

ticular pup drowned. Let us know, when the Estimates are brought down, exactly what these concerns are costing, and then, if they are paying, we can help them. But if they are not paying, we ought not to take them over on that ground, allowing the shareholders to manage them and pat themselves on the back if eventually a success is made. I strongly object to these businesses being carried on by means of Government money while the State has no opportunity of recovering the funds so invested.

On motion by Mr. Munsie, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.9 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 3rd September, 1919.

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

QUESTION—WHEAT LOADING AT FREMANTLE.

Hon. A. H. PANTON asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is he aware that the boats "C.J.S." and the "Almora" were delayed in Fremantle owing to insufficient wheat being available to load? 2, In the interests of the Fremantle port, will the Minister take steps to prevent such delay in the future?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1 and 2, There was no undue delay in supplying wheat for the "C.J.S." and "Almora." The wheat was supplied in accordance with the terms of the charter parties which governed the loading of the vessels.

QUESTION—ALIENS AT KALGOORLIE.

Hon. A. H. PANTON asked the Minister for Education: 1, Are the Government aware that large numbers of aliens have left Kalgoorlie under advice by the police? 2, In the interest of peace, will the Government take steps to prevent these aliens invading other industrial centres?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, The Government are aware that a number of aliens have left Kalgoorlie. 2, The Government are not aware that these aliens are invading other industrial centres and are informed that a number are arranging to leave the State.

QUESTION—SOLDIERS' SENTENCES, REMISSIONS.

Hon. A. H. PANTON asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many returned soldiers were undergoing sentence in the State for other than military offences on Peace Day (19th July)? 2, Were any of the sentences remitted? 3, If so, how many, and to what extent?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, It is not recorded whether prisoners (other than those convicted of military offences) are returned soldiers or not. 2 and 3, All prisoners were granted a remission of sentence on the declaration of Peace in accordance with the following scale:—Sentences of 3 months and under, 14 days; for each subsequent period of 3 months, 14 days. Limit of remission, 6 months.

BILL—MENTAL TREATMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

Order of the Day read for the third reading.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) 4.37: I move—

That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clause 2.

When I saw that the second reading was fixed for yesterday's sitting I did not think there was any chance of the Bill going through Committee on the same day, and when the matter was before the House last night I was unavoidably absent. I crave the indulgence of the House to that extent. The Bill is a controversial one, and while I am not making any complaint against the leader of the House—indeed he can make one against me—I thought the ordinary procedure would be for the Committee stage to be taken at another sitting of the House. With regard to Clause 2, I would like to be permitted to put one or two matters before hon. members. That is why I ask that the Bill be recommitted.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.38]: I have no objection to the Bill being recommitted, but I would like to assure the hon. member that the usual procedure was followed. If the hon. member had intimated to me that

he wished the Committee stage to be delayed, I should have had much pleasure in doing so. The ordinary course was adopted at yesterday's sitting, and when the second reading of the Bill went through without discussion, we proceeded with the Committee stage.

Question put and passed, the Bill recommended.

In Committee.

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

Clause 2—Repeal of Section 54 of the Health Act Amendment Act, 1918; Section 41 made perpetual:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The matter is one of great importance and it interests different sections of the community very much. It was originally provided that the section should remain in force only until the 30th September, 1919, and no longer. The clause in the Bill makes that section perpetual. What is the reason for it? In a Bill of this nature it is advisable that Parliament should have an opportunity of considering it year by year, otherwise we are handing ourselves over to the Public Health Department. This is in one respect a Federal measure, introduced as we were told at the express desire of the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister for Education: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is what I have always understood.

Hon. J. Cornell: We lead; they follow.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The proposal was that all the States should bring in a similar measure at the same time.

The Minister for Education: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then, what is the position of affairs? We are setting up a department against the Federal Government. What right has the State Commissioner of Health to go into the Federal military camps? I maintain that except with the permission of the Federal Government neither he nor his officers have any such right.

The Minister for Education: Do you suggest they ever did go into the camps?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not care whether they did or did not; if the State has not the right to go into these Federal hospitals and camps, how can we say that we are going to treat the disease in this country?

