

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 11th October, 1932.

	PAGE
Standing Orders, amendment, report of Committee ...	1063
Questions : Financial emergency legislation ...	1063
Butter, moisture ...	1063
Hills areas, settlement ...	1063
Bills : Financial Emergency Tax Assessment, 1A. ...	1064
Financial Emergency Tax, 1A. ...	1064
Mine Workers Relief, 1A. ...	1064
Transfer of Land, 1A. ...	1064
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, 1A. ...	1064
Electoral Act Amendment, 1A. ...	1064
State Trading Concerns Act Amendment (No. 2), 3A., passed ...	1064
Mortgagees Rights Restriction Act Continuance, 3A. ...	1064
Local Courts Act Amendment, 3A. ...	1064
Debtors Act Amendment, 3A. ...	1064
State Trading Concerns Act Amendment (No. 1), 3A. ...	1064
Pearling Act Amendment, 1A. ...	1070
Factories and Shops Act Amendment, returned ...	1071
Bulk Handling, Speaker's ruling, dissent ...	1071
Bulk Handling, 2A. ...	1073
Bulk Handling, referred to select committee ...	1098
Bulk Handling, Council's concurrence requested ...	1099
Annual Estimates—General debate concluded ...	1064

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

STANDING ORDERS, AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee.

Mr. Richardson presented the report of the Standing Orders Committee.

Ordered: That the report be received and read.

The report stated—

Your committee has the honour to report that it met on Thursday last to consider certain amendments to the Standing Orders which it considers necessary to the more effective carrying on of the business of the House.

The first is an amendment to Standing Order 21a—Deputy Speaker and temporary Chairmen of Committees.—The title of "deputy" has been substituted for that of "temporary" and power is conferred on any one of them to take the Chair of the House, when requested by Mr. Speaker. The next amendment is an alteration in the mode of putting the question for the striking out of words. The new form suggested is "That the words proposed to be struck out be struck out." The present method of putting the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part" has led to confusion, and it is hoped that the new method will obviate that. New Standing Orders are submitted to provide for the laying upon the Table of documents quoted by Ministers and private members.—Sydney Stubbs, Chairman.

Resolved: That the report be printed and its consideration made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.

QUESTION—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY LEGISLATION.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH asked the Attorney General: Do the Government intend to introduce legislation during the present session to give relief to Government employees on the Eastern goldfields from the anomaly created under the financial emergency Acts, by which those employees have had wage and salary reductions ranging from 18 to 22½ per cent. and goldfields allowance reduction of 70 per cent., whilst the cost of living, as indicated by the basic wage, has been reduced by only 9 per cent.?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: District allowances are determined by the Court of Arbitration, and are not affected by the court's cost of living declarations, or by the Financial Emergency Act. The district allowances now being paid were awarded by the Court of Arbitration in 1930, after full inquiry and consideration of evidence submitted by all parties concerned. It is not intended to introduce amending legislation as suggested in the question.

QUESTION—BUTTER, MOISTURE.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: When is it proposed to take action against those manufacturers who are marketing in the metropolitan area butter which contains excessive moisture?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: Action has already been taken.

QUESTION—HILLS AREAS, SETTLEMENT.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the greater part of the Upper Darling railway from Carmel to Narragullen runs through forest and water catchment areas, and that the policy of withholding land from settlement is retarding settlement and thus minimising railway facilities to the people living in the district? 2, In view of the importance of the railways securing traffic, will he endeavour to obtain a review of the policy of withholding certain portions of the area from settlement, and thus assist in providing traffic for the railways?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The position was reviewed

recently by the departments concerned, when it was decided it was necessary to maintain the present policy.

BILLS (6)—FIRST READING.

1, Financial Emergency Tax Assessment.

2, Financial Emergency Tax.

Introduced by the Premier.

3, Mine Workers' Relief.

Introduced by the Minister for Mines.

4, Transfer of Land.

5, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

6, Electoral Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Attorney General.

BILLS (5)—THIRD READING.

1, State Trading Concerns Act Amendment (No. 2).

Passed.

2, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.

3, Local Courts Act Amendment.

4, Debtors Act Amendment.

5, State Trading Concerns Act Amendment (No. 1).

Transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1932-33.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 4th October on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Richardson in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £1,442:

MR. WILSON (Collie) [4.50]: I purposely refrained from speaking on the Address-in-reply because I felt that the Estimates would be better ground for me to go upon. I have studied the Estimates fairly carefully, and I find in them little to be grateful for on behalf of Collie. Except as regards a few items from the Main Roads Board and the Forests Department, my district has not much to be thankful for in the matter of gifts. However, I do wish to thank the Forests Department for what they have done, or tried to do, for the district

and for the hundreds of men who are out of work there. Incidentally, the same remark applies to the Main Roads Board. But for those two bodies, the Collie electorate would be in a bad way indeed. There is plenty of opportunity to do something, especially while labour is a bit cheap; and when I speak of labour being cheap I refer to men on the dole, who in my opinion might well be employed in carrying on the good work of reforestation. In passing, may I say that in my electorate there is a town which I consider is entitled to the coal trade of Western Australia. I shall show presently that an order for 1,000 tons of coal going to Newcastle means the taking away of £1,500 from the Collie pay sheets. Such facts make one stop to think what is going to happen, and I shall speak of the Collie coal debacle later on. As regards the immediate necessities of Collie, the local railway station is unfit for anything except the freestick. The simple truth is that the station is uninhabitable and even ungetatable: one cannot get into the place; it is meanly built and unfit for office work. A new station should be erected promptly. There are plenty of good workmen available in the district, and something should be done to make the Collie station an up-to-date station. A bridge has been promised over the Collie River at the east end. The residents there in winter are sometimes shut off entirely from the Narrogin side. At times the water overflows the railway high bridge, and incidentally the district is then cut off except on the Bunbury side. Some time ago I spoke to the Minister for Works about getting approaches made for that bridge. Plenty of good hewers and plenty of maiden bush being available for timber in the vicinity, a decent bridge, which is my estimation would do for the next 50 years, could easily be constructed. That is a suggestion which, I submit, might well be entertained. If the Minister for Works would visit the district, he would see for himself that something ought to be done in the direction I have indicated. Fifteen months ago the Premier visited Collie, and at my request he inspected the Buswell Brook land. He was very pleased indeed with that land, and promised that something should be done to throw it open to men out of work in the district. I know the hon. gentleman allotted a sum of money to get a road put

out to the area. Although the land has been surveyed, somehow it is still lying in the same state as when the Premier was there. There are some unemployed in the neighbourhood, and it would be easy to find men willing to take up blocks. There would be little or no difficulty in establishing on that land a dairying community to supply the industrial town of Collie. I am sure the men I allude to are only waiting for the chance to take up some of this farming land. Before I get on to my pet subject, may I remark that I observe from the Press that the Government intend to sell the Power House. My only object in referring to the matter is to point out that if the Power House is sold, we want to make sure that protection will be given to the people who have been supplying coal to the Power House for the last ten or twenty years. Collie in the course of the year sends something like 110,000 tons of small coal to the Power House. A company purchasing would never consider the merits of Collie coal, or, incidentally, consider the merits of anything or anybody but its shareholders. In a way, one cannot blame the company for that, but I do trust that the Government, if they attempt to sell the Power House, will make provision to protect the Collie coal industry in the matter of local coal being always used at the Power House.

The Premier: You will have plenty of opportunity.

Mr. WILSON: Many thanks. The rumour as to the sale of the Power House I consider an ugly rumour. Now, it should not be necessary for me to stand alone in this Chamber year after year to proclaim the merits of Western Australia's native fuel. It seems to me that I have been a voice crying in the wilderness for the past 24 years. There are in this Chamber ten or twelve members who, whenever they speak, add something to the weight of the influence that keeps the gold mining industry going.

The Premier: The twelve are not equal to you.

Mr. WILSON: I have not yet discovered that fact. Then there is the Country Party, with ten members to voice the views of the agriculturists: but as soon as Wilson gets up, the cry is, "Collie coal again!" It becomes, not disheartening, but preventive of a man showing much enthusiasm. To-day I wish the House to listen

to me because I have to bring forward matters that are of great importance. In passing may I say that those members of another place who deery Collie coal should be given a chance to air their views; and therefore I suggest that the Government invite them to go before Dr. Herman, the Royal Commissioner on the Collie coal industry, and explain to him what they do not know about Collie or any other coal.

Mr. Kennelly: Why not Dr. Bentley?

Mr. WILSON: I would not go so far as that at present, although perhaps later it might be advisable to offer that suggestion. I do not know the full extent of Dr. Herman's commission; but now that the Royal Commissioner is here, he will no doubt go into the whole matter fully, with the result, I hope, of producing a report that will bring about peace and quiet in the industry for the next five or ten years. I suggest that the Royal Commissioner carry out practical experiments, and give every mine, the Griffin included, a chance to have a representative on the spot to see what the coal from his mine is worth, and the capabilities of each separate coal. I hope that after Dr. Herman has set up a standard formula for the coal, that standard will be maintained intact, and not be varied at the caprice of succeeding Railway Commissioners who may manage the Railway Department from time to time. At present the Collie coal industry is, and for the past ten months has been, pilloried between different setts. Chiefly it has been jambed between the Arbitration Court and emergency legislation. It got a rough squeeze between those two powers. Under the emergency legislation, I believe, from 18 to 22½ per cent. would have been the extent of the reduction imposed on any person. That has not been so, however, in the case of the Collie miners. I can produce figures to show that the emergency legislation figures have been exceeded as applied to Collie miners. Miners lose 28 per cent., shiftmen 25 per cent., sett riders 26½ per cent., piece-work colliers from 24.7 per cent. to 26.9 per cent., and the elimination of refuse item 33 per cent. The whole of the weighted reductions imposed on the Collie miners are over 22½ per cent., a bigger reduction than that experienced by judges and others. The miners have not been able to protect themselves against

these reductions. I do not know too much about the work of the Arbitration Court during the last few years; but if some of the things said to have been done were done, it appears that there is practically no Arbitration Court at all. The decision of the court was in effect a mandate to the mines to produce coal at a very low price and men's wages suffered accordingly. The Crown asked to be represented on the tribunal during the hearing. Now, I never knew the Railway Department to produce any coal. Yet they were present in the Arbitration Court to watch the proceedings, and examined witnesses on behalf of the Crown. When we passed the Industrial Arbitration Act Section 66 provided—

The Crown may, where, in the opinion of the Minister, a State industry is, or is likely to be affected by the award, order, decision, or determination of the court, intervene in any proceeding before the court, and make such representations as may be thought necessary in order to safeguard the public interest.

The Railway Department was represented by an advocate, and the Collie Miners' Union had to fight against both advocates. Section 66 of the Act was never intended to be used in order to sabotage the Collie miners or any other workers. However, the case was decided by the Industrial Registrar, and then it went to the Court of Appeal in Arbitration. In the meantime the Westralia mine had closed down. I was under the impression that no company could cease operations while a case was pending in the circumstances I have outlined. However, the court authorities considered that no harm had been done. The mine was closed, but protests were made from time to time and petitions were presented in connection with the position. Allanson township is ruined and the houses of the workers there are valueless. Although the mine was closed down, Government orders continued to be given to the company every week, from November 12, 1931 up to June 30 of this year. When we passed the Financial Emergency Act, we provided that the deductions from wages would be as follows:—On wages or salaries not exceeding £250 per annum, 18 per cent.; above £250 but not exceeding £1,000, 20 per cent.; over £1,000, 22½ per cent. Yet we find that the miners at Collie have suffered a reduction up to 28 per cent. Shift men suffered a reduction of 25 per cent., sett-rider work-

ers 26 per cent. The men on the Cardiff mine suffered a reduction of 26.8 per cent., and the men on the Westralia Mine, 26.9 per cent. For taking the refuse out of the coal, the men suffered a reduction of nearly 33 per cent. Yet the Financial Emergency Act provided for reductions rising from 18 per cent. to 22½ per cent. No first-class Collie miner experienced a lesser reduction than 22½ per cent., and that has been practically the same as that experienced by the highest-paid official or the squatter. Yet they have no redress at all. During the Arbitration Court proceedings, some data was asked for from the Commissioner of Railways, and a letter was submitted to the court embodying the information required. The secretary of the Miners' Union at Collie received a copy of the communication with a covering letter dated 26th November, 1931, reading—

I enclose a copy of a communication addressed to the president of the Arbitration Court as requested by him during the hearing of the appeal. Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) Evan Thomas, for the Commissioner of Railways.

I take exception to the data accompanying the letter addressed to the court because I regard it as misleading right through, while the figures quoted are not in accordance with fact. The letter would convey an impression to any layman that the tables included were compiled in the same way as those by the Royal Commission of 1916. In the table there appears the following:—

In Tables 2, 3 and 4 the method adopted by the Royal Commission in 1916 in arriving at the rate of 12s. 10½d. per ton quoted in Exhibit No. 7 put in by Mr. Whiteaker has been followed, the figures being brought up to date.

