 4,338 miles of line in existence, the additional loss would work out at approximately 2½d. per head of the population. When we take into consideration the good that would accrue to the people by the construction of this line of 28 miles in length, we see there is nothing in the argument that the Bill should be held up until an elaborate return has been prepared and placed by the Government on the Table of the House. It is wrong for mem-

bers to attempt to judge the value of this or any other railway on present commodity prices. It must be apparent to all that in the process of time there will be an appreciation in the value. What are people living in the districts south of Southern Cross going to think of members who would deny them almost the right to live by refusing to give them the life-blood of their existence, namely, this railway. Without this railway they cannot compete in overseas markets with the main commodity they produce—wheat. They cannot continue to cart their wheat from 15 to 30 miles to the rail-head, as they are doing now. It is wrong and a sin that any member should attempt to deprive these people of the railway which the Government promised to give them.

Mr. Marshall: Do not you think further construction should be stopped while a general stocktaking takes place?

Mr. FERGUSON: I do not think there should be any stoppage.

Mr. Marshall: Of course not.

Mr. FERGUSON: Western Australia can produce wheat as cheaply as any other country in the world can do. We should not let up on our wheat production, but we must get our costs down to prove to the rest of the world that we can produce wheat cheaper than it can. In course of time, those countries which are producing wheat under artificially protected conditions are going to stop wheat production. When that time comes, and it is fast approaching, the member for Guildford-Midland will be the first to express his regret at his attempt to stop the construction of this particular railway. He would then recognise that his attempt would have done incalculable harm to the people living south of Southern Cross, and to Western Australia generally. The hon. member wants the railway held up until a return has been prepared by the Government and presented to Parliament, showing the partially improved or idle lands lying alongside existing railways. Who is going to say whether the land is being put to its best use or not. I defy any man to say whether any land alongside any railway is being put to the best use. The hon. member knows what is the best use to put his farm to, and every farmer knows the best use to make of his farm.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I am more concerned about the properties which are not used.

Mr. FERGUSON: Many miles of our railways pass through land which is not cultivated. That is the type of land which excites the envy of people like the member for Guildford-Midland. Many miles of our railways run through York gum and jam country, which is specially suitable for the grazing of sheep. A lot of that land has not been cleared or cultivated, and that is what is worrying the hon. member. But the best use to which that land can be put is not necessarily wheatgrowing. In fact, it will not grow a profitable wheat crop; but it is ideal country for sheep, as the owners of it know very well. Ploughing and killing the natural grasses and then attempting to grow wheat crops would be futile. There are scores of miles of country in the Great Southern district famed for the production of blue wool. That country has not been cleared and cultivated as desired by the mover of the amendment. The production of high-quality blue wool would cease once that country was broken up by the plough and the natural herbage killed. And so the State would be all the poorer. Highly profitable wool is far preferable to indifferent wheat crops. The owners of such land are better qualified than any member of this House is to judge what their land is best suited for. I appeal to the member for Guildford-Midland in the interests of the people of the districts specially concerned in this railway. The miners in the locality have put up a wonderful performance in the development of their properties under extremely difficult conditions, due to the uninviting nature of the country in its native state, and also due to the physical disabilities of the miners themselves consequent on the dread disease which caused them to quit the goldfields. What will those miner-farmers think if this House carries a motion to shelve the construction of their railway by such a subterfuge as this? I hope the House will refuse to have anything to do with the amendment.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet—on amendment) [S.18]: Like the previous speaker, I hope the amendment will not be carried. It asks that the Government should submit to Parliament a report upon the area of unused or only partially used land within reasonable carting distance of existing railways, and also a scheme for the more complete utilisation of such land.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is what is being done in Queensland.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If we had the best land settlement scheme in the world to-day, we could not finance it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But you can finance railways.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is another matter.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Of course it is.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is a much cheaper matter. Here we have an established settlement in which the Agricultural Bank have invested no less a sum than £115,000. We have the settlement, the land and the settlers, and have spent our money, and now the practical course is to give the settlers railway facilities by which they can make practical propositions of their farms. We have not the money to spend on what the amendment suggests. In even a highly promising scheme £115,000 would not go far.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It would give a valuable start.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have before us in this country every day examples of schemes on which, in all, millions of pounds have been spent without results. On group settlement we have spent £10,000,000, but whereas the State has to find £400,000 in interest on that expenditure we collected last half year a beggarly £4,000 by way of interest. Personally I refuse to enter upon any such scheme in our present situation, when it takes all our time and all our money to keep the settlers on the land. What is the practical scheme we should adopt? Here we have a settlement of over 90 settlers, representing a population of 381 in the district. In three years those settlers produced 268,000 bags of wheat. They had to be given last year a carting subsidy of £5,000. Then the practical thing is to get some return from the £115,000 already spent there, and keep the settlers on the land and make them successful.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: As soon as you have built this railway, you will have another practical railway scheme.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is quite correct. Where there is a body of settlers to whom the Agricultural Bank have advanced hundreds of thousands of pounds, and where the settlers have cleared hundreds of thousands of acres and the success of those settlers is dependent on rail-

