

there is no relationship existing between the employee and the insurance company. Nor will this Bill provide any relationship. I do not propose to support the Bill. The State Insurance Office should adopt a better attitude to injured workers and say it is not prepared to regulate its conduct by the standard of conduct set by the private companies, but that it is going to set its own standard. If it were able to show that its ratio of claims to premiums was not the same as that of private companies, but was much greater, it would not be tinkering with the question. If the Government wish to do something of real value and service for the workers, they will bring down a Bill to provide for a scheme of insurance which will ensure that workers receive their compensation irrespective of when the accident happens, by means of a payment apportioned between the employer and the worker on an actuarial basis. I propose to vote against the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.14 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 30th September, 1936.

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

BILL—WOOL (DRAFT ALLOWANCE PROHIBITION).

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—CUE-BIG BELL RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: This is a measure which I hope the House will deal with as expeditiously as possible, consistent with members having a full knowledge of what it contains. It is a Bill to authorise the construction of a branch railway line from Cue to the Big Bell Mine. It also ratifies an agreement made on the 6th March of this year between the Premier and the American Smelting and Refining Company of New Jersey, whereby the company is required to put up a bond of £50,000 as a guarantee that it will proceed with the development of the mine when the proposed line is completed.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Are these people contributing anything towards the cost of the line?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. The agreement had its genesis in representations that were made to the Minister for Mines when he was visiting England last year. He was then approached by the chief representative of the company (Mr. Guest), who at that time was interested in the Big Bell Mine, through Premier Gold Mines Ltd., a company of which he was chairman of directors. Mr. Guest intimated that preliminary testing at the Big Bell had proved satisfactory, and that his principals were then prepared to develop the mine, on condition that the Government proceeded with the construction of a spur line from Cue. Mr. Guest was informed by the Minister that the application made to the Government would receive sympathetic consideration. As the result of that interview the company's Western Australian and Australian representatives received immediate instructions to submit the proposal to the Premier for consideration. At the same time the company proceeded with the work of developing the mine. When the Minister returned from abroad the company again pressed the proposal, whereupon the Government decided to carry out a test of the mine, that being a preliminary to any Government being prepared to agree to a proposal of this kind. The State Mining Engineer was instructed to proceed to the Big Bell, where he checked exhaustively the samples which had been taken by the company. The company had already taken samples of the drive and cross-cuts, which had shown an average value of

3.508 dwts. per ton. It is very interesting to note the procedure adopted by the company on this occasion. I believe that the testing was of a more thorough and comprehensive nature than is usual in dealing with such propositions. When a drive or crosscut had been extended 10 feet or thereabouts the whole of the ore broken was crushed and put through an automatic sampler, as is done by companies when purchasing parcels of ore. When finally ground and sufficiently reduced in size the sample was divided into four portions, one for assay at the mine, one for assay at Mt. Isa, one for assay by the Federal Mining Company, Idaho, United States of America, and one to be kept. Further samples were taken from the drive by grooves across the back at 10ft. intervals, and the crosscuts were also sampled again by grooves cut along the sides. The State Mining Engineer reported on the company's sampling. He stated that the results so obtained gave as accurate an estimate of the average value of the ore as it was possible to obtain at the present time. I will quote the following from his report:—

“The sampling of these drives and crosscuts (he states) may be said to have been most careful and thorough. Nevertheless, for my own satisfaction, I did a certain amount of check sampling as set out hereunder:—

Confirmation of Mine Sampling and Assaying—

In order to be in a position to confirm the mine sampling and assaying, I decided to take a number of samples which had also been taken by the company and to compare our results. I accordingly sampled one side of each of the crosscuts at the 250ft. level in five feet sections, and also the back of that level at the crosscuts. On the assay plan accompanying this report the results as received from the Government Mineralogist and Analyst are placed in one column and the mine results taken from their assay plan are placed in another column alongside them. The result is most remarkable. Individual samples, as is usual in mine sampling, show considerable variation, but the average value of the 166 samples taken by myself was 3.517 dwts. per ton, whereas the average value of the corresponding mine samples was 3.508 dwts. per ton, a difference of only .009 of a dwt. This agreement was much closer than we expected to get.

As a result I have considerable confidence in accepting as correct the balance of the sampling carried out by the company, and I feel that the results obtained by them give us as accurate an estimate of the average value of the ore as it is possible to obtain at the present time.”

Summarising his conclusions, Mr. Wilson continues:—

The width and value of the ore body as disclosed by the present workings and boreholes

suggest that Mr. Pitt's estimate of two and a half million tons of ore above the 650ft. level will be realised, and that three million tons may reasonably be expected. The assay results obtained, and the treatment experiments carried out at the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie, indicate that the recoverable value will be 3 dwts. per ton. Mr. Pitt anticipates a slightly better value than this—perhaps $\frac{1}{4}$ dwt. higher—but after a careful revision of the assays I do not consider it safe to assume any higher figure. By mining and treating 30,000 tons per month of ore of this grade by modern methods under good economical management a profit of 10s. per ton may be made while gold is worth £8 per oz. This is rather a narrow margin when an initial outlay of £400,000 to £450,000 has to be made, and a further additional expenditure if the capacity of the plant is to be increased, and when it is also borne in mind that gold may fall in price below this figure.

In coming to a decision in regard to the railway, it should be remembered that the future of gold mining will depend largely on the successful working of large low grade propositions of this kind.

It is interesting to note that the plant is to be designed to treat 30,000 tons per month, which is the same tonnage as the plant at the Wiluna goldmines was originally designed to treat. In addition to actually employing about 500 men on the mine, a new township will be started, and the output of the State may be expected to be increased annually by about 54,000 fine ozs. of gold worth £432,000 while gold remains at £8 per oz. The State Mining Engineer, Mr. Wilson, continued in his report—

Mr. considered opinion is that the benefit to the State of getting this mine operating on the proposed scale is such as to warrant the construction of this spur line.

I have given members an outline of the report, and the opinion, of the State Mining Engineer. After receiving his report, the Government, in accordance with the provisions of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, submitted the proposal to construct the line to the Transport Board. The board believe that the full length of the line, namely $18\frac{3}{4}$ miles, including $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles within the boundaries of the Big Bell leases, could be constructed at a cost not exceeding £60,000. This amount would include the value of the rails and sleepers that have already been purchased by the Government. Consideration was also given to the advisability of road instead of rail transport. The estimate submitted by the Commissioner of Main Roads for the construction of a bituminous road 18 miles in length was £47,500. The board, however, are of the opinion that the Govern-

ment are justified in proceeding with the construction of the proposed railway line, and that the work should be put in hand at the earliest moment, and, if possible, completed before the arrival of the machinery for the mine. The Government, having been impressed with the advisability of proceeding with the construction of the line, nevertheless felt bound to demand a bond to protect themselves against any failure on the part of the company to fulfil their obligation. The main provisions of the agreement, which Clause 4 of the Bill proposes to ratify, are that a company shall be formed locally with a share capital of not less than £400,000, which must be fully paid up within two years. It is further provided that the American Smelting and Refining Company shall give a bond to the Government of £50,000, Australian currency, a sum £10,000 less than the estimated cost of the railway line. I wish to inform members that a company has already been formed known as Big Bell Mines Ltd., having its registered office in this State, and that its capital has now been fully subscribed by four companies—the American Smelting and Refining Company Ltd., the Mining Trust Ltd., the Premier Gold Mines Ltd., and Terra Nova Pty. Ltd. That money having been fully subscribed by the companies, the shares will not be presented to the public for subscription. At the commencement of negotiations for the construction of the line, the Government were asked to accept the bond of the American Smelting and Refining Company of New Jersey in respect to the latter's agreement to proceed with the erection of a treatment mill at the Big Bell mine. Members will see set out in Clause 2, paragraphs (c) and (d), of the Schedule to the Bill, that the company undertake, under bond, to equip a mill capable of treating 25,000 tons of ore per month. This provision will ensure that the company fulfil their obligation. Exhaustive legal negotiations preceded the drafting and completion of the agreement. While inquiries made in respect of the American Smelting and Refining Company, who are sponsoring the venture, revealed that the company had a very high financial standing and that the Government could well accept their bond, the question arose whether the company were legally competent to give the bond, as they would be governed by the provisions of American law, under which the American Smelting and Refining Company are incorporated. Investigations revealed that the