No such figures appear in the report of the Royal Commission and, in fact, they have been deliberately raised from 133 tons of Collie coal and 100 tons of Newcastle coal to 155 tons of Collie coal and 100 tons of Newcastle coal. An amount of approximately £50,000 is added in the estimates as the cost of Collie coal. What is the good of various authorities deciding upon formulae if each successive Commissioner seeks to establish a different one for himself? During the past 28 years various Royal Commissions have dealt with the matter. Dr. Jack established a formula providing for 100 tons of Newcastle coal to 133 tons of Collie coal. That was followed in the years 1905-6-7 by Mr. Hume, Mr. George, and, incidentally, by

Mr. Evans, who, however, said that the formula was 141 tons of Collie coal to 100 tons of Newcastle coal. The Woolnough Royal Commission, of which I was a member, made tests all over the railways. We had the services of the best railway engineers available. We did not pick out men to put on the engine plates, but we had the services of Mr. Appleby, a first-class engineer, who subsequently died in France, and a driver and fireman specially appointed by the Commissioner himself. As a result of their investigations, the Commission arrived at a formula of 138 tons of Collie coal to 100 tons of Newcastle coal, and so it goes on. The present Commissioner, Mr. Evans, now adopts the formula of 155 tons of Collie coal to 100 tons of Newcastle coal, as against 141 tons of Collie coal as he determined in 1906. Where will this sort of thing land us? I am afraid the percentage will be two of Collie to one of Newcastle before we stop it.

The Premier: I would not tell the present Commissioner that.

Mr. WILSON: The country can do without the Commissioner and without me, but the State cannot do without Collie coal. That is one point I am trying to make. We are sending to Newcastle for 1,000 tons of coal every week, and keeping men in employment there, whereas some of our own miners are on the dole, and cannot secure employment at all. It is high time that we cried a halt here. I thank the Minister for Railways for tabling the information I sought from him, and treating the matter formally, without compelling me to go to the trouble and expense to secure the facts I required. I wanted information regarding the quantity of Newcastle coal used for the 27 weeks ended the 30th June last, also the orders given to the companies at Collie and the supplies received from them. The document tabled by the Minister, in response to my request, is most interesting, and proves to the hilt the contentions I shall place before members. The details embodied in the document disclose the weekly orders given to each mine, and also the quantity of coal supplied. A peculiar feature, however, is that the mine that was closed down received an order from the Government weekly ever since. The Westralia mine has not worked since it was closed on the 12th November last. As a matter of fact, the engine is off the ground and the rails are up, while

the mine itself is full of water. Yet orders have been given to that mine every week! Could not those orders have been given to the mines that were operating, and thus have saved orders being sent to Newcastle?

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Is there not provision that any order short-supplied shall be given to other mines?

Mr. WILSON: But that was not done.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: The agreement provides for that.

Mr. WILSON: I can say that a good deal of it was supplied, but that does not justify sending away orders for thousands of tons of coal every month to New South Wales.

The Minister for Railways: The coal was used out of stock.

Mr. WILSON: But the coal supplied to the railways could not have been all from stock for the simple reason that 969 tons of Newcastle coal was burnt every week by the Railway and Tramway Departments—62 tons by the tramways, and 907 tons by the railways.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Over what period?

Mr. WILSON: The table gives particulars from the 1st January to the 30th June this year. That is to say, the department burnt 26,163 tons of Newcastle coal in those 27 weeks and imported 18,000 tons only. The departments burnt 8,000 tons more than was imported from Newcastle. It would be interesting to know how much coal was in stock at the Railways at the beginning of the year and how much at the end of June.

The Minister for Railways: Do you know we were compelled to increase our stocks because of the darg?

Mr. WILSON: That is not so. The darg was a myth. I asked the Minister for information regarding the orders for Collie coal and the supplies made available by the companies, and I find that with the exception of about 200 tons of coal in eight weeks, the department did not suffer any loss. In other words, that was all the darg meant to the department. The darg was started so that the men should not work their soul cases out of their bodies during three days to do what they did do in five days. As a matter of fact, some of the Collie miners are working but three days a week now. Why should the men work

their soul cases out for three days when they can do all that is necessary without hampering anyone by spreading the work over five days?

The Minister for Railways: Are we importing Newcastle coal now?

Mr. WILSON: But who controls the position? Inadvertently or otherwise, the Minister told us, when we saw him last February, that an order for 11,000 tons would have to be gone on with, but the coal would be kept in stock. Seeing that over 1,000 tons of Newcastle coal is burnt every week, did that quantity come from stock? If so, what stock is on hand now?

The Minister for Railways: We cannot afford to do both. We cannot pay for that coal and additional coal from Collie as well.

Mr. WILSON: Although the railways burnt 26,163 tons, 11,000 tons only were ordered. That being so, the Minister must have got more coal in the meantime. Every week, for 27 weeks, the railways used 969 tons of Newcastle coal and fully £1,500 weekly was sent to Newcastle to keep the miners in work there while over 300 men at Collie could not secure employment. That is the position.

The Minister for Railways: It is hardly a fair statement.

Mr. WILSON: But it is true. Here is the statement of the Commissioner.

The Premier: It is the truth, but not the whole truth.

Mr. WILSON: How long is this going to carry on? If we allow the Commissioner to use so much additional Newcastle coal, our men will soon have no work in Collie. I trust the Minister will give Dr. Herman a chance to look into this.

The Minister for Railways: Is there not sufficient evidence before you to show that until the trouble occurred at Collie we did not import more Newcastle coal than was absolutely essential.

Mr. WILSON: But you said it was going to stop, notwithstanding which between January and the end of June you burnt 26,163 tons, as per this statement.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: How much Newcastle coal was imported until February?

Mr. WILSON: The tonnages shipped from January to June were as follows:—s.s. "Echunga" 5,033 tons, the "Iron Monarch" 4,162 tons, the "Echunga" 2,082 tons,

and "Echunga" again 1,928 tons, "Aroona" 2,766 tons.

The Minister for Railways: That was to complete an order.

Mr. WILSON: It must have been a pretty big order.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It should have been cancelled.

Mr. WILSON: Then there was the "Iron Monarch" again with 2,009 tons. Practically speaking, there were 18,000 tons of Newcastle coal brought in. Yet we were told by the Premier and others that only 11,000 tons had been ordered.

The Premier: They must have given us good weight.

Mr. WILSON: Then it must be remembered that every ton of coal that comes from Newcastle robs the Mines Department of the royalty of 3d. payable on each ton of Collie coal. During the past five years Collie coal has paid over £35,000 royalty, and in addition there is the royalty on the timber used. On the other hand, the departments are sending £1,500 per week to Newcastle to keep the men over there at work, while here a dole is provided for 200 or 300 unemployed men in Collie.

The Minister for Railways: We are not doing that at all.

Mr. WILSON: You are. I wish you were not, although it seems I am a lone voice in the wilderness.

The Minister for Railways: When possible we have taken 100 per cent. of Collie coal.

Mr. WILSON: Until this year, yes. In ten years that has been the only bit of trouble at Collie, and that lasted only two days. I did my best to prevent it, but the men took the bit in their teeth. Other than that, there have been no stoppages. That is the point I want to take up. A good deal has been said about freights. I think that Dr. Herman, the Commissioner, should make investigations with a view to seeing whether the Government of New South Wales are not subsidising the coal companies in order to get the coal into this State.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The Commonwealth have done that.

Mr. WILSON: Yes; the Commonwealth did it.

The Minister for Railways: Believe me, if it could be avoided I would not take a

single ton of Newcastle coal, not if it were subsidised to the point of being put in here free

Mr. WILSON: I understand that an arrangement was made for a rebate of 1s. 8d. per ton to be given in overseas freight on Newcastle coal.

The Premier: But to bring it here would not involve overseas freight, so such a rebate would be wrong.

Mr. WILSON: Well, they can fix that up. It costs 8s. 2d. to carry Newcastle overseas coal, that is bunkering coal, 125 miles, whereas it costs 13s. 11d. to bring coal up here from Collie, or 5s. 9d. more for the same distance.

The Premier: That is added to the cost of the coal.

Mr. WILSON: As against that, they carry Queensland coal 310 miles to the nearest point for shipment at 14s. 3d. for shipping coal or 10s. 6d. for bunkering coal.

The Premier: They have cheap coal to do it with.

Mr. WILSON: No, their coal is no cheaper than ours, for ours does not average 15s. 6d. per ton. Some time ago of course, it was 19s. but a tentative agreement was made by the department for a reduction of 2s. 6d. per ton with the proviso that if Mr. Howe granted any greater reduction, it would have to be paid. As a result, the price is now 15s. 9d. as against 19s. The Griffin Company coal was reduced to 13s. 6d. per ton and they are to get a little refund. Some of the coals in the district, Cardiff, for instance, have had as much as a 26 per cent. reduction on their price to the tramways and railways. The weighted averages of coal are just about 22 per cent. And it must not be forgotten that the coal is paying the same freight as was paid during the past two or three years. It is curious that at the beginning of 1920, on coal at 16s. per ton, only 7s. 2½d. freight was paid, whereas the freight on coal of virtually the same price is now 11s. 10d.

The Minister for Railways: The price of 15s. 9d. for bunkering coal is higher than that for bunkering coal in New South Wales.

Mr. WILSON: No less than 600 tons of bunkering coal has come to Fremantle this week for the Collie coal trade. If we were getting the same freight ratio as New South Wales, we too would be able to have some shipping and the Midland Railway Company could use our coal instead of having to send to Newcastle for it. But the price

is too high and so we cannot get any trade at all for bunkering coal.

The Minister for Railways: We cannot vary the charge just now.

Mr. WILSON: No, but you could advise the Commissioner. His own estimate of 141 tons went up to 155 tons, a most unjust disparity. Surely there is some other way of balancing things than by getting at the local coal all the time. The Premier is laughing, but I asked for certain figures in this House and if those given me were not true, it is a shame on the authorities who gave them to me.

The Premier: You are a jolly good advocate.

Mr. WILSON: I am not getting much out of it, anyway. Bonuses aggregating £2,000,000 were given by the Collie coal industry to the railways during the war. Would it be of any use to the Government or to the State if the Collie mines were closed down? It would be no good at all. There must be some insurance on it.

The Minister for Railways: I wish somebody could unravel that bunkering trade.

Mr. WILSON: You start in to reduce the bunkering freight to the same rate as Newcastle and you will go a long way towards solving the problem. On your own statement Newcastle coal is worth 31s. or 32s. in ship's slings Fremantle. Collie coal is worth 15s. 9d. plus 8s. 2d. freight, or 23s. 11d. Do you think you could not get something out of that? It is worth trying.

The Minister for Railways: But there are other interests involved.

Mr. WILSON: There can be no good interest in ruining a township. Another point I suggest for the Commissioner to inquire into is the cost of mixing coal. It is well known that a mixture of the hard and soft Collie coals is beneficial. The mixing would not cost very much. So, instead of picking out the titbits in the Collie coalfields, the Commissioner ought to go right into this question of mixing the coal. What is to be left for the coming generation if the department is to be allowed to pick out the best of the Collie seams? The position is that with 300 good men in Collie the Government, or the people of Western Australia, are sending £1,500 weekly to New South Wales to keep the men there at work. There is something wrong about that. Then, on the other hand, we are giving a dole to unemployed men in the Collie district. We have also to consider the loss of 3d. per

ton royalty. On every ton of coal we produce we must pay 3d. a ton to the Mines Department.

The Minister for Railways: It is only transferred from one department to the other.

Mr. WILSON: I have never seen any transferred to Collie.

The Minister for Railways: It is all included in the price.

Mr. WILSON: It is not in the price. When a man pays so much for the tools he uses in the course of his work, the price he pays is not included in his net wages received, whereas the money that is paid to the Government remains in the coffers of the Government. This particular money could be used very nicely for the purchase of additional supplies of tarpaulins for the covering of Collie coal.

The Minister for Railways: You had better not say too much about that, or the Treasurer may ask for the full royalty that he is entitled, under the Act, to impose.

Mr. WILSON: Then we could kick up a bit of a shindy about royalties that could be imposed in other directions. I leave things well alone. No royalty should ever have been paid on coal. The Government get their fees through the leases, and they also draw revenue from the royalties on timber supplies. I trust the Minister for Railways will see that a better deal is given to Collie.

The Minister for Railways: You are entitled to ask that, but you should also remember that the trouble you refer to was brought about at Collie by the miners themselves.

Mr. WILSON: No, it was not.

The Minister for Railways: It was. It was a question of having stocks available in order to keep our transport system going. The miners should have thought of that before they did anything.

Mr. WILSON: The last order that was given was given after a deputation had waited upon the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: You must remember there was pressure on the Treasury.

Mr. WILSON: The Minister let the 11,000 tons go. He said, "I will give you a promise that if the men go back to work we will keep 11,000 tons in stock."

The Minister for Railways: Yes, but the Treasurer said he could not afford to provide the money to keep that quantity in stock.

Mr. WILSON: That was in the middle of February. Over a period of 20 weeks the railways sent for 20,000 tons of coal from Newcastle. They had only 11,000 tons of Collie coal. I do not think Collie coal has had a fair deal for the last six or seven months.

The Premier: Of course Collie has never had a fair deal!