way communication, it is our business to furnish them with railway communication. As Minister for Lands I do not want any new land settlement schemes at present. Our business, I consider, is to maintain the settlers we have, pending better times. If the holders of unused lands along the existing railway system gave the Government those lands, the Government could not make use of them. How far would the amount here involved go in such a scheme?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: A long way.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. Have we not experience? Have we not a record of what we have spent on these schemes? When we embarked on them we had the illusion that putting men on the land meant successful settlement, whereas the fact is that 20 per cent. of the settlers do not succeed on the land. Settlement is not to be achieved by putting men on the land. We can only get it by putting on the land men who have a liking for the land and a capacity to work it. I hope there will be no more schemes of land settlement until we are out of the slough of despond in which we find ourselves. The amendment looks all right. It seems to get us somewhere. But really it does not. What country does the hon. member refer to as being available alongside existing railways?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Land alongside every existing line.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That will not do. Where can such an area be got for settlers?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Between Bunbury and Bridgetown.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Apart from the South-West. What is happening in the South-West to-day? The State has spent a great amount of money there, and is now faced with just as many troubles as existed 10 years ago. The State is still spending £60,000 a year on those settlers. Having spent £10,000,000 on land settlement in the South-West, shall we embark on another scheme there? Not if we have any sense at all. The amendment appeals; but, apart from the South-West, where is the land alongside existing railways for settlement?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Along every railway.

Mr. Latham: Not between York and Bruce Rock.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Also there.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Where is the area along the Great Southern railway? What are we to do with the area? Grow sheep when wool does not pay? Grow wheat when wheat growing does not pay? All these industries, we are told, are carried on at a loss to-day except as regards a few individuals. We would be merely duplicating or triplicating our troubles by following out the hon. member's ideas. Where is there room for settlement along the Eastern Goldfields railway? As regards repurchased estates, I do not think 2 per cent. of the settlers are paying a penny rental or a penny interest at the present time.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: New Zealand did not buy back land, nor is Queensland buying back to-day.

Mr. Latham: New Zealand bought a lot of land and wrote off £3,000,000 after buying it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If we have any sense, the facts stare us in the face. We ought not to embark on any scheme of land settlement at prices which must prove ruinous. Who would embark upon a scheme of wheat production to-day when the whole world is crying out for restriction of wheat production? Again, who would embark on a scheme of dairy settlement when after the millions of pounds already invested in dairy settlements here we have to find about £60,000 annually to maintain dairy settlers on their holdings? Last year the amount was over £40,000. True, the prospects of wool growing are now a little brighter. I have no doubt things will improve in this country, but this is not the time to embark on a scheme of settlement. Any scheme of settlement means that we have to enter upon alienated lands. On all the estates we have repurchased the settlers are calling out for reduction of land values. As regards the two propositions—that of the member for Guildford and the building of the railway—in my opinion there is only one choice, and that is the railway. We have this existing settlement, from which the wheat is being carted. Therefore the settlers must be given this railway.

Mr. Stubbs: It is good land, too.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Is it not far better to enter upon some scheme where there is good land, rather than spend it in other directions that the country cannot afford to-day? I hope

the Bill for the construction of the railway will be passed because it will be in the best interests of the State to give the settlers facilities that are necessary to enable them to carry out their work with success.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne — on amendment) [S.31]: I really do not wish to support the amendment moved by the member for Guildford-Midland (**Hon. W. D. Johnson**), but it represents the only way by which I can voice my opinions in opposition to the construction of this railway. I have listened attentively to the debate and one thing that has struck me is the extraordinary area of good land in this State. Whenever it is proposed to construct a railway, there is marvellously good land. Every member of the Country Party agrees with that.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They have been the booblers.

Mr. Doney: Are you in a position to state that the land to be served is not good country?

Mr. RODOREDA: I would not say that for one second. When the Bill for the construction of the Yuna-Dartmoor railway was before the House, it was claimed that the land to be served was marvellous country.

Mr. Doney: Was that not correct?

Mr. RODOREDA: Now we are discussing the Southern Cross southwards railway, and the land to be served is also marvellous. There seems something extraordinary about the demand for the construction of railways to serve such areas.

Mr. Patrick: Nothing extraordinary at all.

Mr. RODOREDA: The arguments advanced in favour of the railway, especially by the member for Irwin (**Mr. Ferguson**), could be applied equally to any railway proposition placed before Parliament.

Mr. Doney: Does it not strike you that the reason settlers went to these areas was that the land was suitable?

Mr. RODOREDA: The arguments have been based on generalities all the time, and for that reason I shall not support the construction of the line. I opposed the Yuna-Dartmoor Railway Bill and I have not discovered any reason for changing my attitude in the discussion that has taken place on the Bill now before the House. When I spoke on the Yuna-Dartmoor railway proposition, I referred to the large areas of

unoccupied land already served by existing railways. I consider the Government should use their best endeavours to secure the utilisation of that land before proceeding with the construction of new railways. It is useless for the Minister to say that there is no such unutilised land that could be put to profitable use. Let him consider the number of abandoned farms there are on his hands.

The Minister for Lands: This proposal will not operate in that way.

Mr. RODOREDA: It would appear that the Minister desires to build a railway in order to have more abandoned farms on his hands. Of course, I know the House will vote in favour of the line. In fact, it appears to me that members will vote for any railway proposition that is put before them.