bond could not be given unless the company held a majority of the share capital of the company they were sponsoring. Accordingly, the agreement provides that the American Smelting and Refining Company shall acquire and hold this interest. This they have done. A further clause embodied in the agreement specifies that the courts in this State may be resorted to in any action on the agreement. Under both English and American conceptions of international law, this clause is enforceable. A stipulation providing that the agreement shall be ratified by the major company has already been complied with. With regard to the release of the company from their liability under the bond, a sum of £12,500 may be withdrawn when £200,000 has been expended on the plant, and a further £12,500 when the expenditure has reached £300,000. Upon completion of the plant, the company shall be entitled to withdraw the balance of the bond. It is anticipated that, if Parliamentary approval be given to the Bill and construction commenced immediately, the line will be almost completed by December. I need not elaborate on the obvious and manifold advantages that must accrue to the State as a result of the introduction of new capital into the Western Australian goldmining industry. Quite apart from the merits of the proposal, insofar as it extends a very apparent gesture of goodwill to overseas interests which, in itself, must react to the State's advantage at some future date when the question of investment in the Western Australian goldmining industry is again under consideration, I think hon. members will agree that the construction of this line will be amply rewarded by way of actual freight returns. That provides members with an outline of the Bill. It simply sets out that the Government shall build this line at a cost of approximately £60,000, that the company shall be prepared to spend something over £400,000, and that they shall give a bond of £50,000 to guarantee that they will fulfil their obligations. It is only a few weeks back that I was on the Big Bell leases. Quite a large number of men are employed there, and I was informed by the manager, Mr. Pitt, that within the course of a very few months he anticipated there would be a township there of approximately 2,000 people.

Hon. A. Thomson: They are actually working there now?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: There are hundreds of men employed on the leases erecting buildings, constructing shafts, and so on. It was a very good indication to me of what a proposition like this can mean to a particular district and to the State generally. The amount of money already expended there runs into many thousands of pounds, and the pay roll today amounts to a few thousand pounds per week. The district will naturally derive great benefit from that expenditure. In view of the fact that the tests carried out by the representatives of the company coincided very closely with those of the State Mining Engineer, we can regard the proposition as a reasonable business proposal. The construction of the railway will provide work for a large number of men for a few months, and, from what I could see of the position when I was in the district, it will be a boon to that part of the State in more ways than one. I do not know that there is any further information I can give, but I desire to stress the fact that it is desirable to arrive at a decision as early as possible, so that, if this House agrees to the proposal, the work may be started without delay, and thus assist not only the company but the State. I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Elliott, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.55] in moving the second reading said: Hon. members are only too familiar with the circumstances that have rendered the introduction of the Bill imperative. As a result of a drought of unprecedented severity, the plight of woolgrowers in the pastoral areas has become so serious that it can now only be described as desperate. In certain districts drought conditions have been experienced for long periods. In some they have continued for three years while in others pastoralists have suffered a succession of six dry seasons. As a result, unfortunately, growers are not in a position to bear the further burdens incidental to the drought that still continues. Except during one or two seasons, the wool clip has been marketed at prices unremunerative to the grower ever since the first impact of the de-

pression. During the interim, reserves have been exhausted, and operations only continued through the assistance of the several banks and various financial houses. A reasonably accurate estimate of the ravages of drought in the districts extending between Port Hedland and the Lower Gascoyne may be obtained from the official shearing figures. However, it will be borne in mind that when figures are available in respect of the district most adversely affected—the Murchison—the aggregate losses will be materially increased. The figures I have mentioned relate to 60 properties and are as follows: During 1935, 1,239,129 sheep went off shears for a yield of 23,096 bales. This season, the same properties have shorn 893,962 sheep for a return of 14,678 bales. The decreases in the number of sheep shorn, and the clip yielded, are 28 per cent. and 37 per cent. respectively. Based on the estimated sheep population of the pastoral areas last year, namely, 5,500,000, a loss of 40 per cent. in the flocks of those districts would amount to, approximately, 2,000,000 sheep. Nor can the decrease in wool production be estimated at less than from 50,000 to 60,000 bales, representing, at present prices, a loss of £1,000,000. Perhaps an even more serious aspect of the drought is the loss to growers of two years' natural increase. Generally speaking, the lambs dropped in 1935 have long since died, and prevailing conditions have rendered a 1936 lambing out of question. It is apparent that, when the drought breaks, there will be no young sheep coming on for at least two years, while the reduced number of breeding ewes available will render progress in re-stocking flocks extremely slow. Again, pastoralists have been hard hit in many other directions by the drought. The absence of feed on stock routes, together with the sub-normal rainfall in the wheatbelt country, has precluded the possibility of saving any considerable number of breeding ewes, which would otherwise have been sent down south on agistment from the adjoining pastoral country. It is regrettable that in many cases the breeding ewes lost were the result of years of careful culling and improvement. In these circumstances it is inevitable that pastoralists will experience considerable difficulty in re-stocking their flocks with sheep of the same standard, when the drought breaks. Apart from flock losses growers have been faced with heavy expenses incurred in their efforts to save station stock

and rams, and the remaining breeding ewes. Fresh water supplies have had to be opened up, where possible, existing wells deepened, and hand-feeding and scrub-cutting resorted to. There is no doubt that the future holds difficult times for the industry, and that pastoralists will need the utmost consideration from Governments and private institutions. It is unquestionable that the State cannot afford to see pastoralists forced off their holdings by the effects of drought, especially when it is considered that the pastoral industry has been established without Governmental financial assistance. The Bill now before the House provides a temporary measure of relief to lessees, and represents a contribution towards the task of tiding the industry over its present parlous condition. Under Section 101 of the Land Act, rents are assessed in accordance with the rise and fall of the price of greasy wool above or below 12d. per lb. during the preceding season. This provision, unless amended, will operate unduly harshly this year, for despite the severe reduction in the income of pastoral lessees, land rents for the current season will be increased 8.52 per cent. above the appraised rental—or 25.8 per cent. more than the rental for the preceding year—as a result of the rise in wool values to 13.42d. per lb. for the 12 months ended 30th June last. That will indicate to members the very serious position in which these pastoralists find themselves of having to pay 25.8 per cent. more rental this year when their income is perhaps at a lower ebb than during the previous year. This is a hardship which we believe they should be assisted to overcome. The present Bill provides for temporary relief from payment of rent on account of drought, and empowers the Minister, on the recommendation of the Board of Appraisers, to grant total or partial relief accordingly, as determined. This is a temporary provision and will expire on the 31st December, 1937. Despite a loss to revenue which the Government can ill-afford to forgo, it is felt that the hardships which the pastoralists are experiencing render imperative this measure of relief. I sincerely hope that the Bill will meet with the approval of members and will become law with as little delay as possible. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.5]: I do not propose to ask for an adjournment.

The Bill is a simple one, and the Minister expressed a wish to get the approval of the House at the earliest opportunity. The Bill, as already explained, is necessary owing to the unprecedented drought conditions in the North, coupled with the fact that we have similar drought conditions in the South. Under ordinary circumstances stock might have been removed to the South, but this has not been possible because there has been no feed there. I can go back a number of years as my memory is fairly good, but I do not know that we have ever had in Western Australia a drought from Wyndham to Esperance as there has been this year. There has always been some bright spot somewhere, good rains being followed by good feed in some parts of the State. Members will know that the pastoralists seldom ask for any concession. The Minister has said that to-day, and members will therefore realise that when their representatives come to this House and seek relief, things must be very bad. I do not want to paint too gloomy a picture, but what the Minister has told this House is correct. Even if we had an abundance of rain in the North now, it would only be a menace to the industry. If they get light falls to carry the sheep on, it will be all right, but if there comes a terrific thunderstorm accompanied by heavy rains, the country will be bogged, and the sheep will be so weak that they will go down, and possibly never get up again. These will be the difficulties to face when the rains come. I cannot see any possibility of the industry being rehabilitated in from five to ten years. The pastoralists have had no lambing for two years, no young sheep coming on. They have been losing the old breeding ewes. Some of the young breeding ewes might live under present conditions, but the old ewes will not live on the scrub. Realising that the old ewes have been going out and there have been no lambs for two years, members will understand what the industry is up against. The Bill proposes to give the Minister power to grant relief on the recommendation of an advisory board. On that board, I understand, are to be Government officials and one representative of the Pastoralists' Association, so the House need not fear that the pastoralists will get anything more than they are entitled to. The Bill gives the Minister very drastic powers to do practically as he may think fit on the advice of the board, but