Mr. WILSON: In the case of the miners, who are said to be drawing such high wages, some of them have suffered reductions to the extent of 27 per cent. of their earnings, and in isolated cases there has been a reduction of 33 per cent. We are as much entitled to the benefits of the Financial Emergency Act as are any other people in the community, and we are fighting to get those benefits. The sooner the law is amended to provide that there shall be one law for all, and not one that strikes at the miners, the better will it be for all. The miners have not had a fair deal from two Acts. The Industrial Arbitration Act has meant a big reduction in earnings, and they have also suffered under the Financial Emergency Act. Dr. Herman is here to investigate the position regarding Collie coal. I hope he will have practical working tests made at every mine, and will allow representatives of the mines to be present when those tests are being taken. Once a formula is agreed to it should be allowed to stand for a number of years. It should not be at the whim and caprice of every Commissioner of Railways who comes along.

This concluded the general debate.

Vote put and passed.

Notes—Legislative Assembly, £2,262; Joint House Committee, £3,788; Joint Printing Committee, £3,862; Joint Library Committee, £255—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—BULK HANDLING.

As to Procedure—Speaker's Ruling.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 6th October of the debate on the second reading.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before further discussion takes place on this Bill, I desire to submit to the House the following letter I have received from the Solicitor General:—

Referring to your letter hereunder dated 4th October asking for my legal opinion on the objection taken by Mr. Sleeman, M.L.A., to the above Bill as being unconstitutional, in order that you may be able to give your ruling in relation to such objection, I desire to reply to you as follows:—

I personally did not draft the Bill, but it can be safely assumed that the Parliamentary Draftsman, who did draft the Bill, when doing so, had due regard to the legal effect and validity of the provisions of such Bill.

The validity of the provisions of the Bill is not a matter for determination by Parliament as an institution; it may be a matter of opinion in the minds of individual members of Parliament when voting on the Bill; but any decision as to the validity or otherwise of any provision of an Act of Parliament is one for determination by the proper judicial authority.

Again, the objection taken by Mr. Sleeman raises a legal question concerning which the Speaker of the House is not competent or authorised to give a decision, and in regard to which Parliament as a body is not properly concerned.

Moreover, as Crown Solicitor, I cannot give an opinion in the nature of a judicial decision which would be binding on Parliament or anybody else, and which may ultimately be proved to be wrong in the light of a determination by the proper judicial authority.

In my opinion, therefore, the objection taken by Mr. Sleeman in Parliament is one which cannot be properly taken in Parliament and is one which the Speaker should not allow to be taken for the reason that he is not competent or empowered to consider and decide thereon.

For your own personal information, I may say that I cannot find any provision in the Bill which is ultra vires the Constitution or any Commonwealth Act of Parliament, but my opinion must not be accepted as being correct in law until it has been so decided by the proper judicial authority.

I desire to add that, having given careful attention to the matter since I received this

letter from the Solicitor General, and having consulted the Clerk of the House and looked up authorities, my decision is that Mr. Sleeman's objection must fail, and that the House should go on with the debate.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I take it, Mr. Speaker that your ruling is based on the letter you have received from the Crown Law Department. This states that the matter is not one for Parliament, and that you, as Speaker, are not competent to express an opinion on the subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member making a speech? I cannot allow the matter to be discussed. If he desires to question my ruling, he must do so in the proper manner. I have ruled that the debate shall continue. If the hon. member desires to dispute my ruling he must send up a written notice accordingly.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I intend to move in that direction.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member put his dissent in writing. There can be no discussion upon it.

Dissent from Ruling.

Mr. Sleeman: I move—

That the House dissent from Mr. Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Speaker: On what point does the hon. member wish to dissent?

Mr. Sleeman: I have raised the point that the Bill is not valid, that it is ultra vires the Constitution. I do not see how we can agree with the statement made by the Crown Solicitor that this is not a matter for the Speaker to decide, that it is not competent for the Speaker to give a ruling on the question raised. He also says that the validity of the Bill is not for Parliament to determine, that that is a matter for a judicial authority. I understand that you, Mr. Speaker, uphold the ruling given by the Crown Solicitor. If that is the case, I disagree with your ruling, because I contend that the Bill is ultra vires the Constitution. The Crown Solicitor begins by telling us that he did not draft the Bill and that the solicitor who did draft it was quite satisfied about its validity. If you go through the various clauses of the Financial Agreement, you will not come to any

other conclusion than that the Bill is ultra vires and not in accordance with that agreement. The Bill provides that the trust shall have power to borrow in English sterling a sum of £500,000 and such further sums as the Minister and the trustees for the security holders may from time to time approve. It goes on further to provide that the Minister shall in respect of any securities issued, upon terms which have been first approved by him, attach thereto the guarantee of the State of Western Australia that if the principal sum or sums thereby secured, and the interest thereon, be not fully paid on or before the 30th day of November, 1943, the same shall become the liability of and be paid by the State. I claim that if that clause were not in the Bill, the Bill would not be worth twopence. The Government are also quite satisfied that without the guarantee of the State there would be no chance of raising any money. If it were otherwise, why put the clause in the Bill? If the Government can argue that it will be possible for the trust to raise the money without the guarantee of the State, the clause need not appear in the Bill. As a matter of fact, the Government are doing the borrowing. Any school boy should know, and I think the Attorney General and his legal friends on that side of the House will not dispute the fact that one cannot do for another that which he cannot do in his own right. We have heard that the Government are experiencing difficulty in raising finance for the Power House. If what is proposed by the Bill were permitted, we should have to create a board, clothe it with borrowing powers, and attach to it the guarantee of the State. Then everything in the garden would be lovely. We are here as lawmakers, not as lawbreakers. If what is proposed goes through, I can see in the near future our being able to finance the construction of a bridge for Fremantle by saying to the Harbour Trust, "We are clothing you with borrowing powers and we attach the guarantee of the State." I am disturbed over this because I consider the House proposes to do something that is not valid, and the result will be to involve the State in considerable expense in order to test the matter in the law courts of Australia. I repeat that in my opinion the Bill is ultra vires the Constitution, and in support of that I should like to quote the

decision of Justices Rich and Dixon of the High Court—

Subsection 5 of that section provided with respect to agreements of the description contained in Subsection 1 that every such agreement and any variation thereto shall be binding on the Commonwealth and the States parties thereto notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution or the Constitution of the several States or in any law of the Parliament of the Commonwealth or of any State. In their honours' opinion the effect of this provision was to make any agreement of the required description obligatory upon the Commonwealth and the States, to place its operation and efficacy beyond the control of any law of any of the seven Parliaments, and to prevent any constitutional principle or provision operating to defeat or diminish or condition the obligatory force of the agreement.

The Minister for Lands: What was that ruling given on?

Mr. Sleeman: The whole of the Agreement.

The Minister for Lands: But what case?

Mr. Sleeman: The case between New South Wales Parliament and the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Lands: What does it refer to?

Mr. Sleeman: What I have quoted refers to the whole of the Act. If the Minister cannot understand what I have said, I will read it again.

The Minister for Lands: But you have not said what Bill was referred to.

Mr. Sleeman: The Financial Agreement. It is no use the Minister trying to side-track me. If he likes, he can read it for himself. The Agreement referred to is the Financial Agreement, and what I have quoted was what was said by Justices Rich and Dixon. Next we come to Justice Starke, who said—

The Commonwealth might use all such means as are adapted to carry out the object of the power, the performance of the agreement, whether those means be judicial or extra-judicial. His Honour concluded that the Acts attacked in this case fell within the description of a law for carrying out by the parties the Financial Agreement and that Sections 5 to 12 were valid.

I do not know what "extra-judicial" means; I plead ignorance to that, but I do not wish to see our Minister come under the heading of "extra-judicial," because "judicial" is had enough.

Mr. Speaker: I might interrupt the hon. member. I think he is discussing a subject that is not before the Chamber, and I

desire to put him on the right track. I have not given any ruling to this House on the constitutionality of the Bill. It is quite outside my province to say whether or not the Bill is constitutional. I have given a ruling that the debate shall be continued, and that is the subject matter before the Chamber. I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to that question.

Mr. Sleeman: Very well, but I do not suppose I need send up another motion of dissent.

Mr. Speaker: What the House has to decide is whether my judgment is sound. The only matter that can be discussed now is whether or not the debate on the Bill shall proceed.

Mr. Sleeman: I have already moved to dissent from the ruling that you have given. The Crown Solicitor has told us——

Mr. Speaker: The Crown Solicitor does not come into the matter at all.

Mr. Sleeman: Then may I respectfully ask, what are we discussing?

Mr. Speaker: I have told the hon. member as plainly as he can be told in the English language that the only subject we can discuss is my ruling that the debate may be continued.

Mr. Sleeman: That is what I understand, and I have moved to disagree from that ruling. It is astounding to think that we can allow a debate to take place on a Bill unless we can show that that Bill is constitutional.

The Attorney General: We have passed Bills in recent years that have been doubtful, constitutionally, and brought in Bills with special clauses, recognising what was involved in those Bills.

Mr. Sleeman: The Attorney General cannot get round it that way. Even if in previous sessions we passed Bills which were doubtfully legal, there is no reason why we should perpetuate that kind of thing. If there is a doubt at any time, the Speaker can always approach the Crown Law Department. Moreover, the Government have two King's Counsel sitting on their side of the House and therefore it is absurd to declare that this Chamber is not competent to say that we can manage our own affairs, and that it is a matter for a judicial authority. The Crown Solicitor's decision means that the subject will have to be fought out in the courts. We should be in a position to say definitely, when

the point is raised, whether a Bill is constitutional or not. We should not be placed in the position of having to say at a later period that the Bill merely slipped through, as the point was never raised. Of course, it might be all right from the point of view of the legal profession to allow a judicial authority to determine the validity of an Act. I have no wish to see the State plunged into litigation in the courts. We know what a harvest would be reaped by the lawyers if a matter of this kind were taken to the High Court. The case of New South Wales versus the Commonwealth, heard before the High Court, to determine whether an Act was constitutional was a standing disgrace. I regret it has been necessary to take this action, but I would have been lacking in my duty had I not done so. My sole desire was to protect the State. If in the end it is shown that the Bulk Handling Bill is not valid, the House will have to take the responsibility of any expense to which the State might be subject.

Question put and negatived.

Second Reading.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [6.0]: I cannot allow this very important measure to pass without making a few remarks upon it. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) said that some 80 per cent. of the members of the House were opposed to the Bill. I presume that he meant they were opposed to the Bill and not to the system of bulk handling. I desire to stress the position of the farmers. If the Mortgagees' Right Restriction Act were withdrawn, 80 per cent. of the farmers would be forced into the Bankruptcy Court. The farmers of the State are overwhelmed with debt. Some estimates place the total of their indebtedness at £32,000,000. Farming is a sorely-pressed and impoverished industry, loaded up with compound interest charges, excessive production costs, including heavy handling charges, and high tariff burdens, while at the same time the farmers are receiving phenomenally low prices for their produce. The position of the farmers is so serious that they are looking for every opportunity to reduce the cost of production. Are the excessive costs of handling to continue, or will Parliament give a lead by enabling the hand-

ling costs to be reduced to a minimum? The Government have done many things to help the farmers, and at the same time have urged the farmers to grow more wheat, but the things done to assist the farmers have been mostly in the nature of palliatives. The future of the farmer will be hopeless unless we tackle the problem promptly. His costs must be reduced, his debt position eased, and interest must be cut down and a lot of it cut out. The farmers have succeeded in growing more wheat, but at a loss. How to enable them to grow more wheat at such a cost as will ensure them a living of a decent standard is the problem confronting the country. Wheat cannot be profitably grown under existing conditions. The Bill offers an opportunity for Parliament to do something to enable farmers to make their industry a profitable one. A reduction of costs, an easing of the debt position and a cutting down of interest will give the farmer hope and security, and he will continue to grow more wheat and do his bit towards sending some two score millions of bushels of wheat to market to assist in paying Australia's overseas debts. Several statements have been made in this House that call for reply by country members. The member for Mt. Magnet said that farmers had been influenced by certain propaganda through the Press and from the public platform. I wish to tell the hon. member that the farmers are not dunces in this matter. Many of our farmers are keen men, who have travelled in countries where bulk handling obtains, and who have made a study of the subject. They understand the intricacies of the system and are better qualified, than is the member for Mt. Magnet, to deal with the question of bulk handling. A majority of them probably know more about the subject than does the hon. member. It is just on 20 years since Messrs. Maitland Leake, Caleb Massingham, C. Taylor, G. McLellan and I brought down to a conference of farmers and settlers a motion urging the introduction of bulk handling. At that time very little of the system was known in this country, but since then there have been frequent efforts to introduce the system. On every occasion, however, those attempts have been met by opponents producing the same old Aunt Sallies, the same old bogeys and the same old bugbears. Even

now some of the old objections have been revived. One point made by the member for Mt. Magnet was that dealing with the cost of alterations to railway sidings, as stated in Mr. Poynton's report. To that statement a most emphatic denial has been given. Last season at Minnivale, Benjaberring, Nembudding, Yelbeni and Trayning, facilities were installed for handling wheat in bulk, and no alteration whatever had to be made to the sidings by the Railway Department.

Member: Were those the original sidings?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, and there are hundreds of other sidings in the wheat belt where no alterations would have to be made by the Railway Department.