Mr. Marshall: That applies to rural areas only.

Mr. RODOREDA: Members of the Country Party may be relied upon to be unanimous on that point.

The Minister for Railways: The Government would not put forward any proposal for the construction of a railway if they did not think the line was warranted.

Mr. Stubbs: This looks like a vote of no-confidence in the hon. member's own Government.

Mr. RODOREDA: Certainly it is, in that respect. If I think the Government are wrong, I intend to say so. I do not intend to act like the members of the Opposition.

Mr. Patrick: Why not leave that to the Country Party?

Mr. RODOREDA: Because they will not do anything.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Roebourne will address the Chair.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Country Party members are responsible for squandering a lot of money.

Mr. Patrick: In building a railway to Bruce Rock, for instance!

Mr. RODOREDA: When I discussed the Yuna-Dartmoor railway proposition, the Minister for Railways agreed with me when I said that we should not go in for the construction of new railways. Yet, within a month, he has introduced another Bill for an additional railway to serve what is, practically speaking, a new area. If the line is constructed, arguments will then be advanced in favour of an extension of the line to serve an additional area, and we shall be asked

to agree to a Bill with that object on 'the strength of exactly the same arguments that have been advanced respecting the present proposal. I do not want the House to think that I am opposed to the production of any more wheat. I favour the production of every bushel we can, but I am doubtful whether it is beneficial to the State to go on constructing new railways. I do not regard that as the best means by which we may increase production. We should strive for the utilisation of land already served by existing railways, and see to it that we increase our production per acre. Quality is what we want, not quantity. Most settlers have altogether too much land, especially in the new areas. They have more land than they can farm properly, and that is why they cannot show any profits on their transactions. In my opinion, they never will show profits. The Minister for Lands referred to the enormous amount of money owed by farmers to the Agricultural Bank and mentioned the position of those settled in the area to be served by the line under discussion. I have no doubt that they will always owe money to the Agricultural Bank. The proposal to build this line will merely serve to add to the difficulties of the Commissioner of Railways, who cannot make the existing lines pay. The member for Avon said that the loss on our railways was a mere £175,000 last year. Only that amount! The construction of the present line, he said, would merely increase the loss by a certain sum per head. It would be a pleasant change if the Minister could introduce a railway Bill and show that the line would result in profitable working. This line will serve to add to the loss and increase the burden on the people generally. Yet we are asked to agree to it with almost no argument whatever.

Mr. Ferguson: Are not the primary producers the largest taxpayers?

Mr. RODOREDA: I would not argue that point.

The Minister for Mines: They were not the largest taxpayers last year, when the wages men paid more than the farmers.

Mr. RODOREDA: I understand that the carting subsidy is being paid to the settlers in the Southern Cross district. In my opinion, there is room for a trial of motor transport in that area. The Minister for Railways told the House it could not be done for less than 6d. per ton per mile. I have had experience, extending over eight years, of motor transport in the

bush, and I hesitate to accept the Minister's figures as the basis upon which to work. A vast improvement has taken place in motor transport arrangements during the last two years in particular, and bush carting can be done at considerably less than the Minister indicated. Petrol, too, is down in price. I do not see why that method of transport should not be tried for 12 months in the Southern Cross district, either by calling for tenders for the cartage of the whole of the freight from the Southern Cross area, or by running the transport as a Government concern. There is no reason why the wheat should not be stacked at the points selected for sidings in connection with the proposed railway. The Minister, if he adopted the scheme I suggest, could then see at what price all the freight for the district could be carted for a period of 12 months. I have no doubt that the result would show the work could be done for considerably less than 6d. per ton per mile. I do not know how the Minister's figures were determined; there is no means of finding out, because the system has not been tried.

Mr. Ferguson: It has been tried in every district and the cost has worked out at about 9d. per ton per mile.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: But that was not with a guarantee of the whole available freight for cartage. It has to be remembered that back loading had to be obtained. Motor transport in the North-West is being done for much less than 9d. per ton.

Mr. Ferguson: But that was with haulage over 100 miles and more. In the Southern Cross and other districts the haulage would be over 10, 15 or 20 miles.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: I suggest that the Government should give this scheme a trial.

Mr. Doney: It is not more than 28 miles to the nearest siding on this railway.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: I have no knowledge of the details of the line. I have advanced my suggestion and contend it is worthy of a trial. It is time the Government and the Railway Department got away from the old policy of building railways in every conceivable direction.

Mr. Ferguson: On what basis would the wheat be carted?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the subject.

Mr. RODOREDÁ: I was referring to motor transport as an alternative to the

construction of the railway. I shall support the amendment.

MR. CROSS (Canning—on amendment) [8.43]: I cannot see my way clear to support the construction of this railway.

Mr. Lambert: No one expected that you would. Do you want one like the railway in the Zoo?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CROSS: This reckless policy of constructing additional railways will produce further losses and pile up the interest bill to greater dimensions. It is time that policy was reviewed and a halt cried until such time as we can get a definite assurance from those people who will benefit from the construction of a line, that they will use it.

The Minister for Lands: There is no doubt about this line.