Hon. J. Cornell: The Military authorities will look after that; do not worry about it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then, we are going to have two Acts of Parliament dealing with this question in Western Australia. The matter has been brought up in all the other States. The State of Victoria knocked out a similar clause to this, but so long as we clearly understand the position, I cannot say anything more. I regret that Dr. Saw is not present.

The Minister for Education: If you had been here last night you would have heard what he had to say.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have expressed my regret at being absent, but on the first discussion on this Bill in 1915 Dr. Saw said that the object of the amendment was that the Commissioner should have before him a statement on oath before he took any action, otherwise the clause would give rise to opportunities for blackmail and also for that abomination, the anonymous informer. The latest report of the Commissioner, dated 1917, states—

In Western Australia where a single central authority holds, as it were, the whole State in the palm of its hand—

No one knows better than the Commissioner the friction that has arisen between the Federal and State health authorities and, so long as we have dual control, this trouble will occur. It is all very well to say the military people will look after their side of the business.

Hon. J. Cornell: They do not want any legislation; they make their own.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The inmates of these camps are inhabitants of Western Australia, and we are entitled to know the position of affairs. My proposal is to carry on this section till 1920, so that we shall have an opportunity next year to see exactly where we stand. I move an amendment—

That Clause 2 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"The amendments to the principal Act, made by Section 41 of this Act shall continue in force only until the 30th day of September, 1920, and no longer, after which Section 242j of the principal Act, as originally enacted, shall again come into operation."

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have found it difficult to follow the argument of Mr. Sanderson and can hardly help thinking he is confusing this Bill with another piece of legislation. The Commonwealth Government have never made any request about the matter, nor does the Federal Constitution contemplate that the domestic health of the State shall be the care of the Commonwealth Government. It is entirely the responsibility of the State. The hon. member said the Chamber should give a considered opinion on this clause. When the Bill was before the House in 1917-18, a select committee went into the matter exhaustively and submitted a report, which was approved almost unanimously by this Chamber, and that report did not provide for a limitation of the operation of the clause. That committee and the members of this Chamber were completely satisfied that the clause was a good one, and passed it without any limitation. Subsequently, in another place, some opposition was raised and, by way of giving the matter a trial, it was provided that the clause should continue only until the 30th September, 1919, a period of 18 months. That disposes of the suggestion that this Chamber has not given a considered

opinion on this matter. Those who opposed the clause at that time and succeeded in having the time limit inserted employed, as their strongest argument, the statements made by Dr. Saw when the Bill was originally before the House in 1915. Not being able to get into touch with Dr. Saw, I expressed the view I thought he would take. Dr. Saw had sought to introduce suitable safeguards and I said I was sure, when the evidence was before him, that Dr. Saw would be the first to commend the removal of those safeguards and the substitution of others. I did not discuss the matter with Dr. Saw, but last evening he practically repeated my words. He said he was responsible for the insertion of those safeguards which might interfere with the working of the Act, and he approved of the Bill in its present form. The Commonwealth Government have never asked us to enact such legislation, and I do not think they have asked any other State to do so.

Hon. A. Sanderson: The military authorities.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Commonwealth Government have recognised the importance of endeavouring to stamp out venereal disease and have provided a vote to assist the States. They have recognised that Western Australia is doing more in this direction than the other States and have given us a bigger share, proportionately, of that vote. When the military camps were in existence they acted under military law, and the Commissioner never attempted to go into the camps. When the war was over, a number of men who had enlisted were detained in the military camp on account of disease. They were discharged as soldiers, and the Federal authorities' interest in them, as citizens, ceased. They left the camp and there was no longer any method of dealing with them, except under State legislation. I cannot understand the application of the Melbourne telegram quoted by Mr. Sanderson. The argument to make the provision apply from year to year might be raised in regard to every measure brought before the House. We have too many of these continuance laws already. When we are satisfied, after 18 months' trial, that this measure is a good one, why should Parliament review it every 12 months? If at any time it is abused, it is always competent for Parliament to amend it. I see no necessity for the amendment.