The Minister for Agriculture: And on the Midland line, too.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes. The Midland Railway Company will allow bulk handling facilities to be established nearer to the line than will the Commissioner of Railways. The member for Mt. Magnet said that the estimates given were unreliable. Of weighbridges, 104 have been installed, of portable elevators 10 have already been constructed, and of storage bins five were built and operated last season—at Minnivale, Benjaberring, Nembudding, Yelbeni and Trayning. No doubt exists regarding the costs of those facilities. They were tried out last year, and it is established that the estimates for similar facilities elsewhere have been correctly based. In addition to the £383,000, which is the estimated cost, a sum of £140,000 will be required to provide facilities at ports. The estimates for port facilities have been prepared by Mr. R. Stiecht, an engineer of great ability, whose services were kindly made available by the Cuming Smith-Mt. Lyell Fertiliser Company. Mr. Stiecht has had a wide experience of handling low-valued products in bulk and of adapting methods to suit wheat handling conditions. The total of £140,000 for the ports is made up of £70,000 for Fremantle, £29,000 for Geraldton, £22,000 for Bunbury, and £19,000 for Albany. Those are the estimates, not of a Government department, but of an engineer of a concern that has had unique experience of successful building and development schemes. Consequently they can be relied upon as being correct. Apart from those amounts, £45,000 has been provided for contingencies. The £383,000 is the known cost

that can be vouched for as absolutely correct though, as I have admitted, the figures for port facilities must be regarded in the nature of an estimate. It is not expected that during the first year 100 per cent. efficiency will be obtained at the 280 sidings where bulk handling facilities will be provided. The human element has to be considered, but in the light of experience at the five sidings I have mentioned, there is little doubt that the system can be successfully operated. The past success of the pool should also discount any fears regarding the bulk handling system. The pool authorities have an Australian and a world-wide reputation for businesslike methods. The member for Mr. Magnet claimed that the life of the facilities would not be anything like what was claimed for them. In company with the Minister for Lands, and Messrs. J. J. Holmes, M.L.C., and G. W. Miles, M.L.C., I visited the five sidings where experimental facilities were operated last year. It was a surprise visit, and we saw things as they were normally conducted. Messrs. Holmes and Miles observed that Mr. Thomson had been very conservative in his estimate; from their experience and knowledge of building and materials, they would give the facilities a life of double the period, provided proper attention were paid to them. Mr. Holmes added that he would have preferred to see jarrah utilised for the whole structure, excepting the roofing. There are 28 sheds that were erected over 10 years ago and that are still in sound condition. There are sheds built 28 years ago at Beverley and York and other places by the old Producers' Union, and they are still serviceable.

Mr. Wansbrough: They were not used for bulk storage.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No, they were used for storing bagged wheat.

Mr. Withers: With bagged wheat there would be no pressure on the walls of the buildings.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The construction of bulkheads is a very different proposition, but the material in the sheds of which I have spoken has lasted for 28 years.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Before the tea adjournment I was dealing with actual figures resulting from bulk handling experiments in the Wyalkatchem area. Before I finish with that phase of the subject, I wish to

quote from a report by the manager of the scheme in that district, Mr. H. McCann—

The change-over to bulk handling in the Wyalkatchem district proved quite a simple method for the growers, who were given very little notice of the intention to instal the system, and were more or less unprepared. Despite the fact that none of the settlers had had any experience of bulk handling, the season's work was carried out quite smoothly, and proved to be less worrying, less costly, and more expeditious than under the old bag system.

This is backed up by the statements of the farmers who used the system. Mr. J. Brookes of Wyalkatchem, with 11 miles' cartage, handled 8,760 bushels, and effected a saving of £101 17s. 8d. Mr. N. Threlfall of Korrelocking, with 5½ miles' cartage, handled 12,400 bushels, saving considerably over £100. The time taken to unload 140 bushels, he states, was from seven to eight minutes. He also states—

It was a great thing to be relieved of the bag sewing, and we were given much more time to attend to odd work, which always accumulates, instead of spending every odd moment and damp mornings in sewing bags. I claim that this is the only genuine effort that has been made to diminish the cost of production.

Next as regards long-distance carting. The reason for the greatly increased quantity of wheat received at Korrelocking during last season was that farmers who had never previously carted to Korrelocking did so this year. They adopted this course in order to save bags, and in doing so they carted ten or more extra miles, but considered the extra distance worth while. At Benjaberring Mr. R. Reilly, who has a farm six miles from the siding, used one team to harvest and cart, and required only 500 cornsacks for 6,700 bushels. With a team continually on the road, 200 or 300 bags were sufficient for 9,000 bushels. A further advantage was that on Mr. Reilly's place the harvesting was not unduly prolonged. By carefully storing all second-hand bags, and by washing their superphosphate bags, the great majority of farmers would rarely need to buy new cornsacks. Mr. Lewis, another Benjaberring farmer, carted 13,500 bushels over a distance of from 2½ to five miles, using only 300 super. and second-hand bags, and 300 new bags. Mr. Lewis considers that four or five per cent. of cornsacks will be the most that will be required by the average farmer to handle his crop

under bulk handling. At Wyalkatchem the Hon. J. Lindsay, carting 12½ miles, transported 16,207 bushels, using only two bales, equal to 600 bags. Under the bag handling system, 18 bales of bags would have been required. The resultant saving in bags, sewing twine, and so forth, was over £200. Harvesting was in no way affected by the change of system, neither more nor fewer men being employed. In 1930-31 Wyalkatchem handled 80,000 bags, but owing to the introduction of bulk handling at Korrelocking, Wyalkatchem handled only 27,000 bags during the 1931-32 season. Farmers went past their proper siding to Korrelocking and Benjaberring, in order to obtain the benefit of the new system. In fact, farmers carted from a little north of Tammin, actually 20 miles from Korrelocking, while farmers from Gnuca and Nalkain, 14 miles north of Korrelocking, did not use their own sidings, which were handily close, but carted to either Korrelocking or Benjaberring. Up to early in February, Korrelocking had handled over 348,000 bushels, and still had 160,000 bushels awaiting transport to the coast. Carting was finished one month earlier than usual at all five sidings. Mr. Thiel of Nembudding, formerly known as Homebush, is farming some 6,000 acres. He is a gentleman well known in the commercial and journalistic worlds. In the presence of the Minister for Lands, the Hon. J. J. Holmes, and the Hon. G. W. Miles, as well as Dr. Boyd and myself, Mr. Thiel uttered some words which provide much food for thought—

With these facilities provided, I have been able to make a profit—certainly not a big one, still a profit; though not as big as I should like. I will illustrate just what it means in purchasing bags from Calcutta, as against using silos constructed of Australian material and local timber. Unaware that bulk handling would be operating this season, I bought my bag supply early, 32 bales. As bulk handling was started, I used that method. Consequently I used only two of those bales, together with some old bags I had by me, and was able to sell the other 30 bales owing to the inauguration of bulk handling at Nembudding. Even with a charge for facilities provided, the bag purchase alone will show a handsome profit on the credit side of the ledger, to say nothing of the saving of endless worry and hard work on the farm, elimination of waste at the siding and farm, no bag sewing, no twine, no branding, etc., to pay for. The damage by mice will be largely abolished.

I may mention that at one time I was inspecting wheat stacks for the Westralian Farmers Ltd.; and I have a lively recollection of going to Geraldton, after a bad spell of wet weather during the summer months, and seeing the stacks at Mingenew and Geraldton growing crops of wheat better than the fields, owing to damage from rain. I had further to go to Indarra, near the farm run by the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy). The stacks there, which were unprotected, were so riddled by parrots and other birds that there was a continuous fall of wheat all round the stacks, with resultant enormous waste. I especially mention this because under the scheme now proposed wheat will be better protected than it has ever been in Western Australia, even with the additional covering agitated for by people who think that wheat is not protected as fully as it should be. Whilst we were talking to Mr. Thiel, along came Leo Naughton, a young farmer from Yorkrakine, who had travelled some 20 miles with an old Ford truck converted into a box wagon. This Ford truck had been at work on the farm and on the road for eight years. I heard that this young farmer had carted the whole of his wheat to Korrelocking. I asked him, "How do you manage to fill the wheat into the wagon, and what did it cost you to alter the truck?" His reply was, "We have the wheat in a loose heap in the paddock, and a boy 15 years old and myself filled the truck with kerosene tins in seven minutes. The iron sides of the truck, with fittings and so forth, cost for labour and material £7 10s." The old Ford seemed a trifle hard to start, but it transported this Yorkrakine crop to the railway. Anything in the way of difficulties can be overcome by the stalwarts who have been waiting over a score of years for the Yarramony railway.

Hon. A. McCallum: It is a long while since we heard that remark.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yelbeni siding had then received 231,000 bushels. The same story was told at Yelbeni of enthusiastic support of the up-to-date method of handling grain. Trayning had then received 248,000 bushels, and we saw railway trucks being loaded with the portable elevator and what is termed a Clark shovel, to bring the cutlying grain to the elevator when cleaning up. I found that from North Baandee many settlers, including Messrs. Barton,

Ormesher & Tickle, Stone, Thompson and Laird, were finding it a payable proposition to cart the 18 or 20 miles to Trayning. This fact shows how seriously the farmers are taking the experiment; they cannot escape the realisation of the question. They have discovered the benefits of the system, and are whole-heartedly in favour of it. In conclusion let me state that the experimental units used last year were entirely new, in both form and construction, and that they were put into operation with the use of all sorts of materials and existing sheds. There were certain evidences of rough-and-ready methods, but this was in appearance only, and did not affect the effectiveness of the scheme. What will be done in the future is that the weaknesses which have been discovered in some sections will be remedied. In future the works will not be put up by casual labour, as in the past, but by experienced workmen; and there is every indication that the life claimed for these facilities will be fully realised. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) made references to bulk handling and the markets this State is perhaps destined to lose. It may not be generally known that there are only two ports in Britain which definitely require bags. At Bristol Messrs. Spiller are constructing new mills for bulk handling. In London the Associated Flour Millers are adopting a similar course. The Mersey millers invariably empty the bags in the hold, thus bulking the wheat before taking delivery of it. At Swansea, Weaver, the big miller, prefers bulk to bag wheat. Associated Millers, of London, take bags over the side of vessels, put a knife into the bags, slit them, and take the grain in bulk in barges, from whence they are transported to the mill. Banks, Spillers and the Co-operative Wholesale Society are the three big combines of millers who, with the London Associated, practically control the milling industry in Great Britain. The three former cut the bags and bulk the wheat in the hold of the vessel before taking delivery of the cargoes. Naples, Genoa, Leghorn, Marseilles, Dunkirk, Antwerp and Rotterdam are all bulk ports. Shanghai possesses facilities for both bulk and bag wheat, while most of the ports of Japan are fitted with bulk handling facilities. I shall say no more beyond making another passing reference to the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy),

who pointed out that nothing was contained in the Bill to protect the wheat producers against losses. He said that there was no clause in the Bill under which compensation would have to be paid to the farmers. I point out to members generally and the member for Mt. Magnet in particular—as he is not here, he may read my remarks later on in “Hansard”—that in the course of 10 years the Wheat Pool has had five stacks only damaged by fire and 1,605 bags were all that were destroyed. That loss was amply covered by insurance. In all such operations, insurance will play an important part. As a final word, I would point out that much has been stated in the House that has been in the nature of bogeys and Aunt Sallys put up only to be knocked down. Year after year the same old tales are trotted out.

Mr. Kenneally: You have introduced a few of them.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have introduced only what has been stated by others. The same old stories are repeated, and have to be religiously knocked down. It would appear that a new generation has grown up and nowadays people do not know that so many of these objections are built on false premises. I make an appeal to members to regard the Bill as the first step towards reducing the cost of production in connection with a sorely harassed industry that is overwhelmed with debt, an industry that cannot carry on unless drastic steps are adopted to remedy the position.

HON. A. MCCALLUM (South Fremantle) [7.48]: The Bill is easily the most important on the Notice Paper, and will probably be the most important this Parliament will be called upon to deal with, because it vitally affects so many industries and upsets many long-established customs. It will revolutionise the business of wheat handling in Western Australia, which is the largest of our transported commodities. It will deprive a large number of men, whose life's work is centred in this industry, of their means of occupation. That was admitted by the Minister when he moved the second reading of the Bill. At the same time, those who have built up vested interests in the handling of the wheat will also find their occupations gone. It behoves the House, before it lightly deals with a Bill of this description and comes to a final determination, to see to

it that a thorough and most careful examination is made of all its ramifications. There has been previously no proposition before this Parliament for some considerable time, the effects of which are so far-reaching as those of the Bill before us. I regret having to say that we have found during the last two months, before the intentions of the Government were known and before any Bill could be presented in this Chamber, that the members of the Country Party, in their press propaganda throughout the State, have been accusing the Labour Party of being desirous of doing everything in their power to block the passage of the Bulk Handling Bill. Quite two months ago I read in a country newspaper, under the heading "Country Party News," a statement that the members of the Labour Party were determined by all the means in their power to oppose the Bill, and to see that its passage was blocked. I would remind the House—the point was also taken by the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy), the only previous speaker on this side of the House—that there can be no question of a party issue regarding the Bill from the Labour Party's standpoint. As you know, Mr. Speaker, our system is that the candidates standing in the interests of the Labour Party go before the people with a set platform, which is printed and distributed widely. Everyone knows to what a Labour candidate is pledged. We also sign a pledge that the decision of a majority of the Labour members in Parliament shall be binding on us when it comes to a question of giving effect to the party platform. Apart from that, there is no machinery by which we are bound respecting any question.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They could not bind us.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No.