Mr. CROSS: It is all very well to smile and make a joke of it. The truth of the matter is that at present the cream of the freight from the country areas is transported by motor traction, not by the railways. The people who will benefit from the line will probably get their requirements from Kalgoorlie or Perth by motor transport. When they go to Perth, they will travel by motor car, not by train. According to the latest report from the Commissioner of Railways, the working cost of the system last year was £2,111,588, of which £996,233 represented interest. The earnings totalled £2,932,140, thus showing a loss of £176,681. I am of opinion that before further railway lines are constructed in country areas consideration should be devoted along the lines of the amendment with a view to forcing some of the idle country into use. I will oppose the policy of railway construction in country areas until such time as we get a definite assurance from the producers concerned that they will give all their business to the railway when it is built.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison — on amendment) [8.46]: I fully appreciate the motives of the mover of the amendment. It is remarkable that a few years ago the Minister for Lands, who has said there is not too much available land adjacent to the existing lines, was a member of the Ministry that introduced the Closer Settlement Bill for the purpose of bringing into intense culture available land adjacent to the railways. I had proposed, of course, to look up "Hansard" to see what arguments he advanced in

support of that Bill, but I notice that he adds, by the way, that the position is, and has been for many years that there are millions of acres of land adjacent to railways not in a full state of productivity. I remember that a highly paid officer was delegated by the Government of the day to ascertain the area of that land for the purpose of bringing it into intense culture, and I recollect the fate that befell him on account of his report; he lost his position, or at all events he missed promotion, through being too honest in regard to the area of land to be found in one of the most fertile sections of our rural areas. He reported that there was approximately 12,000,000 acres of land, the bulk of it in the Avon valley. His report was too honest, and consequently the Government of the day did not favour it. So the contention that there is no land available is wrong. I agree with the Minister for Lands that probably there is not sufficient money available to-day to bring it into intense culture. We have arrived at a time when railway construction must be seriously considered before being authorised. We have now a good guide in what has actually happened, not so much concerning the construction of railways, as what might be said to be the land settlement policy of the country. We have had Ministers who were members of the Country Party. An ex-Minister of the Crown has on frequent occasions declared in this Chamber that our land policy was altogether wrong, that invariably our farmers held too much land, more than they could properly cultivate and develop. There was a lot of truth in that gentleman's utterances. In the main our people are land poor: rates and taxes of all descriptions have to be met by them, and they cannot pay, notwithstanding which they still hang on to the land. Then we have to consider the factor of motor transport. In an old-established town like York there are fewer people to-day than there were 25 years ago. The explanation is that one farmer has, so to speak, swallowed his neighbours one after another until he has reduced the population. Yet most of the land in that district is served by a railway. What we are doing is to permit a monopoly of the land adjacent to railways, and then go out and settle new people in the wilderness.

Mr. Thorn: We are settling them all right.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes: we have settled practically every group settler, and have pretty well settled the taxpayers in doing so. Now we have motor transport in opposition to our railways. Wherever there is a little community built up, motor transport is successfully competing with the railway. My friends opposite are always eulogising the virtues of motor transport. Then in the name of goodness, why do not they get to work, for we have in the district under consideration a belt of country fully developed and being farmed. Yet we find no motor transport there, as yet. However, I suggest that no sooner shall the line be built than the next demand will be for a road, after the construction of which we shall have the ghastly spectacle of motor transport successfully competing with the railway.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, if they are foolish enough to build the road alongside the railway.

Mr. MARSHALL: In that respect we have been particularly foolish in the past.

The Minister for Mines: There can be no doubt about that.

Mr. MARSHALL: That has been our experience, and that will happen again. The Commissioner of Railways points out in his report that he is under an obligation to adhere to the policy of the Government, and so has to haul super and wheat at unprofitable rates. He suggests that if only he could charge a flat rate for all the commodities he hauls, including super and wheat, charging 1½d. per mile per ton, his railway system would show a huge profit. But the position is that under direction from successive Governments he hauls the major portion of his commodities at a price below cost.

Mr. Lambert: That is only a matter of policy.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have already intimated that. The goldfields have always been charged the maximum price for haulage, even in lean times. When the gold mining industry was struggling for an existence, we still had to pay the maximum charge on all commodities hauled. In that, to-day is no different from yesterday. And notwithstanding that the people of the goldfields, under protest have done that, we are now to build another railway, and that with no guarantee that the whole of the haulage of the district will be confined to the railway. Consequently the loss on the railways will increase, and so we must impose taxation in order to make up the deficiency on the railways.

Mr. Lambert: The State spent half a million in building the Wiluna railway in the district you represent.

Mr. MARSHALL: And it is the most profitable proposition the department has had for years; it has even excelled the manganese railway. I have been given to understand by those in authority that it is the most profitable railway in the State.

Mr. Lambert: You had better not say anything about the prices for haulage.

Mr. MARSHALL: If I were the hon. member, I would not mention the price of hauling anything, for he has had a fair issue of concessions for all those things in which he is interested.

Mr. Lambert: I wish you would mention some of them.