the position is so serious that somebody has to have authority to deal with it at once. The Bill makes provision for concessions in the way of rents—extended payments and reduction of rents from the 30th June, 1936, to the 31st December 1937, a period of 18 months. I do not think that meets the case. From the published speech of the Minister for Lands, which has been confirmed by the Chief Secretary to-day, this drought has been in existence in some places for three years and in others for six years. I suggest that the Chief Secretary should confer with Mr. Troy, who I know is sympathetically inclined, with a view to suggesting that the Minister be given power to go back to an earlier stage in order to give relief in cases where drought has existed and flocks have been gradually diminished for the last six years. Let me give one instance. A man I know well, and who can be relied upon, told me last week that a shearing team on a station in the Murchison in 1934 shored 20,000 sheep; in 1935 they shored 12,000; and this year 2,000. In some places there is no shearing being done at all. Contracts have been cancelled and they are catching what sheep they can on the well and shearing with portable shearing machines. The only amendment I ask for, and which might be considered equitable is that the Minister be given power to deal with cases of that kind.

Hon. L. Craig: With a view to giving refunds?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I don't know about refunds. I heard this morning of one instance where a Crown lessee owed £500 and the Government rightly accepted £200 and allowed the balance to stand over.

Hon. L. Craig: Many people have borrowed money to pay their rents.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Some of them cannot even do that. Are they to be driven off their leases because they are not in a position to pay? The Bill gives the Minister power, on the recommendation of the board, to deal with each case on its merits, and all I am suggesting is that the Minister should have the authority to go back even before the 30th June, 1936.

Hon. W. J. Mann: How far back would you go?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Minister in his introductory speech said that some of the pastoralists had been in difficulties for three years and some even six years. I

am merely raising this point because I consider it would be just to go further back than the 30th June last. The Chief Secretary and the Minister for Lands can rest assured that this House will support them in this matter almost to any extent, because if there is one section of the community that has kept away from politics and Parliament, it is the pastoralists in the North. Everything that pastoralists have done has been with their own money, or money obtained from outside financial institutions. I am not concerned about the terminating date of the concession because I fear that next year when we meet again and the measure comes up for further consideration, the position will be far more difficult for the pastoralist and greater concessions will be necessary. There is nothing more that I can say except to give my support to the second reading, and to express the hope that the Minister will see his way to accept the suggestion I have made.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [5.15]: I also support the second reading of the Bill. Following along the lines of previous speakers, I would say that if it is possible for anything more to be done by the Government on behalf of the Murchison pastoralists, it should be done. As it happens, I represent the portion of the State which has been hit hardest by the drought. The Murchison squatters have had a particularly bad time. Only those who have passed through that area as I have can realise what those men have been up against—in many cases for seven years. In the North-West and on the Gascoyne the drought has, fortunately, extended over only two years. But pastoralists in the Murchison, who have been through six years of bad times, should get more relief than the pastoralists who have suffered only two years of drought. In the case of the former it is fair to go back further than the Bill proposes. Two years' lambing has been lost by the Murchison pastoralists. In some portions of the Murchison it must be five years since a lamb has been reared. That fact will give hon. members some idea how far back the pastoralists are going. One wonders what the outcome will be if the drought continues. While there are a fair number of sheep in the agricultural areas now, the number would not be sufficient to allow of stock being sent back to the pastoral country for the purpose of breeding-up there. It has been suggested here that it would be most unfortunate if the

really good ewes which have been bred on stations I could mention as outstanding from a merino point of view should be lost. That would be a calamity to the pastoral industry of Western Australia. It took years to breed up the flocks, and it will take many years to breed them up again.

Hon. G. W. Miles: A lifetime, in some cases.

Hon. T. MOORE: Yes. In one instance a line of sheep has been built up during 80 years. Those sheep have been dying. Two years ago I met a pastoralist well known to hon. members, Mr. McKenzie Grant, coming down from the Murchison, and he then spoke of how things were in one part of that country. He spoke of seeing the sheep dying, and said it was bad enough to see ordinary sheep dying but that from a State point of view the destruction of those particular sheep was a calamity. He thought some effort should be made to save them. Unfortunately, in that particular area there have been six years of drought. The Minister for Lands, I feel quite sure, is sympathetic towards the pastoralists. The Minister knows the conditions as well as anybody knows them, because he travels up there frequently. I am confident the hon. gentleman will go as far as he possibly can to give relief to the pastoralists. I hope he will make the Bill more retrospective than it is at present. I do not wish to labour the question. I know every hon. member is prepared to do all that is possible to help the pastoralists. They have never asked for anything during the time I have been in Parliament, at all events; and now that they are asking for relief, I hope everything possible will be done for them.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.19]: I thank the Government for bringing forward the Bill. The people of the State do not realise the seriousness of the position. My colleague said that it would take five years to breed up these flocks, but I think his estimate is too moderate. I believe it will take 10, 15, and perhaps 20 years. Many of the stations affected have been building up their flocks not for one generation only but for two generations. And those sheep have been dying. As Mr. Moore has pointed out, on the Murchison particularly there has been a drought for six years. No sheep are coming on there to replace the old ones. As regards the few

ewes that are left, any concession the Government can make in respect of land rents will be highly appreciated by the pastoralists as an aid towards keeping those few ewes alive. I have heard of one case where 100 tons of Meggit nuts have been sent up to the station. On the large areas it is most difficult to feed stock. However, the pastoralists there have come to the conclusion that if it costs them 10s. or £1 per head to keep the ewes alive until the drought may be expected to break, towards the end of the year or early in the new year, the money will be well spent. Therefore any relief the Government can grant will benefit not only the individual pastoralist but the whole State. The Budget has been framed on certain lines, and I am wondering whether the Government have given sufficient consideration to the loss of revenue which will occur not only from the pastoralists but also from the farmers. I know of one case where 80,000 sheep were shorn a year ago, and not 20,000 will be shorn this year. The seriousness of the position can hardly be exaggerated. I repeat, the public of the State generally do not realise how serious is the state of affairs. I was in the North last summer, and on my return, towards the end of May, I said that there would be a reduction in value of a million pounds in the wool clip of the State, a shortage of at least 50,000 bales. The financial institutions talked then of there being only 30,000 bales short, valued at half a million pounds. From the figures quoted by the Minister I feel sure that the estimated loss will be exceeded. We shall not get off with a shortage of £1,000,000 in our wool. What does that mean to the community and the State, apart from land rents? There is the taxation the Government will not collect. I say again, the position is much more serious than people generally realise. I again thank the Government for bringing down the measure. As various hon. members have said already, the pastoral industry has been developed by private enterprise. The pastoralists have never asked for Government assistance. Even now they are not asking for cash to be paid to them, but for relief which the Government can give and propose giving. I thank the Government also for their action in reducing railway and shipping freights on feed for starving flocks. Those concessions are

highly appreciated by the pastoralists. I feel I need say nothing more to convince the House, as I believe all hon. members know that something must be done. I have no doubt whatever that the Government will do everything in their power to assist the pastoralists in the serious position in which they unfortunately find themselves.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [5.24]: I also wish to express my pleasure at the introduction of the Bill. Hon. members may recollect that when speaking on the Address-in-reply I pointed out the anomaly which had been created by Parliament when agreeing to amending legislation in regard to pastoral rents. The result that has accrued was never contemplated. Such a serious drought as has occurred was never anticipated. As the Minister pointed out this afternoon, the effect of the amending legislation is that pastoral rents are to be fixed on high prices which ruled last year, and there is little wool to pay them with. The Bill will help to give the relief that is needed. I fully agree with the remarks of Mr. Holmes. I do trust the Government will be able to afford some further relief in that direction. I am afraid the giving of relief will be rather difficult in those cases where pastoralists have borrowed money and have paid their rents. In such cases, however, the Government might be able to do something in the way of guaranteeing special accounts with the bankers of pastoralists who have paid the rents, for the amount only of the rents paid since the drought hit those men badly. In those cases where rents have not been paid—I did not know there were many of them—it will be a simple matter to defer payment. As the Minister has pointed out, the most serious feature of the position is the difficulty that will be experienced in breeding up when the rains do come. As is natural, the greatest losses always occur in the females. The Minister, answering a recent question of mine, showed that the Government are fully sympathetic with the pastoralists. The Government have promised to do everything possible to discourage the slaughter of ewes. However, in my opinion something more can be done. Unfortunately, there are pastoralists in the North-West who are compelled to send ewes down for sale. Most of those ewes are sound-mouthed old ewes, but quite good enough to give a lamb or two later. The trouble is, where are these