Mr. Marshall: They have never attempted to do so.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is so. Bulk handling was not a part of our platform at the last elections, and consequently no member on this side of the House is bound regarding his attitude. Bulk handling was not mentioned in the platform of any political party at the last election. From what we can hear, caucus meetings have been held by the National and Country Parties, and the whip has been cracked. Thus, while other political parties will make the Bulk Handling Bill a party issue, although they had no mandate from the people to that end, seeing that the question was never before

the public at the last election, every member on the Opposition side of the House can speak for himself but cannot speak for the Labour Party as a whole. I would further remind members of the Country Party, and particularly that section that, in the Press, has been so anxious to consistently place before the public the statement that the members of the Labour Party are opposed to the interests of the farmers, that we have more wheatgrowers in the Labour Party than there are in the ranks of the Country Party.

Mr. Marshall: We always have had more and better farmers.

The Minister for Lands: You must remember that you have 23 members and there are only 10 in the Country Party.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Three Country Party members who have spoken so far on the Bill do not grow one grain of wheat between them. Thus, when it comes to considering the interests of the farmers, I think we can speak with more authority than the three Country Party members who have already spoken. Whatever views I may express before I resume my seat, those who are supporters of the Wheat Pool will not accuse me of opposing that organisation. Every year since I have been interested in the production of wheat, I have helped that organisation, and this year, to my financial loss, the pool handled 100 per cent. of my harvest.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. C. Willcock: What! "Hear, hear!" because the member for South Fremantle lost some money?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I did not take the Minister's interjection in that sense.

The Minister for Lands: I did not mean it that way.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I have been consistently the biggest customer from my siding, so that whatever my views may be on this particular question, it cannot be said that I am opposed to the Wheat Pool. The Minister has suggested that the Bill should be referred to a select committee for investigation, and I notice that the member for Nedlands (Mr. Keenan) has given notice of his intention to move that the Bill be referred to a joint select committee of both Houses of Parliament. Five long months have passed since I headed a deputation to the Premier and asked that a thorough investigation be made into the bulk handling proposition. At that

time we could see that the proposal was so far-reaching in its ramifications and would mean so much to the State as a whole, as well as to those who were personally interested in phases of the business, that it was better, before Parliament was asked to deal with the measure, that a thorough investigation should be conducted. All established practices in the handling of wheat were to be put aside, a new system introduced and experiments embarked upon. Our view was that before that happened, a full inquiry should be made into the whole question, but my request to the Premier fell on deaf ears. In June last the Chamber of Commerce made representations to the Premier and asked for the appointment of a Royal Commission. They suggested that the subject was of such importance that there should be a further investigation. Reverting to the attitude of the Labour Party as misinterpreted in the Press, when the Labour Party's suggestion was made that a Royal Commission should investigate the bulk handling problem, it will be remembered that the Chamber of Commerce made a similar request. But the Press pointed out that our suggestion for a Royal Commission of inquiry was merely with the sole object of delay. On the other hand, they referred to the representations by the Chamber of Commerce as "a business precaution." Even the committee appointed by the Government to consider the Westralian Farmers' proposal asked for a further inquiry. On page 9 of their report to Cabinet, over the signature of the full committee, they reported—

In view of the great difference of opinion disclosed, we suggest that a committee of experts should be appointed to go into the question from every aspect, having regard particularly to—

Then the committee set out the several headings that should be particularly inquired into. Again, on page 31 of the report, Mr. Shaw, who had been deputed by the Minister to make a special investigation in the Eastern States, reported—

Having traversed various phases of bulk handling and set down certain data and deductions therefrom, I feel a *prima facie* case has been made out, justifying the Government very seriously considering an installation for this State. Before being able to do so, they must have something lucid and firm before them, and I consider they might very reason-

ably avail themselves of the free services offered by certain specialists of the Eastern States. You are fully au fait with the offers made, and I need not stress that phase further.

Despite that, the Government leave it until this late stage. Five months have gone by, and now the Bill is before Parliament. The Government have expressed their determination to reach a decision before the end of the session, and now, at this late stage, suggest there should be an inquiry. There can be no question as to who has been responsible for the delay. If an inquiry had been carried out when we suggested it, it would have been over by now, and the House would have been in possession of full information when the Bill was placed before us. The difference between our proposal and that which we are to deal with in connection with the Bill, is that we suggested the investigation should be made by expert men skilled in the business of wheat marketing. The proposal of the Government is that the inquiry should be by a committee of members drawn from both Houses of Parliament. The men who will conduct the inquiry will be more or less novices. This proposal is not nearly so effective or valuable as that put up by the Fremantle branch of the A.L.P. and the Chamber of Commerce five months ago.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But experts will be giving evidence.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, but experts would have been able to get evidence and sift it, whereas interested parties, in giving evidence will be able to hide certain facts if the committee do not know of them. So there would be immense advantage in having an inquiry by men who understand the business. The issue at stake is not only for and against the principle of bulk handling, but is a question of the scheme in the Bill, or an alternative to that scheme. While the Minister gave us some interesting information as to the operation of bulk handling in other countries, he gave us no information whatever relating to the proposals in the Bill. He never touched the Bill, and members have been left to delve for themselves. One would have thought that in a proposal such as this a fund of information would be supplied to the House, but the Minister kept well away from the Bill and dealt with the question of bulk handling in other

countries that are not comparable with this State. No doubt it was that which prompted the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) to say the Minister's heart was not in the Bill. Certain it is that the Minister has denounced the scheme in the Bill and that the committee he appointed has on two occasions denounced it. The Minister denounced the scheme and said he was going on with his own scheme. This was the order of sequence of events as I recall it: The Minister denounced the scheme and said he was going on with his own. Mr. Monger said unless he could get the Westralian Farmers' scheme he was going to advise the farmers to vote against the Minister's scheme. It was a battle royal between the Minister and Mr. Monger as to which was to get his way. The Minister visited his electorate and came back and announced that he was going to advise Cabinet to appoint a Royal Commission to decide between the two schemes. The Cabinet decision is the Bill. There has been no Royal Commission, so it is quite evident that Cabinet turned down the Minister and that Mr. Monger won the battle, because his scheme is the scheme in the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: He usually does win.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister on more than one occasion has expressed his views, which I could quote. In the explanatory notes on the first page of this printed report we get this—

The position to date is that plans, specifications and other necessary data are being urgently prepared to enable tenders to be called. Definite information as to costs will thus be available when the subject is before Parliament.

What has become of that? That, evidently, has been thrown to the winds, because the scheme the Minister had in mind at that time is not part of the Bill. The Minister in his report to Cabinet said his scheme was 1½d. per bushel better to the growers than the Westralian Farmers' scheme, and that on a 40,000,000-bushel crop it would save to the farmers £187,000. Why has the Minister made this sacrifice? Those figures were used by the member for Mt. Magnet, and in this morning's paper they were questioned by Mr. Thompson. But they are right. Mr. Thompson claimed for the first scheme put up by the Westralian Farmers that it

would save in handling charges to farmers 2.75d. per bushel. The Minister on page 17 of this report deals with that and says—

The Westralian Farmers' bulk scheme shows a benefit over bags of 2.106d. per bushel. In my estimate this benefit will be increased by 1.250d.

That was his report to Cabinet, and the Westralian Farmers put forward a new scheme and claimed for it 2.125d., which is .625 lower than their first estimate, but is still, on a 40,000,000-bushel crop, £145,000 worse for the growers than was the Minister's scheme. But the Minister has abandoned that idea of saving £145,000 to the growers on a 40,000,000-bushel crop. I think the House is entitled to some explanation why the growers have been sacrificed by the Minister. That is his scheme and here is his report to Cabinet, and those are the figures worked out from his own statement. Of the Country Party members on the cross-benches, three have spoken and declared their support for the Bill. I submit they cannot support the Bill from the information given to the House—because the Minister gave no information relating to the Bill—and so the support to the Bill must be coming from some movement outside the House. I want to point out some of the difficulties in the way of the establishment of bulk handling, and also to point out the necessity for a great deal of further information before the House commits itself to this proposal. On the question of the merits and demerits of bulk handling itself, I suppose all members have been snowed-up with figures, as we have been, mainly from interested parties. The outstanding feature of the information I have received, and I suppose other members also, is that it mainly contradicts itself. So far as I can see, there is no scheme of bulk handling in any part of the world comparable with that proposed in the Bill, so I cannot admit that figures relating to any other bulk handling scheme apply to this one. In certain regards, such figures have been taken as a guide and I intend to deal with them from that aspect. But to say that because such and such happens under an orthodox system in operation elsewhere, that system can be applied here, is utterly illogical, for I venture to say there is nothing in the world quite comparable to the scheme in the Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the feature of it.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: We are asked to set out on uncharted seas and deal with an industry vital to the country and affecting interests established in the State for many years which men have looked forward to enjoying for the rest of their lives. This Parliament should be very careful before upsetting it all. I had the privilege while abroad of looking at bulk handling, as I told the House a few nights ago, and I tried to learn what I could of it in the short time at my disposal. I collected a deal of information, and no doubt the Minister found in his office a lot of data I brought back and left there. I saw the bulk handling system at both the English and Scottish ends being discharged, and I spent a full day from just after breakfast until after dark at night with the authorities in Montreal, and I was all day with the wheat pool officials at Winnipeg, and again at Vancouver. I saw the operations from the farm to the loading into railway wagons, and again into small steamers to go down the lakes, and I saw the wheat being discharged into the elevators at Montreal and out of the elevators into overseas ships for transport abroad.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It was all controlled by the pool.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There is no one authority controlling the silos; there is quite a number with silos of their own. There is no monopoly at all. The Canadian authorities, when discussing the question, emphasised the importance to them of bulk handling on account of their being able to grade their wheat for marketing. It is essential that the Canadian crop be graded. That is where we differ considerably from them. We are not comparable with Canada in that regard. Less than 16 per cent. of the Canadian crop is classed as No. 1 grade, and less than 19 per cent. of it as No. 2 grade, which suffers a reduction of 3 cents, while 20 per cent. of it is of less than No. 2 grade and suffers a reduction of 8 cents, and nearly 50 per cent. of it is classed below the No. 3 grade and suffers a reduction of anything from 10 cents to 20 cents per bushel.

The Minister for Works: It varies from year to year.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, and it varies according to the seasons. But some of the Canadian grain I saw in the barges would

not be credited as being fit for human consumption as compared with the grain grown in Western Australia. They have some 20 grades of wheat, and everyone to whom I spoke pointed out that if it were not for the elevators they could not grade their wheat, and so the marketing of their crop would suffer materially. Grading is essential to the Canadian farmers. Bulk handling has meant a very great deal to them in that regard, and so we can understand why they bank so much upon it. Our f.a.q. standard here is accepted the world over as being not quite up to No. 1 grade, but as being ahead of the Canadian second-grade. Generally regarded, there is no comparison between our wheat and the Canadian wheat, some of which is no bigger than carraway seeds and nearly as black. I was surprised to learn the cost of transport which is charged to the Canadian farmers. Take the bagged wheat produced in Saskatchewan and the ordinary rail freight that is charged. It costs more to transport wheat from the farmer's wagon in Saskatchewan to Liverpool than it costs from our ordinary 4d. siding in Western Australia. In Western Australia it costs 16.27d. per bushel, and in Canada the cost is 20.237d. per bushel. It costs practically 4d. more per bushel to get Saskatchewan wheat to Liverpool than in the case of our 4d. sidings. If bulk handling has meant a saving in handling costs to the farmer in Canada, one wonders what the position would be if the handling were to cost more. It is impossible to compare anything I saw in Canada with the system proposed here. The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) tried to contradict what the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) said. It appears to me, however, from what I could gather, from the Press reports of meetings of farmers in the country, that the main point put to them was that bulk handling in this State was going to effect a saving on the importation of bags; in other words, that the farmers would not require to use bags. The abolition of bags is said to mean a saving of 3d. a bushel to the farmers, and the matter is left at that. If that is all the farmers are having put up to them, it is no wonder they are carrying resolutions. Practically all the resolutions are worded in the same way.

The Minister for Lands: That is good organisation.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not think that is good organisation. Surely the Minister has had enough experience to know that if anything is built on a false foundation it cannot last.

The Minister for Lands: I was thinking of the resolutions.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If that is the way the resolutions are framed, when apprising those who are asked to carry them of the facts, those resolutions will collapse from their own weight. The question is whether the farmers clearly understand what finance will be involved in finding a substitute for the bags. The mass of figures one gets warrants a special investigation. I can give the House an idea of the amount of contradiction that appears in the document put forward by the Chamber of Commerce. This is set out fairly concisely. Here are some of the different estimates for bags as against bulk given by different people. There is a wide range in the figures. The Westralian Farmers say that the cost of bulk handling will be 3.954d. per bushel, the Perth Chamber of Commerce, 4.790d.; F. S. Alford, of South Australia, 4.334d.; the Victorian Department of Agriculture, 5.54d.; the Victorian wheatgrowers, 6.54d.; and the Western Australian Government committee, 3.550d.