Mr. MARSHALL: The people of the goldfields have to pay the maximum haulage charges on all commodities required, and have to pay very heavily. On behalf of those people I suggest that the time has arrived when we should hesitate about constructing further railways until we have a definite understanding as to what is going to happen them when constructed. When they are built it is too late, for they have to be worked and therefore the trains have to be run at a loss, and it is the people of the goldfields who have to carry the burden. I will not oppose the construction of this line, for I recollect that when the settlers went out there they were promised the line. They circularised most of the members then in Parliament, and I amongst others promised them I would support their line. However, at that time, with the price of wheat at what it was, we could see nothing better than growing wheat. It is of no use members to-day preaching the doctrine of God help us if we cannot grow wheat. I can produce a little book showing that the same statement was used in the Tasmanian Parliament when the hop crops were under discussion. It was said that Tasmania would be ruined if anything happened the hop industry. Yet the hops have all gone from Tasmania, notwithstanding which that State is just as prosperous to-day as it was when it was growing hops. It has to be borne in mind that certain other countries by virtue of their geographical position can grow and market wheat even more economically than can Western Australia. Moreover we have to remember that the World Economic Conference decided

upon the restriction of wheat production in other countries in order to give us a chance to secure a reasonable price. It is of no use saying, "Let us spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on this line, and God help us if we cannot get a better price for wheat." We are called upon to build railways, make roads and provide carting subsidies, and then the Federal Government are called upon to subsidise the industry, after which members say, "God help us if we cannot grow wheat." I will not oppose the construction of the line since I have promised to support it; and I will not support the amendment, although undoubtedly the time has arrived when the subject matter of the amendment should be of grave concern to the Government. Instead of hauling trains through vast areas of unused land, we should tackle the problem of bringing such land into production before contemplating the development of new districts farther out. At the moment we can only concentrate on keeping intact what we have, but the proposed construction of further lines should receive very serious consideration before being submitted to Parliament. The Government should also consider the advisableness of coming to arrangements with settlers in new districts supplied with railways with a view to keeping the whole of their trade instead of getting merely the unprofitable portion while motor transport gets the profitable part.

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

Ayes	4
Noes	31
Majority against	27

AYES.

Mr. Cross	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Johnson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Clothier	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Seward
Miss Holman	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Keenan	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Lambert	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Thorn
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Troy
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Moloney	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Wilson
Mr. North	Mr. Withers
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Doney
Mr. Patrick	

(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.
Mr. McDonaldNo.
Mr. Collier

Amendment thus negatived.

On motion by Hon. N. Keenan, debate adjourned.

BILL—GOLDFIELDS ALLOTMENTS REVESTMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [9.7] in moving the second reading said: This Bill deals with the revesting of certain surrendered allotments in the Crown.

Mr. Latham: They are not surrendered, are they?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Many holders of lots on the goldfields, notably in Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Southern Cross, Brown Hill, Trafalgar and Coolgardie, either being unable to pay rates due under the Goldfields Water Supply Act, 1902, or having no further use for the allotments and desiring to be freed from the liability for the payment of rates, handed in their titles and the surrender of their land to the Water Supply Department. The arrears of rates owing at the time of the surrender have been written off, both by the Water Supply Department and the local governing bodies. To register the surrenders in the Titles Office would entail considerable expense, and it is desired to take action towards the revestment in order to clear the books of the local governing bodies, etc., of charges for rates which they could never collect, and in order that the lots in question might be resold by the Crown and again become rateable if purchased by other people who desire to use them. For that purpose it has been decided to introduce the Bill to provide for the revestment of the lands. There is a demand for lots on the goldfields, for in that one portion of the State there is considerable activity. Provision is made for the Bill not to become operative until a day to be fixed by proclamation and such day will be not earlier than three months after the passing of the measure. The necessary provision for the revesting in the Crown, enabling the lots thereafter to be disposed of under the provisions of the Land Act, are contained in Clauses 1 to 4. Provision is made in Clause 5 to the effect that if,

at any time before the measure becomes law, any one of the holders desires to pay up the arrears of rates and obtain possession of the allotments, the Minister may direct that the title be returned to such person and the allotment will then become exempt from the operation of the Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—FEEDING STUFFS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [9.11] in moving the second reading said: This is a small but necessary measure to amend the Act. The main reason is to define clearly the word "sell." In the Act, the definition of "dealer" means any person who carries on business as an importer, vendor or dealer in food for stock for the purposes of trade, whether such person carries on any other business or trade, or not. It has been found necessary to insert before "importer" the word "manufacturer." Section 4 of the Act provides that any person who sells bran or pollard that is not in accordance with the standard prescribed in the Second Schedule shall be guilty of an offence. Before any firm could be prosecuted, even though samples taken by a departmental officer did not comply with the standard, it was essential to prove that the bran or pollard sold was actually of the lot sampled. That has presented difficulties. If the Department of Agriculture are to police the Act, a simple method of taking samples must be provided. If an officer purchased a sample, he would have to prove, in the case of a manufacturer, that it was actually exposed for sale, and to do that would be difficult. Under the amendment it will be assumed that the manufacturer with bran on his premises has it for sale. A departmental officer will have the right to take samples. In the case of bulk bran, proper sampling is necessary, and the inspector would have authority to go on the premises and take samples. On those samples he would have the right to proceed if the bran were found to be not up to standard. It is necessary to protect the purchaser.