ewes to be held? Fortunately, there have been some good rains in the south; and we hear nearly every evening in this Chamber of the number of abandoned farms. Therefore I was wondering whether the Government could make some of these abandoned farms which are handy to railways and ports, available free of rent to any pastoralist or stock agent who cares to put breeding ewes on them, from now until the drought breaks and conditions permit stock to be sent back to the North. It would not cost the Government anything, and I feel quite certain that if some of the big stock agents knew there was land on which they could depasture the ewes for the time being, they would purchase them instead of allowing them to be sold for slaughtering, and would put them on the abandoned farms, to be sold to their own clients later. Some of the pastoralists may be well enough off to save their ewes. However, I do ask the Government to consider the matter and see whether something cannot be done to save more of the ewes by the use, free of rent, of abandoned properties, on which of course there should be water available.

Hon. A. Thomson: A most practical suggestion.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It all depends on the district.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Yes. Many of the areas could be used provided they are close to a railway or a port. At all events, I put that suggestion before the Government. I feel bound to say that it is most encouraging to those engaged in the pastoral industry to see how sympathetic the Government have shown themselves. I feel perfectly sure that we can trust the Government to do their very utmost to help the pastoralists through this most unfortunate time. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [5.28]: I wish to support the remarks of previous speakers, and to express my appreciation of the Government's action in bringing down the Bill. Further, I wish to express my appreciation of the assistance already given to pastoralists by the Government in the way of reduced railway and shipping freights. The reduction amounts to approximately one-third as against previous charges on the railways and on steamers. I am one of those unfortunate Murchison pastoralists. Refer-

ence has been made to-day to a drought of six years. In my case the drought has been longer: it has been a seven-years drought. Although my station is well managed by an extremely competent man, I have not sold one head of stock for fully seven years now. There was a time when I used to shear something like 25,000 sheep, but for the last six years I have been shearing between 15,000 and 18,000. Starting in a week's time I anticipate shearing 4,000 or 5,000 sheep, chiefly at the wells. That is one case showing the position in the Murchison area. From Yalgoo to Cue the position is absolutely pitiful. It is marvellous how the sheep can live. This morning I was at the saleyards, and saw a shipment of 800 or 900 sheep from the Gascoyne. They were absolutely a painful sight. The sheep were starving. Apparently they had just come off the boat. It was marvellous that those sheep could possibly have been kept alive for any time at all.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Were they wethers?

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: They were principally wethers, and small wethers at that. They made a pitiful spectacle. We appreciate very much the remission of rent for one year, but I think relief will have to be given over and above that. I understand the assistance of the Agricultural Bank cannot be availed of in this direction, but I really do think that further assistance will have to be forthcoming. In regard to Mr. Angelo's suggestion that certain group blocks should be used, I have land down South carrying cattle. But the position there is still very much the same as it is elsewhere, although I am not more than 30 or 35 miles from the coast. Yet before long I will have to get the cattle off that place. Instead of September being, as usual, one of the rainy months of the year, we have had scarcely any rain down there during September, and so the position there is bad enough in all conscience.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Are there not some abandoned farms near Mullewa?

Hon. T. Moore: Yes, but there is no feed on them.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: The position is bad everywhere. However, I will support the second reading.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.33]: I too will support the Bill, which has a

bearing on the position in the North-East. Although the drought has not been so bad up there, the pastoralists are feeling it keenly, and I know they will appreciate this offer of assistance from the Government.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—ABORIGINES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.34]: I look upon the Bill as one of the most important that has been before the House for a long time past, and I hope that with a few amendments it will become law. For too long has the position regarding aborigines in this State been allowed to drift. As I see it, the situation is full of menace and danger, particularly to the coloured people and, in lesser degree, to the other people of the State. Many are under a delusion regarding the aborigines, and it is generally believed by the man in the street that it is only a matter of time when the aborigines will die out, and that the best thing to do is to leave them alone and let them take their chance. I do not agree with that idea. We are going to have with us for many generations to come the full-blooded aboriginal or his descendants, and it is those descendants that are likely to cause a great deal of trouble.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Only in the South. That does not apply to the North.

Hon. W. J. MANN: But it will apply to the North in due course. There are lots of people who can give us good advice about the natives, and I believe that there are certain societies devoted to the interests of the natives. However, the Lord help us if we take much notice of some of them. If the position is going to be handled at all, it must be handled by people with a knowledge of it and of its possibilities. Mr. Holmes said just now that although the situation may be fairly bad in the South it is all right in the North. But the undeveloped portions of this State are gradually being invaded by motor cars and aeroplanes, and in consequence many of the remote parts of the State will be opened up and developed. As a result

the aboriginal will be pushed further out or, alternatively, his condition will be so changed that he will take a new interest in the white man. So the natives' insularity will disappear and we shall find them drifting towards civilisation. As soon as they do that their degradation will begin.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is rough on the white people, is it not?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Well, it was the white people that caused their degradation in the past. If we could build a wall around these primitive people and keep contaminating influences away from them, all might be well. But we cannot do that with aborigines, who will not stay put. The native is a wanderer and a wanderer he will always continue to be. Just as the moth is driven towards the flame, so the native, as he becomes acquainted with the ways of white people, wants to drift into their realm. We as a State have to see that the natives shall be safeguarded as far as possible from some of the awful things that have happened in the past, particularly in some respects in the North. The difficulty I see is that the problem is so widespread that I doubt whether we can adequately cope with it. Up North the position is comparatively easy, but down South it is full of difficulties. I should like to see the two portions of the State. North and South, worked independently; because the proposition of handling half-castes in the South is very different from handling the full-bloods in the North. Figures were quoted by the Chief Secretary showing the increase in the half-caste population. They very clearly indicated the growth of that population. I regret that the Bill does not go a good deal further in an endeavour to control these people and even render possible their improvement. As far as I can see, we shall soon be in the position of having amongst us a social order on a lower level, but of no mean dimensions. If they exhibit the same ratio of increase during the next few years as they have done during the past ten years, we shall have a comparatively large coloured population. It is that which constitutes the danger. Other countries have had the same difficulty with half-caste populations, and doubtless members have read of America's experience and how that section of her population has been frequently described as white trash. We do not want any white trash in this State, and everything possible should be done to control those people and particularly the younger half-

castes, who should be educated and trained in some useful way. The Chief Secretary deplored the fact that stringency of finance prevented the Government from going as far as they wished to go in this direction. Personally I think it is not merely a State matter, and so I contend that the Federal Government should be asked to assist in this. The Federal Government have a White Australia policy and we frequently hear the determination expressed to continue that policy. Yet the Federal Government are doing nothing whatever to prevent a half-caste population growing up in our midst.

Hon. H. Seddon: What could the Federal Government do?

Hon. W. J. MANN: They could keep some of the full-bloods away from the whites, or impose heavy penalties such as this Bill proposes. The Commonwealth Government have done nothing whatever to help in this matter. It has been left to the State to do all that has been done to ameliorate the conditions of the natives.

Hon. J. Cornell: In South Africa it is a national obligation.