Hon. J. E. DODD: When the Bill came before the House last session I opposed this clause very strongly and I see no reason to alter my opinion. If I thought from experience that the Act had justified itself, I would be willing to support it. But I am not altogether satisfied that we have given the clause a sufficiently long trial to show that it is operating satisfactorily. Since coming to the House, I have received a letter from several women's societies, drawing attention to a number of points in connection with this measure, and they ask that the Bill be deferred in order that they

might obtain further information. Among other things, they are inquiring how many females have been notified; how many were suffering from the disease; were they subjected to clinical or bacteriological examination, and if so how many of each; in how many cases did the Commissioner request women to report for examination. There are a number of other points, and, in view of this request for information, I support the amendment. It is as well to give those interested an opportunity to express their views to the Government by deputation or otherwise. There is nothing like this proposal in any other legislation in the world and, seeing it has only recently been put into operation, it is not too much to ask that it shall be made law for only another year, so that there will then be an opportunity to review it.

Hon. J. Cornell: You will always find some people with objections.

Hon. J. E. DODD: This is the most revolutionary proposal of its kind in the history of legislation and I urge that its operation be limited to another year, in order to give an opportunity to review it again. I am strongly opposed to too much compulsion, and therefore I hope the amendment will be carried.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I hope the amendment will not be carried. As regards the answering of the questions which Mr. Dodd has mentioned, let me say candidly that if the women's organisations had had their way from the beginning, the principal Act would never have been passed. My experience abroad has taught me that the sooner we realise the venereal evil and give the necessary power to those qualified to cope with it, the better for the community. When the original measure was carried, all sorts of bogies were raised; but I have yet to learn of a case being quoted against the administration of the Act. Any case quoted now, after 18 months' operation, must be purely supposititious. Let us give the Health Department the power they ask. If they abuse it, we can take it away again.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I will not follow the question of the Federal or the military authorities any further except to say that I am under the impression the suggestion came from them. At any rate, on the showing of the leader of the House, they are financing us in this matter. However, here is a piece of experimental legislation on a matter of the greatest importance. It is ludicrous to maintain that this Parliament has solved off-hand a problem which has puzzled many generations. The measure should come up automatically for reconsideration. Let us have an up-to-date report from the Health Department on this subject, instead of a report two years old, and then let us reconsider the question. I think the members of the medical profession will be the first to admit that there are other problems besides the medical one involved in this matter. I consider that the women's societies who have moved in con-

nection with the Bill are to be thanked for their action, and I trust the amendment will be carried.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I am sorry I was not present when this debate opened. On the introduction of the original Bill in 1916, I had very considerable doubts, believing there was a distinct chance of the measure giving an opening for blackmail. Therefore I did what I could to safeguard the person who might be accused of suffering from venereal disease, by the insertion of the section providing for a signed statement. After a couple of years' experience of the working of the Act the Commissioner states that the necessity for obtaining a signed statement militates against the successful administration of the measure; and I am prepared to pay a great deal of deference to his opinion. I do not think we shall abolish venereal disease by any Act of Parliament, and my chief object is the mitigation of the evil. In view of the Commissioner's report, I am prepared to waive my original objection and to agree to grant what he asks for. I imagine the Commissioner will at all times satisfy himself that the person reporting is worthy of credence, before official steps are taken on a report. The Minister for Health has stated that during the time the Act has been in force there have been no complaints. Since my return from France I have not heard any complaints, and I think that if there had been any they would have reached my ears, because everybody knows the interest I have taken in the measure. The necessity for combating venereal disease is now greater than it was at the time the principal Act was passed, and therefore I consider we should make this a permanent provision. The other States have not introduced legislation of this character simply because of the hornets' nest which is always roused when the words "venereal disease" are mentioned. If this particular provision should give rise to blackmail, there is sufficient force of public opinion to secure its repeal.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Bill again reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—CROWN SUITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—GENERAL LOAN AND IN- SCRIBED STOCK ACT AMEND- MENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.15] in moving the second reading said: The General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act of 1910, Section 18, paragraph (a), provided that the interest on such inscribed stock or deben-