This power is given under the Fertilisers Act as well as under the Agricultural Products Act. The departmental officers under those Acts have the right to take samples, and if they are proved not to be up to the standard required by the regulations, proceedings can be taken against those concerned. The section gives the Minister power to publish a list of dealers who have registered foods for stock. Such a list is necessary in order to show what foods for stock have been registered. It is considered that the publication of this information will be of great value to the settlers, and enable them to compare the various feeds that are on the market. Although there is some verbiage contained in the Bill, this is the real reason for its existence. The departmental inspectors will be able to take samples, and, if these are found unsatisfactory, to proceed against the manufacturer. This cannot be done now without a great deal of difficulty, and without a good deal of uncertainty of getting a conviction. It is further provided that a list of manufacturers can be published in the "Government Gazette" or the "Agricultural Journal," as well as particulars of the food-stuffs and their values.

Mr. Ferguson: Will that apply to stock licks?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Farmers experience a good deal of difficulty in that respect to-day, as it is not easy for them to assess the value of the various licks in the market. One of the most expensive licks when analysed was found not to contain the value that the price seemed to suggest. If the constituents of the stock licks are published in the "Agricultural Journal" or the "Government Gazette" the stock owners will have an opportunity of gauging the value for themselves. Furthermore the department will be able to make a recommendation on the subject. We should be able to compel the manufacturer to observe the law for the protection of the producer. It was intended that this should be so, but the word "manufacturer" was left out of the definition. Had it not been for that omission it would not have been necessary to introduce this small measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Ferguson, debate adjourned.

BILL—REDUCTION OF RENTS ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th September.

MR. LATHAM (York) [9.18]: This continuance Bill is part of the Plan legislation which had to be introduced in 1931, to give effect to the arrangement made between the Commonwealth and the States. I am sorry the Minister for Justice is bringing down this continuance legislation in piecemeal fashion. The Bill is only part of quite a number of pieces of legislation of a similar character. When the Mitchell Government dealt with the matter all the notices regarding the legislation were given together. I should like to have an idea whether any material alteration will be made to the rest of this Plan legislation.

The Minister for Justice: You have had two Bills. There was the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance Bill.

MR. LATHAM: That was no more a piece of the Plan legislation than the Tenants and Purchasers Mortgagees' Relief Act. I am talking about the Plan legislation. Behind the whole thing was the idea of bringing down costs by 20 per cent., not only in the case of Governmental expenditure, but in the case of other avenues, in order to assist primary producers and others to continue their operations. I do not propose to offer any objection to the Bill, but wish to protest against this legislation being brought down piecemeal. The Minister might have told us what the proposals of the Government are in respect to that big piece of legislation known as the Financial Emergency Act. Is it proposed to amend it? If there is any intention to alter the idea behind the Plan legislation, that is, to make a 20 per cent. reduction in costs, it ought to be made fair and even all round. The idea behind the whole thing was to treat everyone as fairly as possible, and not to give concessions to certain individuals which were withheld from others.

Mr. Marshall: That is not so.

MR. LATHAM: I say the idea behind it was to treat everyone as fairly as possible.

Mr. Sleeman: You did not do that by this legislation.

Mr. Marshall: You used the word "everyone." You benefited a section of the community only.

Mr. Sleeman: And a small section of that.

Mr. LATHAM: We did it as fairly as possible, so far as we could control the matter.

Mr. Marshall: Having regard for your political task-masters outside.

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member should refrain from those interjections.

Mr. Marshall: I shall do so to enable you to proceed.

Mr. LATHAM: We get rather weary of them. I do not think there is any objection to the Bill. It was brought down by the previous Government, and as a continuance Bill is being brought down by a Labour Government, which was then sitting in opposition. I should, however, like the Minister to tell us what the Government propose to do with the rest of the Plan legislation. Is it proposed to continue the financial emergency legislation?

The Minister for Mines: You will get it all in good time.

Mr. LATHAM: This is part of it, but I do not like it being brought down piecemeal.

The Minister for Mines: You did a lot of things last year that we did not like.

Mr. LATHAM: I enter my protest against dealing with these matters piecemeal.

The Minister for Mines: You will have to put up with it, just as we had to do.

Mr. LATHAM: I can well imagine what would happen in the case of some legislation we have dealt with to-night, if it had been introduced by members on this side of the House. Tears of blood would have been streaming from the faces of members opposite.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will continue to imagine those things and not discuss them.

Mr. LATHAM: I am only imagining what would happen. I have a right to protest against this legislation being brought down piecemeal.

The Minister for Mines: Of course you have.

Mr. LATHAM: And I am going to protest against it. The idea was to endeavour to spread this reduction as fairly as possible amongst all sections of the community. I am sorry we have only one piece of the Plan to deal with. We might hold it up until we see what is going to be done with

the rest of it. If it is intended to continue the Financial Emergency Act, no objection can be raised to this piece of legislation.

The Minister for Justice: It will be continued in some form.

Mr. LATHAM: We want to know what that form will be.

The Minister for Justice: The Government will announce their policy within a reasonable time.

Mr. LATHAM: Then this Bill might wait a reasonable time.

The Minister for Justice: It will not matter whether this passes now or not, so long as it does pass before the end of the year.