Hon. W. J. MANN: And so it should be here. We talk about the white Australia policy.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The obligation is imposed on us by our Constitution.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Commonwealth Government are very keen to keep coloured aliens out of Australia, but they are not doing anything to assist the State in the problem of the native races. We should receive assistance from the Federal Government, and the care of the natives should be a national one.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You mean financial assistance?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes. The problem as it affects my province is not nearly so acute as apparently it is elsewhere, but it is fairly close to the borders of my province. The Government should be commended for taking this action, and I hope they will proceed without delay to put the provisions of the Bill, when it becomes law, into operation. There are a few instances of degenerate whites mixing with half-castes, and the sooner the authorities come down on those gentlemen and put them in their place, the better it will be for the community. I see a great menace in the half-caste problem. We do not hear much of whites marrying half-castes; what is happening is that half-castes are

marrying natives. We cannot prevent that, but we can do a good deal to raise the status of those people and make them useful. I cordially support the Bill.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.47]: I have scrutinised the Bill carefully, and am quite satisfied that the object of the sponsors is the betterment of the aboriginal race. As to whether the Bill, when it becomes an Act, will accomplish that, is quite another matter. The Bill proposes to designate the aborigines in future as natives. I am at a loss to understand the change from aborigines to natives. This morning I looked up Webster's dictionary, which I suppose should be an authority on the subject, and this is what it says—

Aboriginal, an original inhabitant of any land.

Aborigines, the earliest known inhabitants of a country; native races.

It seems to me that that is the correct term. I was born in this country, but I have no reason to believe that the natives should be ashamed of the fact that they were the early pioneers of the country. To change the term seems to be an appeal to the vanities of those people. They have not much vanity except when they appear in their war costumes. I think they are more concerned about securing reasonable living conditions without too much work, rather than with any alteration of the name. The Bill proposes to alter the title of the officer controlling the department. I fail to see any necessity for making that alteration either. Before Western Australia was granted responsible government, the Imperial authorities stipulated that there should always be a chief protector of aborigines. What better title could we have? Under this Bill, however, the Chief Protector is to become the commissioner. It seems as if we are to have a department set up controlled by a commissioner, and that money will be spent in the administration of a large department, whereas the whole trouble is the absence of sufficient funds to meet the requirements of the aborigines. Therefore I cannot see that anything is to be gained by the change from aborigines to natives, or from chief protector to commissioner.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: An aboriginal by any other name would smell no sweeter.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Those people originally owned the country, and the Imperial Government recognised that fact before they

granted us responsible government. They stipulated that the native people should be cared for, and provision was made for £20,000 to be found by the State for that purpose. The Act of 1905 contains that provision.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Originally it was 1 per cent. of the revenue.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Imperial Government before granting us Responsible Government, thus recognised the rights of the natives. I do not consider that the Governments which have followed have lived up to their responsibility.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It should have been handed over to the Federal Government at the time of Federation.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That is one of the troubles to-day; as soon as a difficulty arises in the State, we hear suggestions to push it on to the Federal Government, while the Federal Government in turn wish to push it back on to the States. It is about time that the duties of the State and of the Commonwealth were clearly defined. It is a peculiar fact that, at the commencement of Federation, the Commonwealth authorities did not own an acre of land in Australia, and did not have the power to send a policeman into any State. Even to-day I do not think they have that power. How we can get the Commonwealth Government to deal with the natives in the far North is beyond me. We can pass all the legislation we like, but it will have no effect whatever, unless we have a sympathetic Government prepared to find the money so that the native race can be cared for. I am not directing my remarks against the present Government, because they probably have done more than other Governments for the natives, but Governments have come and Governments have gone and little has been done and little will be done. Nothing tangible will be accomplished by building up a big department in Perth and putting a commissioner at the head of it if there is a shortage of cash. What we should do is to minimise expenditure at this end and provide funds for deserving people outback. That the aborigines have been neglected is an established fact. I could produce sworn evidence of blood-curdling conditions under which some of the aborigines are allowed to exist. That, however, would not get us anywhere. We must forget the past, if we can, and do better in the future. I believe that the Chief Protector

at the moment has made an earnest attempt to deal with this problem, but the question of funds is cropping up all the time. Members, myself included, have been apt to criticise the Chief Protector for not having done this, that and the other thing, and the explanation has been that he has not had the funds at his disposal to deal with the matter. There is no provision in the Bill that any money at all shall be spent on the aborigines.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They have no votes.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A sum of £10,000 is provided in the Act.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the £10,000 has not met the needs, it is about time the Act was amended in the direction of requiring the Treasurer to provide sufficient funds.

The Chief Secretary: Last year the amount was £20,000.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That shows how difficult the problem is. In knocking round the far North, the only happy, contented people I have found amongst the aborigines have been those on the stations. They like their work; they like horses, riding and chasing cattle. I was pleased to note that the Chief Secretary, when moving the second reading of the Bill, complimented the squatters on the manner in which they had kept the natives.

Hon. A. Thomson: The biggest problem is down south.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is a bigger problem in the hon' member's province than in the far North, where nearly all are full-blooded natives. I am not blaming the hon. member because he happens to represent that province and I happen to represent another province where the greatest number of aborigines are to be found. One reason why I take an interest in the aborigines is that 50 years ago, in the southern part of the State, there was a fine race of native people. They were well fed; the country at that time teemed with game and fish were plentiful. They hunted for themselves and lived well. The greatest calamity that happened was due to the action of the Imperial Government, who caused bales and bales of blankets to be forwarded to the south to clothe those people. My father was the officer who made the distribution. Prior to that the natives hunted for game. They caught opossums in the right season when the fur was thick, and kangaroos and wallabies. They tanned the skins in their own way, and sewed them

together with a sort of hemp obtained in the swamps. They wore the skins day and night with the fur next to the body and the tan on the outside. They slept in the skins at night, and were perfectly comfortable. The piccanninnies they carried in fur bags on their backs. And then the blankets, which had been sent out by the Imperial Government, arrived and were distributed amongst the natives. No more hunting was done. The natives wandered about in the wet all day, and lay down at night with their blankets wet, with the result that they died in great numbers of consumption. Naturally they were thinned out. That was a mistake on the part of the Imperial Government. I am afraid the State Government may continue to make mistakes which will not be beneficial to the race. We should have two Acts of Parliament, one for the North and one for the South. We should have two sets of Administration, one for the North and one for the South. How we are going to fit in the coloured question of the South, with its half-caste problems, and the diminishing race, with the virile black race of the North, I do not know. How one officer, administering the department in Perth, can deal with the whole problem, is beyond me. My proposal is not new. We have had it before. In our licensing laws we have made special provision for the North compared with the South. In the Vermin Act there is one part dealing with the North and another dealing with the South. The Commonwealth Government have special legislation dealing with coloured divers at Broome. They have provided special exemption for the North, which cannot be obtained for any other part of Australia.

Hon. A. Thomson: You also have exemption under the Transport Act.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: So we should, because we have no roads. All the money is spent round about Katanning.

Hon. A. Thomson: I wish that were so.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Why should we not have those exemptions? Too much is undertaken from Perth in this matter, and there is too much centralisation. The aborigines of the North should be dealt with quite separately from those in the South. The problems in the two places are separate and apart from each other. I would like to quote from one of the many

praiseworthy remarks that appear in the report of the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Moseley. I think we have complimented him before on the manner in which he has handled not only this subject, but other subjects that have been referred to him. On pages 20 and 21 of his report I find the following:—

There must of necessity be a central office in Perth where records may be kept, but the work of the office should not be allowed to interfere with the Chief Protector's obvious duty of travelling. It is impossible as matters now are for that officer to travel to any extent. And even if it were, this would not meet all requirements. The State is too large to enable native problems to be dealt with satisfactorily, even if the Chief Protector travelled the whole time. There must, in my view, be divisional protectors, permanent officials who will devote the whole of their time to matters affecting the natives within their respective districts. They should have power to act—not merely to recommend certain action to the Chief Protector. I see no great difficulty in the way of this, unless it be the cost involved.

There would be no difficulty in handling this question properly if the Government would find the money.

My point of view will, I hope, be understood when I say that I am not greatly concerned with that aspect. I am not suggesting anything in the nature of extravagant reform. I am merely convinced that without divisional control the administration will never prove successful.