The Minister for Lands: What did it cost last year?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: These are the estimates for bulk handling. On the other side we find that for bag handling the Westralian Farmers put down the cost at 6.114d.; the Perth Chamber of Commerce, 3.90d.; F. S. Alford, of South Australia, 3.033d.; the Victorian Department of Agriculture, 5.54d.; the Victorian wheatgrowers, 6.54d.; and the Western Australian Government committee, 3.772d. For bulk handling there are variations in the figures from 3.550d. to 6.54d., and for bag wheat the figures vary from 3.772d. to 6.114d.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: A variation of 90 per cent.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: When the Chamber of Commerce go on to examine the later proposals of the Government committee, they come to a fresh conclusion. In revising the figures on page 16 they put up a bag estimate of 3.58d. and a bulk estimate at 3.98d. There is a wide difference between those who have made an investigation as

to their idea of what the savings will be in bulk handling and handling in bags. It has become the practice, and both the Minister for Works and the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) repeated it, to say that if we do away with the bag system we shall keep half a million of money in Western Australia. That is a common thing to say. It has been said that we shall keep £500,000 in Western Australia, and that those who are thrown out of work by the introduction of the bulk system will have work found for them by the expenditure of the £500,000. The Premier used that argument when discussing the amendment I moved to the motion for leave to introduce this Bill. The member for Mt. Magnet corrected that the other night, and I want to put the matter in another way. Let me take an estimated crop of 47 million bushels. I think we shall get that this year. The wheat kept on the farm has to be bagged, whether in old or new bags, in superphosphate bags or others.

The Minister for Lands: In a little while that will not be so.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It is bagged now. Let us say that five million bushels are kept on the farms.

The Minister for Lands: In Canada seed wheat is not bagged.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There is the quantity handled by the mills which eventually finds its way into bags. Let us say six million bushels for that. Then there is the estimated quantity of wheat railed direct for poultry and other purposes, say two million bushels. Then there is the stiffening for bulk cargo estimated at 7½ per cent. I do not know about the non-silo sidings. The estimate is about 7½ per cent. of the total crop. That may not balance, because some wheat will be shipped at Geraldton, Albany and Bunbury. We might allow three million bushels for that. This would leave 31 million bushels for export. If we divide that by three it will give us 10,333,333 bags. I am advised that this year the bags have been purchased at the mills in India for approximately 6d. each, so that the cost will be £253,333.

The Minister for Lands: At 6s. a dozen.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: To that must be added £71,000 for exchange. I am advised that the 6d. includes freight and insurance

to Western Australia. The profit has also to be added to that. Whatever profit is made by local firms remains in Western Australia. After the £71,000 is added for exchange, there is left the sum of £324,333 to go to India. That is a big difference compared with the half a million that has frequently been referred to. It is £175,000 less than that figure. With regard to the possibility of saving £324,000, the whole of the inquiry so far has been as to how the farmer will be affected. So far no investigation has been made as to the effect on the economic position of Western Australia. I know the Minister in his speech held that so long as the farmer was prosperous the State would be prosperous. To an extent he is right. Other interests, however, are involved in this. It may be that some other means of making the farmer prosperous can be found without interfering with other interests that this scheme would penalise. No investigation has been made into the economic position of the State. I submitted the other night it may mean, after an investigation, that the facts will disclose that it will pay the State to subsidise the farmer to the extent it can be proven that bulk handling will suit him, and still allow the existing state of affairs to continue. I should like that point investigated, and I think we are entitled to have this done. It is the duty of Parliament to see that the proposition is well handled. No inquiry has been made into that aspect of the question. With regard to the saving on the importation of bags, I want to run as briefly as possible over the different interests that to my view this will affect, to show what appears to me are the main headings associated with the economic position of the country. The first point to take is the Fremantle harbour into which the imported bags first come. If there are no bags to import, it will mean a loss in revenue on handling charges to the Fremantle harbour, and a loss in revenue on the ships, of approximately £10,000 a year. That is the first loss. On page 34 of the committee's report an estimate is given of the loss to the railways in freight on bags of £23,000 a year. This means a loss to the two State instrumentalities on the transport of bags of £33,000 a year. The member for Mt. Magnet dealt fully with the question of handling wheat in bulk. I wish to re-echo the views

he expressed. It is surprising to find that so little information is given either in the printed report or in the Minister's speech. Parliament, which is called upon to deal with this question, has had but little information relating to the railways. The railways are the main factor in the success or failure of bulk handling. What information have we got? The House is not even favoured with the views of the Commissioner of Railways. One would have thought the first thing the Government would have done would have been to apprise Parliament of all the information available relating to the railways. Except for a short paragraph in the committee's report relating to the railways, no information is given to the House. From such information as is given in the report, I have tried to deduce other information which I think will be fairly interesting. I was amazed to learn that this committee was appointed over a year ago. Notwithstanding this, it has never once consulted the manager of the Midland Railway Company. He is the man who controls the main artery of transport in perhaps the richest wheat-growing part of the State. He was not consulted. His views were not sought. The difficulties that would arise were he to adopt the system, were not investigated. If Parliament passes the Bill and bulk handling is established, then if the Midland Company advise that they have not the money with which to convert their own stock, they will not take delivery of bulk wheat. What will be the position then? One would have thought that the two first men to be examined and their views sought to see whether the scheme would fit in to suit their arrangements, would have been the Commissioner of Railways and the manager of the Midland Railway Company. But they were not brought in; their ideas even were not sought. I am amazed to learn that that is so. There is only a very short reference in the report to what has happened as far as the railways are concerned, and that deals merely with the Fremantle zone. There is no proposition before the House. We have not a figure relating to bulk handling as it applies to the railways throughout the State, and the Bill deals with bulk handling at every point of the railway system with the exception of Esperance and Ravensthorpe. There are no figures, no facts, not an ounce of information outside the Fremantle zone, and we are asked to pass a Bill to give a monopoly and

make alterations over the existing system without knowing how the most vital part of the whole thing will be affected. There is just this one short reference to the railways and it will be found on page 34 of the report:—

It has been represented to the Committee that certain capital and other costs will be involved in respect to the railways by the introduction of the bulk handling system. These are set out as follows:—

It does not say that the figures were supplied by the Commissioner of Railways; it merely says they are set out as follows:—

	£
500 new trucks at £550 each ..	275,000
1,500 sheets at £5	7,500
Cost of alteration to present rolling stock	38,000
Total capital	£320,500
Annual charge would be—	
Interest at 5 per cent.	16,025
Depreciation at 2 per cent. ..	6,410
Loss in railway freight on account of extra tare hauled on altered trucks	11,000
Additional maintenance	15,000
Total charge	£48,435

Then the report goes on to say—

It is further represented that this figure makes no provision for alterations to sidings in the country or at Fremantle, nor for loss of freight (£23,000) on bags hauled.

That is the only information we have. A capital outlay of £320,000. If we add to that £320,000 the cost of altering country sidings, we can easily say in round figures £350,000. The annual charges are given as £48,435 and the loss in freight £23,000, and there is a switching charge at Fremantle—this is referred to on page 27 of the report—of 9d. per ton, amounting to £29,693, making a total annual loss to the railways of £101,128. If there is any set-off against that we have not been told about it. Those are the figures for the Fremantle zone—a loss of £101,128 annually to the railway system. What we have to ask ourselves is where is the Commissioner of Railways going to get the £350,000 for the Fremantle zone alone and how are the railways going to fare if we add to their already enormous deficit another £101,000 a year? Who is going to foot the bill? Who will make up that loss? In the Commissioner's report for 1930-31 we see that wheat repre-

sents 55 per cent. of the ton mileage of the railways, and fertilisers 7.45 per cent. Together they represent 63 per cent. of the ton mileage of the railways; in other words, they return only 37.24 per cent. of the railway revenue. What will happen if that loss is added to by another £101,128 a year? It simply means that the other 37 per cent. of the freight will have to be added to, or else the rate on that wheat and fertiliser will have to be considerably increased. The Minister's estimate, the committee's estimate and everybody's estimate—that of the pool and Westralian Farmers, in fact every estimate that I have seen so far calculates on railway freights under the bulk system remaining the same as they are now. Nobody has thought that there will be any alteration in the freights, and in view of the figures I have quoted, it seems remarkable that that should be allowed to pass. There is a hint on page 27 of the report—it is the statement of Mr. McCartney, the manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust—

I know of course, as mentioned by the Commissioner, the railways will require to adjust their freight rates having regard for the proposed new conditions.

I do not know what that proposed adjustment means. We are entitled to know the Commissioner's opinion. The farmers too will want to know just what is in the Commissioner's mind. It may mean that the adjustment will eat up the whole of that 3d.

The Minister for Works: It will be less with the greater efficiency.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I think I can show the Minister that there are a lot more difficulties to overcome. He says there will be greater efficiency. I do not know whether he is casting aspersions on the present management, inferring that the railways are not now being efficiently managed. There is the suggestion from the manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust that there will have to be an adjustment. Then we have Mr. Poynton's statement which appeared in the "West Australian" the other morning. Mr. Poynton said—

Sidings would need expensive alterations. Transport efficiency would be affected by largely increased empty haulage of additional tare weight represented by the converted wagons. Shunting costs would rise. There would be greater train mileage without a

corresponding increase in paying business. These factors, expensive as they may be, are yet superable. It is only a question of money and of whether the expected savings would be sufficient and would be available as an offset.

So it will be seen that the Midland Railway have their eye on that 3d. There is no doubt about what Mr. Poynton said. This will have to be done. But that is not the whole story of the railways by a long way. On page 18 of the committee's report we find that the New South Wales Commissioner replies to a questionnaire put to him by the Minister of this State. He is asked, "What are its disadvantages?" referring of course to bulk handling. The reply was, "Percentage loss of freight-earning load when bulk wheat conveyed 6 2/3rd per cent. on 'WS' truck; 16 2/3rd per cent. on ordinary 'U' truck." There we have the information relating to New South Wales, and not a line of information relating to our own railway system. Is it not extraordinary that Parliament should be asked to pass a Bill without having that information? There is no point in making inquiries in Sydney and omitting to make them in Perth.

Member: What was their experience in moving wheat?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: We should have that information, but we have not got it. What I am urging is that the House should insist on being apprised of all these facts. A further question asked the New South Wales Commissioner was, "Are the bulk wheat trucks used for goods other than wheat?" This came up in the form of an interjection on the floor of the House the other night. The reply given by the Commissioner was, "Yes, when not required for wheat, i.e., between the close of one wheat season and the commencement of another." So during the whole of the wheat season they are used exclusively for wheat.

Mr. Doney: Was not that proposal the same as in regard to trucks carrying bags?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The hon. member knows that is not so: he knows that the argument used for cheap freight for superphosphate is that it goes out to the country and the same trucks come back laden with wheat. But then I forgot that the hon. member is not a wheat grower. However, every farmer knows that you take your superphosphate from the truck and load the same truck with your wheat.

Mr. Kenneally: Every farmer except the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I put that point because when I said here the other night that it was so, I was contradicted. While in Canada I asked about this, and was told there are certain trucks which they in Canada do use for other purposes, but that those trucks are hosed out and lined with what we here know as tar paper, a paper with a tar backing to it. The trucks are hosed out and lined with this tar paper before the bulk wheat is loaded. But apart from that, the Winnipeg pool authorities told me there is no bulk handling in the world where the health authorities will allow bulk wheat to be loaded into trucks used for other purposes. Now where in this State would it be possible for our trucks to be hosed out? Mr. Poynton has said that if it means to his company that they will have to haul the wheat trucks empty one way, he will have to charge freight both ways. So that 3d. per bushel will be looking pretty blue.

Mr. Panton: It looks a bit sick now.

Mr. Doney: Are you supporting that first statement of Mr. Poynton's, which you read out a little while ago?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am not supporting anything which I do not know enough about. I have repeated myself pretty frequently to-night in stating that I want information, and I think the House wants information. We are absolutely disgusted and astounded that Mr. Poynton and the Commissioner of Railways have not furnished a detailed report of what the proposed system means to the railways of this country. No such report is before us, and we are asked to deal with the Bill without having that report. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney), when he spoke on the Bill, showed courage enough to support the Bill. But he does not know the least thing about its effect on the railways; he has not had opportunity to know, yet he displays his knowledge about it when he wants to know about trucks being back-loaded to go up with bags. That is his knowledge of what happens on the railways. If the hon. members knows no more about the railway system than was suggested by his interjection, it is no wonder he is satisfied with the Bill. But I venture to say that those who are trying to look a little further into it want a little more information. Take that £100,000 annual cost. Will the hon. member challenge any point in those figures?

Mr. Doney: No, but I will challenge some of those other points.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The hon. member would challenge everything, as he does in his articles in the country Press, when he tells his readers that we on this side are out to oppose the Bill at any cost. I have read his article.

Mr. Doney: You have read no such article from me.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I have read the article coming from the Country Party's secretary.

Mr. Doney: You are talking a lot of rubbish.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If the hon. member is satisfied with the information that is before the House, I am not, nor do I think the House is. I want to show a little more of the headings under which I want information.

Mr. Doney: Why can't you ask for it?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am asking for it.