Mr. LATHAM: This reduction in rents applies only to leases in operation prior to the passing of the Act, namely, 30th June, 1930. I suppose that many of those who had these leases are very pleased to be getting even the reduced rentals, that is, the rentals less 20 per cent. This legislation would have to be continued for some time, I regret to say, and on that ground I can offer no objection to the Bill. But I appeal to the Minister to let us have the whole of the legislation so that we may ascertain what alterations are going to be made. This is only a part of the whole. The whole was a plan originally arranged between the States and the Commonwealth Government.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [9.24]: Whilst I have no objection to the Bill, I think something else could have been brought down with it. We well remember when this legislation was introduced by the previous Government how many members objected to a section of the community being singled out for relief from rent. This measure deals only with a small section of the community, those who are on the leasehold or monthly tenancy basis. Only a very small percentage of the people concerned will be affected. Not even all the business people are included. I understand it was the intention of the previous Government to give relief to business people generally. I refer particularly to those who can least afford to pay rent. They are not going to get any relief. There are numbers of small business people who have no monthly tenancy or lease of their premises. They are to be found all over the metropolitan area. They have only a small business and are obliged to pay their way from week to week

only. If they do not pay their rent they have to get out. A small business man cannot shift his customers when he is obliged to go to some other district, and he suffers accordingly. The average working man will not get any relief under the Bill. I should like to know if it is the intention of the Government to introduce some measure of a rent restriction character, a Fair Rents Bill, to provide for the necessary reduction in rents. Some people may say that the rents have dropped without legislation, but we know that the rents are not down very much in most parts of the metropolitan area. In the poorer parts and the out-back districts, possibly rents have come down. It is necessary that something should be done for tenants throughout the length and breadth of the metropolitan area and in other parts of the State, so that they may get relief and so that it will not only be the favoured few who are protected by legislation. If a Fair Rents Bill had been brought down there would have been no necessity for this measure. All the cases could have been dealt with by the fair rents tribunal. If the Government are not going to amend the legislation brought down by the previous Government as regards rents, I should like to know if their intention is to bring down a Fair Rents Bill to provide the necessary protection for tenants in the country.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [9.27]: I endorse the remarks of the member for Fremantle. I well remember when the original measure was brought down, the keen disappointment that was expressed by members sitting in opposition. We understood from the Attorney General of that time that the Bill would cover all forms of rent. When it came down the Attorney General found no difficulty in informing us that we had misunderstood him. Following upon that misunderstanding some very heated remarks were exchanged across the floor of the House. The Leader of the Opposition wants to know what is going to happen to the other portions of the financial emergency legislation, which make up the full complement of the legislation decided upon at the Premiers' Conference. He suggested it was a part of the whole and that everyone had to make sacrifices. This particular measure was designed to make a certain section of the community disgorge their fair share. It did not apply to many people. It is true,

as the member for Fremantle says, it covered only very few compared with the total number who had to make sacrifices. Those who work for sustenance get no relief whatever under the Act. They have partial relief under an Act now on the statute-book. Even that measure, however, does not permit the Commissioner to do as much as it is desirable he should do; and the Commissioner has stated that frequently. What is needed is a measure to control rents generally and give relief to the working section of the community. The landlords of such tenements as are here in view have not made much sacrifice. I do not wish to be too drastic against landlords generally, especially as many of them have made considerable sacrifices; but I am referring to the hard, crusted landlord, who until the law compels him to do so will not give any relief to tenants compelled to rent his properties. In the main, small business premises are held on weekly tenancies, more particularly if living rooms are attached. Therefore the Leader of the Opposition, if sincere, would be more inclined to fight for protection for the small tenants than to worry about what will happen to an Act of Parliament that expires at the end of this year and must necessarily come up here for discussion before that period arrives. I hope the Government will give consideration to the introduction of a fair rents measure, especially as this Bill proposes no amendments. Goldfields residents are being exploited owing to the demand for homes consequent upon the recent influx of population. Landlords are now charging extortionate rents. Recently a wood and iron building costing about £150 was let at 32s. 6d. per week, thus returning the landlord its capital cost in about 18 months. True, the minimum wage in that centre happens to be 16s. 1d.; but taking 32s. 6d. a week for rent alone out of that wage means that residents are in an unhappy position. The Government should do something, and do it quickly. The demand for a fair rents measure is practically State-wide. I am not concerned with the desire of the Leader of the Opposition for information regarding other Bills.

The Minister for Mines: At the time the parent Act was passed, a house could be obtained for 7s. 6d. a week on the goldfields. I want a Bill to affect to-day's rents, and not the rents of 1931.

Mr. MARSHALL: Whatever the Minister desires, I also desire. We differ only as to the procedure to be adopted. I rose principally to stress the importance of introducing a Bill to cover cases in which tenants are not receiving justice. There is a section of landlords, even though small, not making the sacrifices imposed on the community as a whole.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—in reply) [9.34]: Referring to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, let me say that the whole question of financial emergency has been gone into by the Government. It is not our intention to bring down a Bill to continue the Financial Emergency Act, in which some alterations have become necessary. Circumstances are different now, and some aspects of the measure have not worked out well. Time and experience have proved the need for amendment. The Leader of the Opposition knows that the Premier, when leading the Labour Party at the last general election, said there would be amendments made in the Financial Emergency Act if Labour was returned to power. The Government propose now to give effect to that promise. We are considering what the amendments shall be, and they will be introduced to the House before long. The aspects raised by the members for Fremantle (Mr. Sleeman) and Murchison (Mr. Marshall) are also receiving the Government's consideration. I refer to the incidence of rent, and the possibility of giving effect to the Labour policy in this respect. Three efforts in that direction were made when Labour was last in office. We hope that when next we bring down a Fair Rents Bill it will have not only this Chamber's support, which is more or less guaranteed, but also the support of another place, and thus become the law of the land.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WHOLE MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th September.