In the face of that report by the Commissioner we now have a Bill before us which gives the Chief Protector full power to deal with the whole question from Wyndham to Esperance. There is a clause in the Bill concerning which I should like some advice. It seems an attempt to contract outside the terms and provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. Some years ago this House passed the Workers' Compensation Act. When it was before us as a Bill it was turned upside down and inside out. We fought it for days and weeks, but no one thought of the aborigines. When the Bill became an Act, the Crown Law Department woke up to the fact that the aborigines could be brought under its provisions. That was a serious situation. I have said repeatedly that as this was done by Parliament unwittingly, the aborigines should have been taken out of that Act by an amendment, and some other provision made to cover them. This particular Bill makes provision

for dealing with compensation to natives. The trouble, I fear, is that they will still come under the Workers' Compensation Act. The squatter, instead of getting relief, when he is employing natives, will find that he is shot at by two guns instead of one, one gun under the Workers' Compensation Act, and the other gun under this Bill. It is questionable whether the clause concerned is foreign to the Title of the Bill. When the Workers' Compensation Bill was before the House, I drew attention to the coloured men employed at Broome. I was unsuccessful in having them excluded from the measure. A peculiar position arose there. I have already complimented Mr. McCallum upon what he did. It was not long before Broome found itself in this position: The Koepangers and other coloured men are brought there under contract. The Government of the countries from which these men came, in making the contract, set a value of £20 per head on the coloured men in the event of the death of any of them. That went on for some 20 or 30 years. No executors or beneficiaries turned up for the £20, but within 12 months of the passing of the Act which put a value of £600 upon these coloured men in the case of death, two claims were made. The £20 did not represent sufficient value for some of our wise solicitors, but when the amount rose to £600, they became very active. Mr. McCallum saw the position, and amended the Workers' Compensation Act to exclude these coloured people from its provisions. In like manner the aborigines should be excluded. I see the ex-Chief Secretary smiling; probably he knows why they were not excluded. It is proposed to make the employer pay so much a week into a fund, and to distribute this money in case of sickness, etc., but the fact remains that the aborigines still come under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, and I do not think this Bill will take them out of it. The Commonwealth Government have special laws governing natives in the Northern Territory. Where there are five or fewer than five natives employed on a station or elsewhere the employer pays a certain amount per annum; if the number ranges from six to ten, he pays nearly double; if from 11 to 20, he pays double again; if from 20 to 40, he pays double; and if the number is more than 40, the annual amount paid is once more doubled. If we could get the natives excluded from the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act by this Bill,

well and good, but if we cannot do so we should have them excluded by an amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act, and then make provision in this Bill for compensation as provided in Queensland and the Northern Territory. I have seen the annual quota which a squatter pays, and do not think it is high enough. Provision should be made for a larger amount to be paid in this State. I am pleased to notice by the Bill that natives are not to be asked to plead guilty or not guilty. I had an experience of that sort of thing in Derby some years ago. The police had been searching about 200 miles out back, and had brought in about 20 warriors in chains. These men were to be charged with cattle stealing. They were all given names by the police after arrest. The magistrate asked me to sit on the bench with him, and I agreed to do so. These big warriors were brought into the large galvanised iron building, and they had chains around their necks. A policeman handed the magistrate a list of the names, and read them out. There were "Tommy" So-and-so, "Jimmy" So-and-so, and so on. The magistrate said, "Tommy So-and-so, you are charged that you did on a certain day kill a number of cattle the property of So-and-so. How do you plead? Guilty or not guilty?" Of course the natives did not understand a word that was said to them, so I turned to the magistrate, and said, "What darned rot! They do not understand you." The magistrate replied, "I cannot help that. Under our law, you cannot try a man without first asking him to plead guilty or not guilty." I am therefore pleased to find in this Bill a provision that natives will not be asked to plead in future.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The fact that this important section of the community, the aborigines, at one time owned all this country demands that now we have, after so many years, decided to amend the Aborigines Act, we should take a little time over it and do the work properly. For a moment I want to revert to the position regarding workers' compensation, which should be cleared up. I am advised that the aborigines are covered by the Workers' Compensation Act, and I do not think they can be taken away from the operations of that measure by means of a Bill to amend the Aborigines Act. If

we cannot do that, I think the time is opportune to amend the Workers' Compensation Act so far as it affects the aborigines, and make ample provision in the present Bill to deal with any difficulties that may arise in that connection. In handling the native question—I prefer to retain the word "aborigines"—we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the race has been neglected, due to the consideration that we have not, since Responsible Government was granted, had a Treasurer sympathetic enough to provide sufficient money with which to deal with the requirements of the aborigines. I was taught that the first principle of government was to maintain law and order, and the next was to look after the health of the people, particularly of the sick and afflicted, irrespective of whether they were white, black or half-caste. None of us can claim that that function of government has been carried out by any Administration within the last 20 years. I will again refer to the report of the Royal Commissioner, Mr. H. D. Moseley, whom we all respect. I am satisfied that he did a good job. I agree with him that there is one way only by which the aborigines question can be dealt with adequately, and that is to split the administration into sections and not attempt to administer the whole Act from Perth, as is proposed in the Bill. We have proved that we cannot blend black with white in the southern portion of the State, and I do not think, under the provisions of the Bill, we will blend the aborigines of the North with the half-castes in the South under one administration, and make a success of the effort that the public are entitled to expect. I agree with the Royal Commissioner that unless we amend the provisions of the Bill, the administration and control of matters affecting the aborigines will not be much better in the future than they have been under the parent Act. I have no more to say, except that I would like the Minister, when replying, to tell members representing the northern provinces what it is proposed to do with the aborigines in and about Broome. Provision has been made at almost every port in the North to deal with the aborigines. There are always a number of diseased natives about Broome, which is an important town, and, for the last 25 years, at any rate, these diseased natives have been treated in the grounds surrounding the Broome hospital, with nothing but a wire fence to prevent them from going out or coming in whenever they so desire, and it permits other na-

tives to go in and out as they see fit. Diseases of various descriptions have been dealt with in that manner for the last quarter of a century, and those diseases include leprosy. Provision is now being made at Derby to house lepers in a properly constructed institution, but there still remain the other natives who suffer from all sorts of diseases, and who come into contact with other coloured men. Those patients are dealt with in the hospital grounds at Broome, and it has been admitted that it is not a fair thing to the town, nor yet to the white patients who are inmates of the Broome hospital. I have heard indirectly that a decision has been arrived at regarding what the Government propose to do in this matter, which I and others look upon as one of urgency. If a decision has been arrived at, I would like the Chief Secretary, when replying, to let the House know what it is. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [7.36]: I take it the Bill is the outcome of the report furnished by Mr. H. D. Moseley some time back, following upon his very exhaustive inquiry into the various problems that affect the aborigines. A perusal of the Bill made it clear to me that it was very difficult to follow the full effect of the many amendments embodied in the measure. I suggest to the Chief Secretary that when a Bill containing such a large number of amendments is submitted, it would be wise if it were introduced in the nature of a re-enactment of the existing law with the proposed amendments embodied in it. If that were done, it would be for the benefit of those concerned and enable members to appreciate the full effect of the amendments.

Hon. T. Moore: Would not that be advisable regarding many Acts?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I agree. I will give members a simple instance in order to illustrate what I mean. Subclause 2 of Clause 3, which deals with the adjustment of certain terms in the principal Act, sets out that wherever the following terms or expressions, namely, "half-caste," or "half-castes," "and half-caste," or "and half-castes," and "or half-caste," or "or half-castes," appear in the principal Act after amendment by the Bill, they shall be struck out. I went through the original Act and it will be noted there that those

particular words occur principally in Sections 15, 16 and 17. In addition, it will be noticed that the interpretation clause has to be amended by deleting the definition of "half-caste." I have already mentioned that the Bill proposes to strike out the words I have quoted regarding half-castes, and I wondered why that decision had been arrived at. It was only by making a close examination of the existing Act that the reason became apparent. In the earlier part of the Bill the word "half-caste" is entirely deleted. What is intended, of course, is to substitute "native" for "half-caste," and so on. The draftsman obviously had to meet the position that was created by the inclusion of the amendments in the form suggested. If a new Bill had been placed before members in the shape of a re-enactment of the existing law plus the amendments proposed, that difficulty would have been eliminated and it would have saved setting out in great detail what is presented in the Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: Many of the amendments are consequential.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But some of them are a little more than consequential. However, I merely draw the attention of the Chief Secretary to this point, and he may keep it in mind for the future.