Mr. Doney: I don't think you are.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I said earlier that the railways may be, probably will be, the deciding factor in any scheme of bulk handling. They must play the major part, and we have no information at all about them. What will the farmers say if they are to have additional freight charged on their super? No one will argue that trucks will go up with super and come back loaded with bulk wheat. I do not think the health authorities will permit that. That has been the main contention for low freights on super up till now, and if what is given to the farmer with one hand is to be taken back with the other, the farmer will find his last position worse than his first. An examination of the figures given in this report shows that the Government committee estimate that for the handling of 25 million bushels in the Fremantle zone alone the Commissioner of Railways will want £320,000 additional capital expenditure. That scheme provided for a 77 per cent. of silo storage in the country. That means that the railways, for an expenditure of £320,000, will be asked to transport only 23 per cent. of the harvest to the port during the harvest; and 23 per cent. of 25 million bushels is approximately 5½ million bushels, so 5½ million bushels are to be transported in approximately 10 weeks in order to keep the

storage down to 77 per cent. of the total quantity to be handled. That is how I figure it out from the report. That would mean that for the expenditure of £320,000 the railway system would be asked to transport 5½ million bushels of wheat. I know from my own knowledge that that is only two-thirds of what the railways have done. So we get to the position that we are going to expend £320,000 to allow the railways to do only two-thirds of what they do now. Then on top of that there is the annual commitment of £50,000. And with that additional expenditure the railways will transport nearly two-thirds of what they can do at the moment. That will be clear to anyone. And it is to be understood, too, that with the introduction of a fast-loading system at the ports the railways would soon be forced to transport right up to what they do now. Those in charge of the silos would never agree to allow the railways to carry on at the two-thirds rate. There would be continual pressure brought to bear on the railways to speed up. It would be pointed out to them that previously they had transported so much, and that now they were doing only two-thirds, which was not enough, and so there would have to be additional capital expenditure. Let us keep for the moment to the Fremantle zone, because the others can be summed up afterwards. That is the point I want to make clear. I take it the points made will be submitted to the authorities if the Bill is going to an inquiry, and these are the points I want to make. I say that from the figures in this report, showing the part the railways will play in the scheme, that part is totally inadequate for the success of the scheme, and that it will mean considerably more than the expenditure of £320,000. Last year the railways were taxed to their utmost to meet the demands of the shippers, and under the scheme they are only going to transport two-thirds of what they did last year. What is going to be the position of the shipper? I should like the Minister for Railways: "How much money will the railways want for the alteration of the existing rolling stock and the construction of new trucks so that they will be able to transport the wheat to all the ports in bulk at the same rate as they could have hauled a 50-million bushel harvest in bags?" That

is the correct test. We want to know what it is going to cost the railways in additional expenditure to haul a 50-million bushel harvest in bulk at the same rate as they now haul it in bags. And besides being told what the extra capital cost is going to be, we should also have from the railways an estimate of the economic loss to be borne through having an excess of rolling stock over the normal requirements for handling the State's traffic. Because if there are going to be so many new railway trucks constructed for bulk handling, so many trucks now used will go out of commission, and charges on those trucks will have to be met, and so there will be a terrific economic loss there, and we want to know from the railways just what it will mean. I venture to say the figures can point only one way, and that will be to a considerable increase in the railway deficit. In view of the present position of the railways, is this House going to view with equanimity the building up further deficits? Last year, I think, it was £200,000. We are going to add another £100,000 to that. I see the Commonwealth Government have taken up the issue and are saying that in their view it is impossible for the State Governments to balance their Budgets so long as the State railway systems remain as they are; and so the Commonwealth Government are asking for a transport conference, so seriously do they view the financial position of the railways. Summing up the railways, this is how it appears to me—and these figures are all taken from this official report: the actual outlay will be £320,000, the annual charges £48,435, loss of switch charges £29,692, loss of freight on bags £23,000, or a total annual loss of £101,128. In addition to that, there is the loss of freight by the use of different trucks, 6 2/3rd per cent. on some trucks, and 16 per cent. on other trucks, according to New South Wales, and the trucks to be hauled empty one way, and transporting only two-thirds of the tonnage they do now, and that confined to the Fremantle zone. Those figures disclosing the position at Fremantle and the position of the railways will prove a great shock to the Treasurer. I think I am right in impressing upon members that we should insist on further information before we approve of the Bill. The position of the harbour is a little more fully

dealt with in the report, although we have not much information in that regard even yet. The harbour derives its dues mainly from vessels using the port, and the charge is approximately £25 per day for each vessel using the harbour. The tonnage dues paid to the Fremantle Harbour Trust by ships loading wheat last season totalled £38,635. Under the charter party for bulk as against bagged wheat, the conditions are that instead of loading 500 tons per day, the minimum is 1,000 tons per day, so that the revenue from dues will be halved. On experience the proportion will probably prove to be less than one-half, because I have quoted only the minimum. Consequently we can sum up the loss to the harbour under the following headings:—

	£
Charge for hire of gantries which will be obsolete	20,635
Estimated charges for use of storage sheds	18,000
Estimated loss of port dues	19,317
Revenue on bags	10,000
Total loss per annum	<u>£67,952</u>

The Minister for Lands: Roughly, half of the Harbour Trust profits.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes. That means that two of the State instrumentalities—railways and harbours—will suffer an annual loss of £169,070. There may be a set-off against that total, but we have not been advised of it. I have not estimated the position at the out-ports and I do not know what the effect there will be, but I should like to know what the policy of the Treasurer is. With the present State deficit, what is the policy of the Treasurer in view of this huge financial loss? How does he propose to make it up? Now I wish to deal with the effect on the labour market. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) repeated the figures mentioned in the booklet issued by the wheat pool. I asked him at the time for the authority for the figures. I wish to point out a more reliable basis of calculation on the question of labour and to take the official report. On page 26 it is shown that the average cost of stevedoring wheat at Fremantle is 1s. 11d. per ton, and the average Harbour Trust charge for handling is .36d. per bushel, or 1s. 1d. per ton. Thus for wharf and ship charges the cost is 3s. per ton. If we allow 20 per cent. margin for profits and insurance—I do not know whether that over-states or under-states the figure, but I think 20 per cent.

would be fair—it means approximately 2s. 6d. per ton is paid in wages at the port for each ton of wheat shipped. If we have a 50,000,000-bushel harvest, we can take it that 45,000,000 bushels are available for export. Calculating three bushels to the bag and 12 bags to the ton, it means 1,250,000 tons of wheat to export. That quantity, at 2s. 6d. per ton, represents £156,250 paid as wages to waterside workers. The award rate is 2s. 7d. per hour, and the number of working hours pans out at 1,209,678. If we allow of the export season extending over 40 weeks, which is about correct, and each lumper working 30 hours a week—members representing Fremantle constituencies will agree with me that the lumpers would be pleased to be guaranteed 30 hours work a week—it means that 1,008 men are employed in wheat loading.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Does that actually take place?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am quoting the figures from the report.

The Minister for Lands: The figures are more accurate than that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The figures I have quoted will bear examination.

The Minister for Lands: That is not the number of men employed at Fremantle.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am dealing with the whole of the wheat exported from Western Australia.

The Minister for Lands: You are including the men employed at the sidings also?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No, I am dealing with the labour at the ports.

The Minister for Lands: That number cannot possibly be employed at the ports.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I will show that that number is necessary.

The Minister for Lands: I will show how much they ship.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: My calculations are based on figures disclosed by the committee. If the Minister for Lands argues that that number is too high, let me deal with it another way. I have seen seven ships loading at Fremantle simultaneously, not once but many times. I have seen at the North Wharf a mile of shipping loading wheat, with nothing more than a few yards of space between the several vessels. If we allow for three ships loading at out-ports—which is not overstating the position—it means that 10 vessels would be loading simultaneously.

The Minister for Lands: How frequently would that happen?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That does not matter. The men have to be available. If the hon. member has read anything of waterside workers' cases in the Arbitration Court, he knows that the court insists upon the union limiting the number of members, but the court has to be assured that the number in the union is sufficient to meet the demands of the port at a peak period. Unless the union can show that the number will be sufficient to meet demands at a peak period, the court orders the books to be opened and also orders that the wages be averaged over the given number. If we take 10 boats loading at the various ports, five gangs to a boat and 15 men to a gang—11 on the ship and four or five on the shore—we get a total of 750 men.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: There have been three boats loading at Geraldton simultaneously.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes; my figures are well within the mark. The 750 men employed on loading are quite apart from the lumpers stacking the wheat in the yards and attending to sampling and repairing and also in addition to the tally clerks. No one would argue that 250 men would meet those additional requirements. Consequently, at all ports, 1,000 men would not be too many. Viewed from either angle, the estimate is correct. Where the writer of the pamphlet obtained his figures, I do not know.

Mr. Doney: Are you arguing that all those men will be displaced by bulk handling?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No; I am dealing with the fact that no fewer than 1,000 men are employed on the water front throughout the State to handle the wheat.

The Minister for Lands: For eight months in the year.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: For 40 weeks in the year. It is said that the number of waterside workers will be reduced by that total except for the number employed on bulk handling. How many are likely to be employed on bulk handling? When I was in Montreal and Vancouver, I tried to estimate what difference bulk handling made to labour, and, as I reported to the Lumpers' Union on my return, I judged that for every 100 men engaged on bag handling, approximately 12 would be employed on

bulk handling. An inquiry by the United States Department of Agriculture disclosed that in California bag handling requires 12 times as much labour as bulk handling, and the United States Agricultural Bureau of Economics estimates 16 times. I do not intend to go that far. I say that about 9 per cent. of the labour would be required for bulk handling as against bag handling. If the system be installed, the other men will have to look for work elsewhere. The pamphlet states—and the member for Williams-Narrogin repeated the statement—that the displaced men could get other work. At Fremantle 75 per cent. of the cargo handled is export cargo, and 80 per cent. of the export cargo is wheat. Where is other work to be found?

Mr. Doney: Do you say there is no other work?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes.

Mr. Doney: You deny there is other work?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There are hundreds of men at the Fremantle harbour not averaging 10s. a week the year round.

Mr. Doney: Out of the 1,008 men?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There are well over 1,600 men working on the water front.

Mr. Doney: They must be occupied with work other than lumping.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am pointing out how precarious is the living of the water-side worker at the moment. I suggest that the hon. member go to the pick-up from 7.30 to 8.30 a.m. any day and see for himself.

Mr. Withers: They might pick him up and that would be bad luck for him.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not think he would run a big risk. First of all, he would have to show a union ticket, and he could not do that.

Mr. Doney: It is very certain that I could not do that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: In addition to the men employed on the water front, I am advised by the wheat merchants that 2,000 men are employed at country sidings during the season. There are approximately 10,000 farmers in the State. If we estimate an average of one man engaged as bag sewer on each farm, we have another 10,000 men to account for.

Mr. Doney: I do not think the average would work out at one man to each farm.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I usually employ two men, but they may work for other farmers as well. Some farmers employ three or four men. I am not wedded to that figure. I usually employ two men during the season, and I do not think, owing to the shortness of the season they have much chance of going to many other farms.

Mr. Doney: On a full-time basis the number of men would be very much smaller.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am not suggesting 10,000 men all the year round. The season only extends over a few weeks. I am dealing with a seasonal occupation, lasting three months at the outside.

The Minister for Lands: In Canada thousands of men used to be sent out to garner wheat although the bulk handling system is in vogue there.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Those men would be working in the field. Canada is under snow for four months of the year and all the farm hands are dismissed during that time. Farm hands are employed only for a few months of the year there, whereas they can be employed all the year round here. I am not dealing with farm labour, but with the extra men employed. If this number of men is to go on the dole, the farmers will have to contribute their share. The money must come out of the revenue of the country.

Mr. Patrick: If we went back to the stripper and the winnower we could employ more men.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not say we should not keep pace with the times. I am pointing out the problems that lie in the road. My idea is that if by the introduction of this Bill we create a problem, we should tackle that problem at the same time. We have no right to push it aside. If this Bill has the effect of putting 2,000 or 3,000 men on the unemployment market, it is our responsibility to see that they are provided for. That is what I want Parliament to do.

Mr. Brown: Are you in favour of reducing costs?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: A scheme to employ these men should run parallel with a scheme to displace them.

Mr. Doney: Do you not agree that the times demand bulk handling?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Evidently I have been labouring in vain when the hon. member makes such an interjection. I am sorry I have so greatly misled him as to my views.

Mr. Doney: Nevertheless I put the question.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister cited other countries where bulk handling exists, but in no instance did he show that in any one of those countries wheat was being handled cheaper than is done here. It is impossible to make comparisons between this scheme and any other. The Minister in his Press statements and in his report keeps on referring to the handling charges of the New South Wales scheme. If he looks up the New South Wales "Hansard" for September 10th, 1931, he will find it stated that the interest on the capital cost of the elevators, the cost of maintenance and the sinking fund are charged to Consolidated Revenue, and that the cost to the State is approximately 4d. per bushel for every bushel which goes through the elevator.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Without any interest charges?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is the cost borne by the State.

The Minister for Lands: It includes interest.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If the scheme had to meet the full charges, the cost would be over 7d. a bushel.

Mr. Doney: You know the reason for that?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The two systems cannot be compared, but the Minister is constantly quoting the New South Wales scheme. Of what use is that?

Mr. Doney: They are not comparable.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No. On an expenditure of £4,000,000 there has been an aggregate loss of over £1,000,000.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They have not got bulk handling alone. They have the bulk and the bag systems.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It is not much use taking that as an illustration. I think the Minister for Lands asked me what the cost for handling was last year. The Minister for Works gave the figures. He said that for 1929-30 the cost from the farmer's wagon to the f.o.b. stage was 2.77d. per bushel.