MR. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [9.40]: The Bill contains nothing to which exception could be taken. In view of the fact that the parent Act broke almost entirely new ground in Western Australian legislation, it is remarkable that so few amendments are deemed necessary by the Government. Last year we found that section of the dairying industry engaged in the supply of whole milk to the metropolitan area to be in a deplorable condition. On all sides there were demands for the introduction of legislation to control and organise the supply of milk to the metropolitan area. Those demands resulted largely from the development of the nearer South-West. Prior to that period the supply of whole milk for consumption in the metropolitan area came from districts such as Osborne Park, Wanneroo, and the outer suburban area; but owing to the development of the nearer South-West many people there sent in to the metropolitan area whole milk for consumption. A great deal of undercutting took place, and as a result the industry fell into a shockingly disorganised condition. Last year the parent Act was passed, and the Government set up a board to administer it. I am indeed pleased with the manner in which the board have carried out their duties. I agree with the Minister for Agriculture that they are to be congratulated on the success which has attended their efforts. Were I called upon to appoint another board to administer this Act, I would not go beyond the present personnel. In my opinion, the chairman and the members have devoted themselves whole-heartedly to the administration of the Act. They have not spared themselves in any way, and it must be admitted that they have made a wonderful success of their job. Naturally, there has been some criticism of the board's activities; but that criticism has come from only one section of the community, and an inconsiderable section at that. I have not heard one producer or one consumer complain of the board's activities. Whilst the consumer is getting a better supply of milk at the same price as he paid prior to the passage of this legislation, the producer, thanks to the

board's activities, is receiving an advance of not less than 3d. per gallon on the price he realised a year ago. Those facts are due to the organisation work put in by the board. Criticism, some of it fairly venomous, has come from either the distributors or those who, being associated with them, see eye to eye with them. That criticism has taken various forms. In one instance the board were criticised severely at a public meeting. Some of the criticism came from a member of the august body known as the Perth City Council, and one of his statements was that the members of the Whole Milk Board should be treated as the vermin they were, and that the Minister who introduced the Act should be put in gaol.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that what this Bill is amending?

MR. FERGUSON: The gentleman who made that statement sought to enter the legislative halls of this country, Mr. Speaker; and the use by him of such language gives a clear indication of his fitness to be a legislator. I think you will agree, Sir, that the electors of Leederville showed a wise discrimination in exercising their franchise. Some criticism has been levelled at the charges imposed by the board. Necessarily there must be some charges associated with administrative work such as that of the board. Those who receive the benefit of the board's activities must expect to pay for some of the advantages they have received. The commodity itself must be responsible for the payment of those charges. But what is a charge of one farthing per gallon if as the result the producers of the commodity receive a price increased by 3d. per gallon? The Minister for Agriculture stated a little while ago that the board had not sufficient power to control the distribution of the commodity in the fullest sense. I have placed on the Notice Paper certain amendments that I desire to move at the Committee stage, and I believe that, if agreed to, they will provide the board with full control. Members will admit that the board should control all the milk that comes into the metropolitan area other than that for the manufacture of butter. It was thought they would control the whole of the supplies, but in practice it is found that they are not in that position. There is a considerable quantity sold

as ships' milk at Fremantle and the board have no control over that milk. There is also a large quantity sent to the metropolitan area for use in ice-cream factories, and the board have no control over that portion of it either. I regret that, in respect of milk that is sent to butter factories in the metropolitan area, the cream is not necessarily manufactured into butter, but in some instances has been used in competition with genuine whole milk from outside areas. That is absolutely wrong, and power should be given to the board to control all milk supplies so that an effective grip can be maintained over them. It is interesting to note that just at a time when Western Australia had taken a lead in placing on the statute-book, legislation to organise and control the consumption of milk in the metropolitan area, the milk producers in the Old Country adopted a similar attitude. In the "West Australian" there appeared a cablegram dated the 6th September last, reading as follows:—

By an overwhelming majority, 150,000 farmers of England and Wales have declared themselves in favour of the Government's milk marketing scheme, under which the sale and collection of milk would be controlled by a board. The result of the poll of farmers recently taken on the proposed formation of national and regional milk pools, was announced to-day by the National Farmers' Union, as follows:—In favour, 96.42 per cent.; against, 3.58 per cent.

That indicates that nearly every farmer in the Old Country interested in supplying milk to the London market, was in favour of organising along lines similar to those that have proved successful in Western Australia. Not only did such a large proportion of the farmers indicate their approval of the scheme for marketing their commodity, but the cablegram indicated that the number of cows owned by the people interested in the vote totalled 1,556,858, so that the owners of 97 per cent. of the cows approved of the scheme and the owners of three per cent. disapproved. Thus, the lead we have set in Western Australia has evidently borne fruit beyond the shores of the State. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.