tures was not to exceed four per cent. per annum. In 1915 that section was amended by substituting the word "five" for "four," making the maximum rate of interest which might be paid on inscribed stock five per cent. In March of 1918 a Bill was introduced for the purpose of further amending the Act of 1910, and substituting $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the four per cent. that obtained in the Bill of 1910, and for the five per cent. that obtained in the Bill of 1915. During the discussion in this Chamber on the Bill of 1918 objection was taken to the high rate of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. being included as a permanent piece of legislation, and it was decided by this Chamber that the operation of the Act should be limited very severely. The amendment was not agreed to in another place, and subsequently a conference between the two Houses was arranged, with the result that a compromise was arrived at. That compromise has expression in Section 3 of the Act of 1918, which reads as follows:—

This Act shall apply to all inscribed stock and debentures issued after the commencement of this Act for the redemption of any loans raised prior to the commencement of this Act, and for any loans which may be raised up to the 30th day of June, 1919, such loans not to exceed a total sum of £750,000, and to debentures issued after the commencement of this Act as security for loans raised before the commencement of this Act.

And Section 4 of the Act made a further proviso that the Act shall continue in force until the 30th September of 1919. During the currency of the Act passed last year, loans have been raised at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., not at $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which was inserted in the Bill as a maximum. It was never contemplated that the State would have to pay $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. As a matter of fact, the loans raised at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. were raised by the Commonwealth Government, the charges, with a discount, amounting to £6 2s. 6d. The present position is that on the 30th day of this month the Act of 1918 will cease to operate, and consequently without some further amendment we shall go back to the position set up by the Act of 1915, which fixes the maximum rate of interest at 5 per cent. It is obvious that for some considerable time to come it will be impossible for the State to borrow at 5 per cent., consequently the Bill now before the House proposes that the Act of 1910 shall be amended by inserting the word "six" instead of "four," which will make 6 per cent. the maximum rate at which inscribed stock or debentures may be issued.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What percentage are the Commonwealth Government charging on money loaned to the State for repatriation purposes?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That depends upon what it costs the Commonwealth Government to raise it. The arrangement is that it shall be loaned at the rate which it costs the Commonwealth Government, which will be probably between $5\frac{1}{2}$ and 6 per cent.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What rate do the Imperial Government charge?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is not finalised. When the papers which Mr. Sanderson moved for the other day are placed on the Table, hon. members will be able to see from them what stage the question has reached. This proposal simply is that six per cent. is set down as the maximum rate of interest that may be paid, instead of the four per cent. as provided in the original Act, and the five per cent. in the Act of 1915. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [5.20]: I regard the Bill as a most important one. Indeed, in the present state of the country's finances, all Bills dealing in any way with finance deserve the most earnest consideration of the House. It is true that the Bill does not authorise the borrowing of any money, but merely fixes the rate that may be paid on loan money which may be borrowed at some future time. But we all know what happens regarding loan authorisation Bills. No matter what Government may be in power, those Bills are brought in at the tail end of the session, and they receive very little consideration. Nobody seems to bother about the rate of interest, and the Bills pass with but little or no discussion. I do not see why, in the Bill now before us, there should not be inserted limitations similar to those which were inserted in the Bill of last year. Those limitations have been referred to by the Minister. In the Bill that was passed last year the amount of money that might be raised at the high rate of interest was limited to three-quarters of a million. Also the operation of the Bill was limited to twelve months. In the Bill now before us there is no limitation to the amount of money that may be borrowed at this high rate of interest, and the Bill is virtually perpetual. There are those who consider that, financially, the present Government are very reckless. The Premier has been described by the chairman of the conference of the Farmers and Settlers' Association as a defiant optimist. I think that description is a fairly accurate one. But whether or not we are in favour of the present Government, to pass a Bill that will give this and future Governments power to borrow at six per cent., which is an enormously high rate, is, to my mind, very dangerous. We certainly should limit the operation of the Bill to twelve months. Then, at the end of the twelve months, some fresh proposal could be brought forward and the position could be again reviewed. The six per cent. will probably mean $6\frac{1}{4}$, if not $6\frac{1}{2}$, per cent. by the time all charges shall have been paid. What projects are the Government likely to embark upon which will afford a return of $6\frac{1}{4}$ or $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and provide sinking fund as well? A majority of members seem to regard Government enterprises as not being very successful. It requires an acute business man to use money at $6\frac{1}{4}$ or $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in any private enter-