The Chief Secretary: It was not overlooked.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It was not until I made a close examination of the Bill that I saw the reason for it. When I first read the reference to half-castes, I thought the effect was to wipe out entirely that term from the Act. It was not until I read through other clauses in the existing Act that I saw the reason for the further amendment in relation to half-castes. There are some other matters one could refer to in the same direction, but I do not propose to weary members by doing so. I admit that like other members I have been greatly impressed with the importance of this subject. Since reading the Commissioner's report and hearing the speeches of other members who have had a very wide experience in connection with this subject, and also the admirable introductory speech made by the Chief Secretary, I have realised the vastness of the subject. The information given will be of great value in framing whatever legislation is necessary. The

magnitude of the task allotted to the Commissioner is made manifest by his comprehensive report. That report shows the complex difficulties confronting any Government in adequately dealing with the problem of the natives. These problems are greater in Western Australia than in most of the other States because of the different conditions existing in the far North as compared with other parts of the State. So far as the Northern portion of the State is concerned, the report does one very valuable thing and that is definitely to refute the allegations which have been made in the past as to the ill-treatment of natives. It also shows that the allegations which were made with regard to slavery and forced labour and the use of other similar expressions by many people who have had little knowledge of the natives and their habits and conditions, were not justified. The Commissioner, I think quite correctly, stresses the distinction between the native in the North and the native in other parts of the State, including those on Government stations and missions and he emphasises, as various members have done, the position of the half-caste. I question, just as other members have questioned, whether the present Bill will solve the most serious problem which has been created and is growing in respect of the conditions of the half-castes. Indeed, in the not far distant future, there is every likelihood that we will have to face a far more serious position than exists at present unless we tackle the problem with the utmost seriousness now. One might, with some justification, refer to what the Commissioner says on pages 7 and 8 of his report in dealing with the half-castes. In one part of his report he states—

The young half-caste men are, in the majority of cases, disinclined to work. One should not altogether blame the half-caste. Little interest has been taken in him after leaving school, and he finds he is able to exist by doing a little casual work when, but not until, it becomes necessary. I have considered the possibility of these half-caste youths being employed with the pearling fleet if, happily, the pearling fleet should continue to operate.

The Commissioner then goes on to explain what took place at an interview he had with those interested in pearling and the arrangements he thought might be made to absorb a certain number of these half-castes. In a later paragraph dealing with the inclusion or exclusion of different classes of persons of aboriginal origin, in and from native

camps, he refers to the subject in these terms—

At first sight it would seem desirable that, for the future welfare of the half-caste or person of lighter colour, the native camps should contain only full-blood aborigines. As I have already observed, there is a duty on the community to see that half-castes are placed in surroundings and given a training which will fit them later to take their place, if necessary, in a white civilisation. An easy method from one point of view would be to remove them when young from the influence of the aboriginal and form settlements at which, on similar lines to those applied in the case of orphaned white children, they might receive the training above referred to. That method, however, does not appear practicable for application to all half-castes. The great objection in many cases is that they have parents, and there is beyond doubt in the native woman a great love for her child, whether that child's father be black or white. It may be said that it is the child we must think of, not the mother; that is true, but we must, I think, in common decency, seek some solution which will benefit the half-caste child but not inflict cruelty on that child's mother, unless indeed the mother, by her mode of living, is deserving of no consideration. Earlier I stated that the vast majority of half-castes is to be found in the southern portion of the State, and in that area we have not to deal with the aboriginal woman of the class found in the North. The southern woman, in many cases herself a half-caste, is more civilised through a greater degree of contact with whites, and more fitted to take her place in surroundings better than those of the native camps. So far as the south is concerned (and by that I mean generally the towns along the Great Southern railway), I would say: abolish the native camps which, without exception, are a disgrace, and provide settlements where the families may be taken, where the grown-up members of those families may be housed according to their needs and be usefully occupied either on the settlements or, at periods at work on surrounding farms, and where the children may occupy quarters of their own, attend a school of their own, be taught such matters as hygiene and other elementary principles of a civilised life, and where, although not debarred altogether from seeing their parents, they may be gradually weaned from the aboriginal influence.

There are, of course, many other valuable suggestions made in relation to the same subject as well as other matters dealing with the natives, but these comments seem to me directly to support what was suggested just now by Mr. Holmes and other members who have spoken on the Bill, and point to the grave necessity of something more being done than has been done up to the present. That particular portion of the report, and several others as well, stressed the necessity for those natives

who, as we know, are indolent, being taken in hand and trained in useful occupations. For example, in dealing with native settlements the Commissioner also makes various important suggestions which I would commend to the attention of hon. members. In the same portion of his report he deals with the position at the Moore River Settlement, Violet Valley, Munja, and Moola Bulla stations, and his comments in relation to these are, I consider, exceedingly valuable, particularly those regarding Munja station. He states that there is some excellent country there, capable of cultivation, and recommends that someone versed in tropical culture should visit the station and see what could be done to employ a large number of natives in some useful occupation instead of permitting them to draw rations and do nothing. Indeed in one part of the report he emphasises the fact that the native is being weaned away from his habit of living and having to hunt around for his food, by giving him so much attention without his having to exercise some effort on his own behalf. Throughout the report there is laid down the principle of vocational training and the establishment of means to provide employment for natives in place of the Government merely giving rations, medical attention, etc.—of course I draw a distinction between the native who gets rations and the bush native who looks after himself—leaving the native who receives support, to his own devices, and thus encouraging him in idleness. I see nothing in the Bill which will remedy the present position of the law. It is interesting to look back and note what obligations were placed on the various Governments from the time the first Aborigines Act was introduced to the present day. The first Act introduced here was that of 1886. That measure appointed, I think, the first Aborigines Protection Board. The board were charged with the duty of doing things, such as looking after the natives and applying and distributing all supplies and moneys allocated by the Legislative Council for the benefit of aborigines, such as distributing blankets and other relief and various things, and also exercising a general supervision and care over all matters affecting the interests and welfare of aborigines. And so forth. That Act of 1886 was followed by a provision in our Constitution Act of 1889.

Before going on to the Constitution Act, I should, however, explain that under the first Act relating to aborigines the board were required to frame an annual estimate of expenditure. Then, having budgeted for that and received the money, they had to apply it in the manner indicated. But in 1889, under Section 70 of the Constitution Act, a definite sum was declared to be set aside for the benefit of the aborigines. That section, as most hon. members will recall, was repealed in 1905; but it provided that a sum of £5,000 would be payable to Her Majesty in every year out of Consolidated Revenue to be appropriated to the welfare—I underline that word—welfare of the aboriginal natives. There they were given their correct term. I mention this as both Mr. Holmes and Mr. Wood referred to the term “natives.” The sum of £5,000 was to be expended in providing the aboriginal natives with food and clothing when they would otherwise be destitute, and in promoting the education of aboriginal children, including half-caste children, and generally in promoting the preservation and well-being of the aborigines. Then the section goes on to state that when the gross revenue of the Colony—as Western Australia was then called—should amount to a sum of £500,000, one per cent. of that gross revenue was to be paid in substitution for the amount of £5,000. If that idea had been carried out, and continued until the present time, the result would have been that it would be necessary to set aside at the present time, for the welfare and benefit of the aboriginal natives, a sum of practically £100,000; because our gross revenue at present is something over £10,000,000. One per cent. of that gross revenue would represent £100,000. But we find that this last year there was expended a sum less than one-third of that percentage, or just under £30,000. That is the position so far as the Constitution Act is concerned; and that was the position up till 1905, when the existing Act came into force. Section 5 of the existing Act provides that the Colonial Treasurer shall in every year place at the disposal of the department, out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, a sum of £10,000, and such further moneys as may be provided by Parliament, to be applied for the purposes of the Aborigines Department. If in any year the whole of such annual sum is not expended, the unexpended balance is to be retained by the

department and expended in the performance of the duties thereof in any subsequent year. The duties placed on the department by the existing Act are much the same as those which were placed upon the original board—in fact, almost word for word the same. That shows the position from a monetary standpoint in respect of the liability of our State for the support of the natives. It is true that we have taken their land and have whittled down the amount which should have been expended on their behalf. That, in my opinion, is one thing that should be kept in view in regard to any legislation, because of the serious position which we see facing us as regards half-castes. The question which presents itself to my mind is this—have we adequately fulfilled the obligations for which we are responsible in regard to the welfare of the natives by doing what we have done, and have we done the best thing possible for them by merely giving them food, clothing, medical attention, and so forth, omitting, as we clearly have omitted, to train the natives to be useful citizens? In my opinion that question can be answered only in this way, that whilst we have endeavoured, through the good offices of the board in the first place and subsequently of the Chief Protector appointed under the 1905 Act, to do the best that was possible in the circumstances by providing food, clothing, medical attention, and so on, for those natives who came and applied for those things, we omitted that which was the most vital thing of all, namely, qualifying the natives to be useful citizens, moulding them and shaping their lives so that they could take a part in the development of the State and the improvement of their own social conditions. That is the point which has been stressed very emphatically indeed by the Commissioner, and one point which it seems to me is not stressed sufficiently, if at all, in the present Bill. It may be answered by saying that we will do certain of these things, but I doubt very much whether the passing of the Bill in its present form will achieve that which is the essential thing in order to combat the threatened evil.