prise and make of it a payable proposition. Is any Government likely to do it? When the Government contemplate borrowing money that will probably cost $6\frac{1}{4}$ or $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. it seems to me we are giving the Government very considerable powers, which are likely to still further endanger the finances of the Government. What makes the position still more remarkable is that the Government are to-day lending money at a considerably lower rate than six per cent. In other words, we are to give them authority to borrow money at a higher rate than that at which they are at present themselves, in some instances, lending money. A House such as this, which claims to have a sense of responsibility in financial matters, ought to see that the Government go slow in borrowing and ought to favour the proposal which I intend to make when in Committee, namely, that the operations of the Bill shall be limited in the directions I have indicated. There are two purposes for which a Government are justified in borrowing money no matter how high the price may be. One is for loan redemption purposes. We must borrow money for any necessary loan redemption, no matter how high the price of that money may be, because it is necessary in order to safeguard the credit of the State. Also it seems that no matter what is done to prevent it, the accumulated deficit continues to grow and will, I fear, continue to grow for a very long time. During the two months of the current year, July and August, the deficit has amounted to £300,000. In view of that position, it is inevitable that for the current year there will be a large deficit, and, much as we may dislike doing so, we must allow the Government money to finance that deficit. In the amendment made last year provision was included for the borrowing of money for loan redemption purposes. The limitation which was placed upon the amount that the Government could borrow last year at a high rate of interest was £750,000. That was fixed as a result of a conference between the two Houses. In the amendments I have drafted, I suggest that the amount that we ought to place in the Bill this year should not be £750,000, but that it might be £500,000. The reason why I have fixed the amount at a lower figure than last year is that, according to the statement made by the Premier, the Government can carry on without any difficulty for some considerable time. The Premier in a public statement he made recently said—

The late Treasurer has left the finances in such a position as to make it easy to carry on. We can carry on not only to the end of this year but for some months afterwards. Provision was made by the late Treasurer whereby we have a balance of £1,064,000.

In view of that statement, I think we would be fairly generous in limiting the amount which can be borrowed at the high rate of interest to £500,000. With reference to the

price that may be paid for loan money, there are two purposes for which loan moneys are wanted in this State at present. One of these is for repatriation. All that money is coming from the Commonwealth Government. The Premier has made a statement in reference to the allotment of money by the Federal Government, as follows—

We have had allotted to us by the Federal Government £3,375,000 and of that sum £750,000 is for the purpose of opening up the country.

The Commonwealth Government at present are raising money at 5 per cent. by compulsory loan. Surely the Commonwealth Government are not going to charge the State Government more than 5 per cent.

The Minister for Education: It costs us more than 5 per cent.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: It is extraordinary if the Commonwealth Government will not give the money at 5 per cent., considering all they have said in the direction of financial help to the States. The second purpose for which money is needed in this State is to assist immigration. Where is the money for immigration to come from? Here is what the Treasurer says on the point—

The British Government is anxious to settle ex-soldiers in Western Australia. We have told the British Government that we want population and that we shall be glad to have their men so long as the money necessary to settle them is advanced by the British Government. They have made it clear that not only men but money will be made available for the purpose of the establishment of these ex-soldiers here.

Consequently, it would be interesting to know what money in the way of loan the Government require further than this large sum of £3,375,000, which they will get from the Commonwealth Government at what one would suppose a reasonable rate of interest, and also this help which has been so generously offered by the British Government. In the face of that, and after carrying on during all the war period under the authorisation permitting them to borrow money at 5 per cent., they now require authority to raise money at an increased rate of interest. We must also remember that the money we get we do not always receive at par. The price of money is sometimes below par, and we might get £99 10s. or even less than that for our £100, but under this Bill authority is being sought to borrow money at as high a rate of interest as 6 per cent. irrespective of discount. I sincerely trust that in Committee the Bill will be limited in the direction I have indicated, that whilst the Government shall have power to borrow money at any rate of interest for loan redemption purposes, they shall have authority to borrow not more than half a million pounds at the high rate of interest, and further, that the Bill shall be

limited in duration to a period of 12 months only. It is extremely dangerous to give Governments this power in perpetuity.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.37]: This Bill is a good illustration of the advantages of an experiment by which it comes up automatically for review. We as individual members cannot get rid of our responsibilities. We have to share in the financial position of Western Australia, and unless we take up some clear stand, and give a clear indication to the Government of our attitude, we must accept this grave responsibility. It has been admitted, both inside and outside the House, that speaking generally not only ourselves but the people we represent are the permanent settlers in Western Australia. We feel that we have a deeper and closer interest, and that the people we represent have a deeper and closer interest, in the financial affairs of Western Australia than others have. This is the opportunity for making our opinions known. It has been said before that the time for a general discussion of the finances is on the Estimates. I have no desire for a general discussion on the financial position of Western Australia. I want an opportunity given to us to interfere, and interfere with effect, and to have our views put forward and acted upon. When the Government propose, almost lightly, that we should borrow money at 6 per cent., it must appear to anyone who has made his permanent home in Western Australia that the position is alarming. The public accounts that were presented to us last session give certain information regarding loan flotations. The loan flotations since the introduction of responsible Government, on the 21st October, 1890, are given there. The last column of page 92 is headed "Rate of interest per hundred pounds sterling paid by the Government, allowance being made for redemption at par at latest (or only) date of maturity." At the foot of this column we find that the rate of interest on 7th September, 1917, was £6 2s. I am not anxious to enter into the matter in any personal or party spirit. I am simply looking at the matter as one who represents a large number of taxpayers, as one who is interested in the State, and as one who is confident that if our finances are handled with care we will get out of our difficulties. Very little credit will be reflected upon us if we pass this Bill as printed.

Hon. Sir. E. H. Wittenoom: It will reflect a lot of debit, perhaps.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Let the Government tell us how much money they want, and what it is being used for. I cannot conceive of hon. members consenting to give the Government carte blanche to borrow money at 6 per cent. The loan authorisation here can be read in connection with the General Loan Act. We find that on the inscribed stock the Government are nearly six millions of money out. It has not been raised, but has been authorised. It is true that the Bill does not authorise any further loan. What it does

is to permit the Government to raise a flotation at 6 per cent. interest. Let us see what would happen in the case of the Esperance railway for instance. It might be constructed out of money costing 3 per cent., but if it is built with money costing 6 per cent. it does not give it a reasonable chance of success. During the recess I employed some time in trying to work out these debentures, Treasury Bills, and inscribed stock. I would call the attention of hon. members to the extraordinary increase in the floating payments on the Treasury Bills. When we are called upon to deal with a Bill of this nature we should have placed before us in detail information as to the exact position of affairs in regard to our loan account. There are many members of this Chamber who occupy high positions in the commercial world, and there are others who, like myself, have to foot the bill. I am confident that the commercial section of the community would not deal with their own affairs in this manner and give anyone carte blanche to raise money at that rate of interest. Those of us in the community who have to pay this interest are entitled to know the amounts that have been raised. If we pass this Bill without knowing the exact amount the Government require and what they propose to do with it, we shall not be doing our duty to those who sent us here. The papers presented last year are certainly valuable in connection with this Bill, but we cannot get later information than that dealing with the period ending June, 1918. The leader of the House, I know, is not responsible, but we really ought to insist on having these statements right up to date. I do not suppose anyone will oppose the second reading of the Bill. It is essentially a Committee measure. Everybody must recognise the difficulties of the Government at the present time in regard to the finances, and so far as I am concerned I am most anxious to assist the Government in every possible way, and will only ask in return that they will present to us clearly and faithfully a statement of the finances of Western Australia.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [5.50]: I listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks that fell from the Minister for Education when he moved the second reading of this Bill. It must be plain to everybody that it is a real effort to try and bring the legislation in connection with the pearling industry as far as possible up to date. The Minister set out so fully the advantages to Western Australia of the pearling industry and also gave us many interesting particulars about it, that it would be superfluous for me to attempt to weary