The Chief Secretary: Have you any suggestion to make?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am going to make a suggestion in a moment. Outside of the activities and assistance rendered by the owners of pastoral stations in various parts of the State in giving employment to these na-

tives, the only other sort of employment that has been given them, so far as the South-West is concerned, has been the result of efforts by police officers and others appointed as honorary protectors under the Chief Protector, to get them casual employment on farms and other places from time to time. But there has been no proper body constituted for the purpose of organising the natives in such a way that their services could be applied in a more useful direction than they have been up to the present time. Suggestions are made by the Commissioner, and these I would commend for consideration; but I support the idea which has been voiced here by other speakers, that an advisory board should be appointed. I take it that the advisory board would be in much the same position as the original Protection Board when there was no Chief Protector in existence, but with this addition, that the Chief Protector, or Commissioner, would still be in office and would be assisted by the board in carrying out his highly important duties. Section 7 of the existing Act provides that the Governor may appoint deputy protectors; but that in itself would not be sufficient. Close attention should be paid to the recommendation made—which has been supported by several speakers—for the appointment of divisional protectors, because the vastness of this State makes it, to my mind, impossible for any one Protector or Commissioner adequately to manage and effectively to control the work in connection with those natives. With the appointment of a divisional protector, say, in the North, and perhaps one in another district, and with the Chief Protector here, far more effective work could be done, and something could be achieved in the way of formulating schemes for the employment of the natives in a way in which they are not employed at the present time. And in that way effect would be given to the recommendations in the report for their improvement and, let us hope, for their rise in the social scale. I recognise, as other members do, that the Chief Protector has honestly endeavoured to carry out a very difficult task; but he has been handicapped by the conditions prevailing, as is emphasised by the Commissioner in his report. The Commissioner says that the work in the office has been effected in a highly satisfactory way, but that it is impossible for the Chief Protector to absent himself for any length of time from his office to travel throughout the State and give that close personal attention

which is essential to looking after the welfare of the natives. It is even mentioned that there is not an efficient understudy in his office. How then can the Protector vacate his office to supervise the work outside, and yet be without that necessary help in the office? These are matters where, I contend, an advisory board would be helpful. But that advisory board would require to consist of men capable and experienced in the handling of native problems.

The Chief Secretary: What would be the cost of the advisory board?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Probably the Minister might say that we would have to go back to the earliest provision here, and get the gross revenue once more restored for the benefit of the aborigines. If that were done, with a hundred thousand pounds we would be able to carry out many necessary improvements.

The Chief Secretary: Then you would not want the advisory board.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, I think such a board would be of great importance in seeing that the money was properly expended in the best interests of the aborigines.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What does the Commissioner say about an advisory board? Did he recommend one?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No, he did not actually recommend it, but he made a comment with regard to it. There is a great deal to be said for an advisory board.

The Chief Secretary: I do not agree.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If we had the right men, I think such a board would be very useful. The Bill proposes to establish a court of native affairs.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Would not that court be an advisory board?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not think we could call the court an advisory board. Clause 32 provides for the establishment of such a court for the trial of any offences committed by a native against another native. I was a little hazy as to whether the recommendation of the Commissioner was for the establishment of a court for native versus native, or whether it was not to be established as a court wherein a native might be tried for any offence at the suit of another person, whether that other person was a native or a white man. Take, for example, cattle-stealing. I am inclined to think from the comments of the Commissioner that his idea was that this

native court should be a court that would try any suit or offence in which a native might be concerned, where he might be proceeded against by another native or by a white man. But this court proposed in the Bill could only hear a suit or proceedings between one native and another. If a white man were proceeding against a native for the killing of cattle, he would be prosecuted in the ordinary way in a police court.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: This would be for the hearing of disputes arising from tribal customs?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is what it seems to mean, but that is not, I take it, what the Commissioner recommended. On page 19 of his report, the Commissioner comments upon the hearing of charges against natives in an ordinary court of justice. Yet those comments in that part of the Commissioner's report do not make it clear whether the Commissioner meant a court to determine merely tribal disputes or a court in which any native, whether prosecuted by a white man or by another native, would have his suit tried. Personally I think the Commissioner intended that the court that should be established would be a court that would hear all cases such as cattle-killing, as well as tribal matters.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Would you take a white man to a native court?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: He could prosecute there; it would not matter.

The Chief Secretary: You have drawn attention to page 19; now read page 20, paragraph 6.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, I have seen that. But the Commissioner emphasised cattle-killing, and when I saw that this proposed court was to be native versus native, I thought it would not be of very much use. The establishment of a medical fund looks, on paper, to be a very good thing.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister did not deal with individual clauses in the Bill, and I hope the hon. member will deal with them only incidentally. The Minister pointed out that it was rather a Committee Bill.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, I admit that. I am only referring to these clauses in a general way. I agree with the views expressed by Mr. Holmes, namely that

there is grave doubt as to whether the provisions dealing with the medical fund, which purport to relieve people who contribute to that medical fund—there is grave doubt whether that will relieve them from responsibility under the Workers' Compensation Act. It would require some looking into and, having heard what Mr. Holmes had to say in regard to the matter, the Chief Secretary doubtless will have the question further investigated. I would suggest for the Chief Secretary's consideration that it would be a wise thing in a measure such as this, when dealing with the question of liability, to have corrected the omission that was made when the Workers' Compensation Act was passed, and eliminate from it entirely any liability on the part of the employer under the Workers' Compensation Act in respect of natives; but to create a certain fixed liability for the benefit of the natives on terms slightly different from those provided in the Bill before us. The opportunity should be availed of now to introduce an amending Bill making that position quite clear as to the liability of the employer of a native under the Workers' Compensation Act. I will conclude by adding that I intend to support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. T. Moore, debate adjourned.

BILL—FREMANTLE LITERARY INSTITUTE MORTGAGE.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [8.30] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to give the Fremantle Literary Institute Incorporated power to borrow money on mortgage in accordance with its rules, and subject to the consent, in writing, from the Governor, for the following purposes:—

(1) Repayment of money previously borrowed and payment of interest thereon.

(2) The payment of the cost of maintaining, renovating, altering, enlarging or replacing of any of its buildings.

(3) The purchase of books, furniture, fittings, etc.

Fremantle Lot 871 is held by the Fremantle Literary Institute solely for the purpose of a literary institute and is subject to mortgages given to the Commonwealth Bank and

the Australian Mutual Provident Society. In order to pay off the amounts under the existing mortgages and to effect certain repairs and renovations to their premises, the institute wishes to borrow £2,000 from the W.A. Trustee Company. The Trustee Company, however, will not accept the mortgage subject to the trust I have mentioned. Accordingly, it is desired that Parliament enact the measure before the House in order that the mortgagee shall be enabled to take over the land freed from any trust or restrictions in the event of foreclosure. The Bill empowers the mortgagee to sell or lease the mortgaged lands, or any part thereof, in case of default, while it also provides that any purchaser or lessee shall hold the land free and absolutely discharged from any trusts. Another proposal provides that the onus of ascertaining that the provisions of the Bill or the rules of the institute have been complied with in respect of any mortgage over the lands shall not rest on the mortgagee. Clause 4 proposes that the provisions of this Bill shall apply to moneys borrowed prior to its enactment. This is a necessary provision, in that no lender would advance money unless the property were free of the trust under any former mortgage given by the institute. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Power to borrow money on mortgage:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: When the company agreed to lend £2,000 on the property, did they know that a Bill would be introduced having retrospective effect dealing with tenants, purchasers and mortgagors' relief, etc., and would the passing of that measure have any effect on the raising of the £2,000?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I cannot say, but I do not think so.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3, 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 5.36 p.m.