the House by referring to the matter at length. But as one who represents the North-Western portion of the State, I can say that the action of the Government in taking the trouble they have done to remedy a number of difficult conditions which exist in that part of the world, is very much appreciated. I would also like to take this opportunity of expressing the appreciation of the pearlers at the action of the Government some time ago in going to the rescue of those people to the extent of giving a guarantee in connection with the sale of pearl shell. It was quite well known at the time that there would be no demand made on the Government for money in connection with the guarantee, but the guarantee had this effect, that it made the buyers of pearl shell, who had arranged matters amongst themselves in America and London, give a little more than the amount guaranteed. I am glad to say also that some of the financial institutions helped in a similar direction. This action was advantageous and enabled the pearlers to tide over the period of the war. It is now, I think, common knowledge that pearl shell is being used to a very large extent in many industries, so much so that there will continue to be a good demand for it, provided that the sale and distribution can be freely and fairly carried out. Under those circumstances we may look forward to an increase in the industry. There are many disabilities connected with pearling, and I should say they are similar to those which apply to gold mining and diamond mining. I refer more particularly to illicit selling. There are difficulties in the way of preventing people getting pearls from divers and those who procure them, and selling them illicitly. I understand the same thing has happened in connection with gold, and I have been very much diverted by the latest method adopted of getting gold away from Kalgoorlie. In one instance the practice of rifle shooting was carried on to such an extent that those who engaged in it, ostensibly went out to shoot turkeys, the real object being to conceal the gold inside the turkeys.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is romance.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I saw that in a newspaper and I understand that the papers print nothing but facts. If people will go to the extent of putting gold inside turkeys, they will resort to any method. I have known of cases where diamonds have been swallowed so as to get them away, and we can readily understand, therefore, that some method will be found by which valuable pearls can be removed. The Bill before the House is a good honest attempt to try and prevent that kind of thing, and to see that those who have borne the heat and burden of the day shall reap the reward which is theirs. Therefore, I think we can safely support the second reading of the measure. There is very little to be said in connection with the clauses. I looked through them very carefully the other day, and one that claimed my attention was that relating to the trans-

fer of a license from one shop to another. I thought that could be done in any circumstances. However, the clause will make the position clear. Clause 10 amends Section 64 of the Act and provides—

No licensed pearl dealer shall have or use as a registered place of business any place which is used for the transaction of any other business.

Why should that be the case? Why should not a storekeeper, if he is licensed, be permitted to deal in his own premises? Of course there may be a reason for it. Another thing is that I did not know what a pearl cleaner was. I find it explained here and will read it for the information of those hon. members who perhaps do not investigate the pearly questions as fully as others might—

A pearl cleaner means a person who cleans, cuts or alters pearls, or improves the shape or appearance of pearls, or receives pearls or has pearls in his possession for the purpose of performing any of the operations aforesaid thereon.

We can quite understand that the gentlemen who have all the knowledge and skill of being able to manipulate these pearls want to be carefully looked after. All the clauses which are in the Bill are very useful, and under the circumstances I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [5.58]: I thank Sir Edward Wittenoom for his reference to the action of the Government, in connection with the guarantees made to the pearlers. As I explained in moving the second reading of the Bill, the Government were in the happy position of having to guarantee very little. Regarding the clauses to which Sir Edward Wittenoom referred, at the present time licenses may be transferred from one person to another. That is to say, a person may sell his licensed boat to another and the license can be transferred. But if the person is the owner of a boat and that boat is lost or damaged beyond possibility of further use, it is impossible to transfer the license from that boat to the boat which the owner wishes to substitute for it. With regard to Clause 10, the object of preventing operations in pearls except at places set apart for the purpose, is to prevent what the hon. member suggested should be done—that is to prevent dealing in pearls in a shop. The clause is strongly approved by the Pearlers' Association. They think it will have the effect of putting down illicit dealing in pearls if a person can only sell pearls at places set apart for that purpose. A man may go to a store ostensibly to buy a pound of sugar, but in reality to sell a pearl. Under Clause 10 the prohibition will not apply to any corporation carrying on the business of banking. That is quite a legitimate provision. But it is the opinion of those interested in the industry that illicit dealing in pearls is likely to be discouraged

if we compel a pearl dealer to operate in places set apart for that purpose.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Insertion of new section after Section 27:

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: Have any arrangements been made to assist returned soldiers to start in the industry? Practically the whole of the men employed enlisted, and many of them are now returning. They are good men, who have done their duty to the State and the Empire, and the Government should see that they are repatriated in the industry. Some of these men were formerly shell openers, and now wish to set up as master pearlers. Will the Government assist them?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot definitely connect my reply with the clause under discussion.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: You can connect it with the reference to the transfer of a ship from one owner to another.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The clause contemplates the transfer of a license from one ship to another. However, there is nothing lacking in our legislation to assist the returned soldier, and the Government are doing everything possible in that direction. The repatriation of soldiers into the pearly industry is an obligation on the Federal Government if the man requires monetary assistance, and there have been applications by returned soldiers for assistance to start pearly. These applications have come to the State authorities and every effort has been made to grant the assistance requested.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: I mean for returned men to set up as master pearlers, not as shell openers.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If a shell opener desires to set up as a master pearler, there is ample scope to deal with his application.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the Minister called at the Repatriation Department he might learn something of what is being done for returned men. If a man at the time of enlisting was a shell opener and now aspired to become a master pearler, he would probably be turned down because he was applying for assistance in a vocation which was not his pre-war occupation.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: They have no option. A man had to be in the business before he went away.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, and definite assistance should be given in such cases. Where the Federal Government fail the State should endeavour to assist. I hope this question will receive the consideration of the Government.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 12, 14, 16 to 19, 21 and 23—
agreed to.

Title agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported without amendment and the
report adopted.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd September, 1919.

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

QUESTION—REPATRIATION, ARMADALE COMMITTEE.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Premier: 1, Is there a repatriation committee at Armadale? 2, If so, what are the names of the members of the committee? 3, How many applications for the purchase of properties have been referred to that committee? 4, How many of the properties purchased were owned by members of the committee?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, James Butcher (chairman), J. W. Turner (secretary), W. R. Han, J. H. Champion, Fred Burnes, B. S. Chapman, J. A. Papson. 3, Sixty-one applications have been referred to this committee in accordance with the department's practice, under which all applications worthy of consideration are referred to the local committee and the departmental inspector, and (in the case of orchard properties) to the Agricultural Department expert and W.A. Orchardists' League. All the

reports are considered by the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Board before purchase is approved. 4, Five, all of which were portions of Mr. James Butcher's estate. A special valuation was made in each of these cases by the chief inspector of the Agricultural Bank.

QUESTION—WHEAT STORAGE, FREMANTLE CHARGES.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: In view of the Wheat Marketing Commission's report upon excessive storage charge on wheat at Fremantle, (a) Are any steps being taken to get a refund of the £12,000 per annum charged for storage on wheat in past years by the Fremantle Harbour Trust? (b) Is he aware that even Sydney charged only £6,000 per annum, where much more wheat was stored and shipped at Darling Island Dock?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: (a) The amount of storage paid to the Harbour Trust was by arrangement and was the best deal that could be made. (b) The Government are not aware of the amount charged to the New South Wales Wheat Scheme for storage at Darling Island.

QUESTION—STALLIONS REGIS- TRATION BILL.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: Is it intended to introduce a Stallions Registration Bill this session?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: No.

QUESTION—BULK HANDLING OF GRAIN.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, In view of the high price of bags, is it the intention of the Government to proceed with a scheme for the bulk handling of grain, in accordance with the recommendations of the local Commission which considered the subject? 2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: The matter is receiving consideration.

QUESTION—CORNSACKS, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFER.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Did the Federal Government, on or about the 17th July, offer to assist the Government to obtain cornsacks for the State for the coming harvest? 2, Did the Government decline the Federal Government's offer? 3, Will the Government state what grounds they had for advising the Federal Government that there were sufficient cornsacks in this State for the coming harvest? 4, In view of the present prospects of an abundant harvest, will the Government review the position? 5, If satisfied that