The Minister for Works: That was the evidence before the Royal Commission.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Since then the lumpers' wages have been reduced 22½ per cent. The commission to country agents has also been cut, and other reductions have been effected. The cost in Victoria is 2.42d. per bushel, in South Australia 2.16d.; and in Canada it is 4d., higher than in any State in Australia, if we take the average storage charges for the season. All the charges in Australia include from 9 to 12 months free storage.

The Minister for Lands: Is that including freight?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It is handling charges only. The storage is a tremendous thing in any bulk system. The Minister was unable to quote any system in any country except the Eastern States which handles wheat cheaper than we do, and there is room for a reduction even here. I now want to have something to say about this strange Bill, as the member for Mt. Magnet called it. It is a strange Bill. The heading of Part 2 is "The Trust, its rights and powers." Not a word is said about its responsibilities. This trust is to have the monopoly of the handling of the whole of the bulk and bagged wheat, to all intents and purposes. The Bill says it will have a monopoly where the bulk system has been provided, or may thereafter be provided. Let us assume that the Midland Railway Company say they are not going to provide for the bulk handling system. The trust will say, "Thereafter we may be providing facilities along the Midland line," or may say they have a monopoly of the handling of wheat although there is not a silo on the system. What will be the position of the wheatgrowers at the smaller sidings where no silos will be installed? Does the Bill mean that wheatgrowers have to buy their bags and still pay a toll to the trust?

The Minister for Works: The Bill does not say that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Bill gives that power.

The Minister for Works: Where facilities are provided.

Mr. Doney: Not unless they actually receive the wheat.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The hon. member has not read the Bill if he says that. It says, "Where bulk handling facilities have

been provided or thereafter may be provided."

The Minister for Lands: You can interpret that correctly.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I can, but someone else may interpret it differently.

The Minister for Lands: I hardly think so.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: When people are out to get power and they have a chance of blotting out competition, it is foreign to human nature that they should not take that action. If a person has the legal authority to blot out another he will seldom fail to avail himself of the chance. The Bill will give the trust power to do that. Parliament has to pass laws to safeguard all interests, not to throw them open to possibilities of that kind. My farm is in the electorate of the Minister for Lands. Most of the farmers in my district send their wheat into Merredin to be gristed into flour, bran and pollard. If I send a truck of wheat to the flour mill at Merredin to be gristed, I will have to pay toll to the trust. That is not right. All other farmers will have to do the same. They will not be allowed to do their own business. That is what the Bill sets out.

The Minister for Lands: In a little while they will be sending their wheat in in bulk.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister said that bulk handling will save from 6d. to 8d. a bushel to the farmers.

The Minister for Works: Ultimately.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If so, where is the necessity for any monopoly? There would be no question about the farmers having their wheat handled in bulk if they were going to save anything like that amount. Before Parliament gives such a monopoly surely it must impose certain responsibilities. There is nothing in the Bill to say that the trust shall provide a percentage of silo accommodation according to the output of the district. There is no obligation on their part to erect silos. If the silos in the country are insufficient to meet the demands of the farmers, pressure will immediately be brought to bear on the railways to send more trucks, and the more silos there are the fewer trucks will be available.

The Minister for Lands: The wheat could not be handled unless there were facilities at the port for storage.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Unless there is sufficient silo accommodation at the ports, pressure will be brought to bear on shippers

to ship their wheat overseas. That will reflect back on the farmers, and they may be compelled to ship their wheat when the market is unfavourable.

The Minister for Lands: The cheapest storage is at the siding.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There is no obligation on the trust to provide any percentage of silo accommodation. What if they have not got it, or refuse to erect it. Where would the farmer be then? What if they say they have not the capital with which to put up silos? The farmer would then be at their mercy and would be obliged to sell his wheat. The trust have the monopoly, no matter what the market may be. That is the Bill. There is no responsibility whatever on the trust. The trust will be continually putting the responsibility on the Railway Department, the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and so forth to meet the deficiency created by the trust. I desire to see many safeguards inserted in the Bill. Further, it is astonishing to know that under the Bill there is no obligation on the trust to give delivery to shippers when they want it. In the first scheme that was provided for, it was set out that delivery must be given in the turn in which orders were received. A shipper might go to the trust and say, "I want a boat coming in on the 10th, and I want this wheat put on board at Fremantle." The trust might reply, "We cannot give it to you; we have not got it." Then there is no obligation on the trust to deliver. On the other hand, the man might want to deliver the wheat to one who had purchased scrip. However, the trust are in a position to pass on all responsibility, carrying none themselves. There is no guarantee to the farmer as to what he will have to pay. This, too, is an amazing thing: even the halfpenny toll is not fixed. The halfpenny toll is a new thing; and a halfpenny, under the exchange, means five-eighths of a penny now, and may mean more later. That charge is not fixed; it is to be fixed from year to year. Fancy a farmer compelled to deliver his wheat to a monopoly without knowing what his charges will be from year to year!

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Suppose the trust handled 30,000,000 bushels in one year, and 50,000,000 bushels the next?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There should be some formula as to costs set out in the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: Making it rigid?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: There is no guarantee that bulk handling will be any cheaper than bag handling to the farmers. It may be that prices will soar, and that costs also will soar, making it cheaper for the farmer to send his wheat away in bags. But he cannot do that, and under the Bill he has no redress.

The Minister for Lands: This is going to be a law of the Medes and Persians.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It is a law that vitally affects practically every channel of trade and commerce in the State. We cannot be too careful in this matter. The House should have all possible information. That is my stand, and I do not think it an unreasonable one; on the contrary, I consider it is one that the House should support. I see no provision in the Bill as to what is to become of the wheat below f.a.q., or smutty wheat; nor did the Minister mention this when introducing the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: Such wheat will be reconditioned, I suppose, in bulk; only f.a.q. wheat will be stored.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Who says so? Can the Minister speak for the trust?

The Minister for Lands: I can speak for anyone possessed of common sense.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister knows that in other schemes the wheat is graded. I would be sorry to think even for a moment that smutty wheat is to be mixed with f.a.q., because that fact would immediately lessen the value of the whole cargo. Smutty wheat can be smelt a hundred yards away.

The Minister for Lands: If smutty wheat is issued for f.a.q. wheat, f.a.q. wheat will have to be delivered at the other end.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: If my wheat, being smutty, is mixed with other wheat at the siding or in the trucks, all the wheat will become affected. Every other bulk handling system has grading facilities, whereas the scheme under the Bill has not.

The Minister for Lands: You know that the different grades are kept separate.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Yes, but in bags. A farmer may have just a few bags taken off his load, because the practice is to sample as farmers come along. The clean farmer is entitled to know just what the conditions will be. I do not express any views on the total cost of the construction. While the Wheat Pool people have the ad-

vantage of the advice of a firm of architects, who say that the construction is right, the Government committee, comprising an engineer and an architect, denounce it.

The Minister for Lands: They denounced it in comparison with a more economical scheme.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: They went further than protesting against it. Another point which requires further professional advice is that the Fremantle terminal is to cater for 1,500,000 bushels, which means 40,000 tons of wheat. I am told the proposal is to use an old shed, which is half over the water and half over the land. To-day one cannot stack bags over the wharf. Everybody knows that that district is honeycombed. An attempt was made to build a dock there, but the dock fell into the sea. It is useless to talk of stacking wheat in the old shed. I warn the House of what probably will happen. The Fremantle Harbour Trust will be urged to strengthen the structure, to drive more piles. From inquiries I have made, it appears that the intention is to use the existing sheds. Certain it is that the floor will not carry. The wheat should not be carried over the wharf, but should be put back on solid ground. As regards the finances of the proposed trust, I gather that the Wholesale Co-operative Company of England is to loan £500,000 at 5¼ per cent.

The Minister for Lands: The Bill does not say the Wholesale Co-operative Company.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Further, I gather that the trust have secured a monopoly of wheat handling, that they get a monopoly for ten years, that there is no limit to the charges to be imposed on the farmers, that the Government guarantee is that investors shall get their money back with 5½ per cent. interest added at the end of ten years. It is not a very risky investment. A day or two ago Mr. Bruce in London raised £13,000,000 at £4 1s. 6d. per cent.

Hon. P. Collier: It would have been raised if he had never been there.

The Minister for Lands: He raised it in two hours.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The suggestion here, according to pamphlets sent to all the farmers, is that the rate to be paid is 5¼ per cent.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the highest rate in the world to-day.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: On page 8 of the pamphlet issued by the Trustees of the Wheat Pool of Western Australia this appears—

Ten per cent. to the Westralian Farmers Limited, who have undertaken to hand to the trustees their patent rights for Western Australia, to recoup the Westralian Farmers for preliminary expenditure, loan expenses, procurement fees, including commission to underwriters, supervision of administration expenses, and completion to the satisfaction of the trustees, £56,000.

The Minister for Lands: But the trust have not agreed to pay that.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is what I am inquiring about. It is not in the Bill, either.

The Minister for Lands: This is the latest scheme; that is an old scheme.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Government's own committee told them that this was the farmers' old scheme.

The Minister for Lands: They render quite a lot of service, you know.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Instead of the trust that is to be set up considering the position and arriving at decisions, it appears that matters are cut and dried before even Parliament has been consulted. I do not expect the Westralian Farmers to give away for nothing the results of their operations, but I join with others in saying that credit is due to them for breaking away from the orthodox with a view to creating something new. On the other hand, we have this enormous figure confronting us.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is their own valuation, and you could not expect them to adopt any other attitude.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am amazed that this has been placed before the public. Surely it is for the trust to decide on the figure. The trust may be able to borrow money on better terms. I believe the Minister has already received a better offer. On page 17 of the Minister's own report to Cabinet we find the following:—

In addition, one firm has submitted, in writing, a proposal to design and do the work at an approved figure, and to accept payment in 4 per cent. Western Australian Government bonds.

This pamphlet shows that it is proposed to charge 5½ per cent.

The Minister for Lands: £500,000 plus 25 per cent. exchange.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister has received an offer at 4 per cent. as against 5½ per cent.

The Minister for Lands: The money would be cheaper if we could get exchange at par.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: According to the Minister's own statement, the 4 per cent. proposal included the cost of drawing plans and doing the work. Why has that offer been passed over? Are we to take it that these pamphlets show that the whole thing is cut and dried, and that nothing is to be left to the trust to determine? Are we to take it that £56,000 is to be the first charge on a scheme that is already adopted? The Minister said that in his view, more buyers would be in the field under the bulk handling system. Where are those buyers to come from?

Hon. J. C. Willecock: How will they operate?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Who will they be? We know that under the bag system to-day, every port throughout the world is open to our wheat. I would like to be assured that that will be the position under the bulk handling system.

The Minister for Lands: Some of the port authorities strongly object to the use of bags. You must know that, because you have been to England.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I never heard that objection taken.

The Minister for Lands: You saw what happened in England.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I know that on the Thames, bags were cut open, and that that practice was followed at other ports as well, but I did not hear any objection raised to the bagging system.

The Minister for Lands: Well, I did.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: On the other hand, we know that every port in the world can take bagged wheat. There is such a mass of contradiction in the information available regarding the ports in the Orient that I would like to know if it is not possible for the Government to get some reliable information. The Minister quoted one letter, but I have also seen a letter in which the statement is made that one port only in Japan is available for bulk wheat.

The Minister for Lands: You know what is done with wheat from Vancouver and other ports.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I know that much of the wheat there was sent to the Orient.

The Minister for Lands: Of course.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: But I also know we were told that, in years gone by, China and Japan imported wheat from Canada and America, and as those countries shipped only in bulk, that proved that China and Japan could take wheat in bulk. Because of that, it was stated that Australia would not be hampered if she adopted the bulk handling system. I know, however, that until the last two years the wheat exported from Australia to Japan and China was infinitesimal. It is only since the price of wheat has been so low—under latter-day conditions we can sell wheat to China and Japan cheaper than the Chinese coolies can grow rice—that our exports to the Orient have increased to any marked degree.

Mr. Patrick: China is one of the big wheat-growing countries of the world.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: It is useless to suggest that because Canada and America despatch their wheat to China and Japan in bulk, that those countries can take an unlimited supply. All I want to ascertain is the truth, and surely the Government have means at their disposal to get the necessary information. Is it correct that only one port in Japan has facilities for bulk handling of wheat?

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am told that it is.

The Minister for Works: I gave you a letter that showed that statement is not correct.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I have a letter that states definitely that there is only one port in Japan available for bulk wheat, and I was told by a ship's captain last night that there is only one port in Japan where there are bulk handling facilities. I have seen other letters disclosing the same difficulty in connection with China.

The Minister for Works: Kobe and Yokohama are fitted with bulk handling appliances.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The first Australian shipment this year was in bulk.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I know that 40 per cent. of our wheat went to the Orient, and that shows the market is a large one.

Mr. Doney: Four million bushels were exported in bulk.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: That is a small proportion.

The Minister for Works: That was from New South Wales only.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I am told that India has no bulk handling facilities.

The Minister for Works: That is so.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: And India took one-fifth of our exports in 1931. This phase should be cleared up. We should not jeopardise our big overseas markets. One point more, and I shall conclude. We have been complaining that the Commonwealth Government have duplicated services. Protests have been made in this House from time to time on that score. Does not the Bill mean a duplication of services? Are we not proposing to duplicate services that are already available?

The Minister for Lands: No; we propose to do away with that service, and substitute a cheaper service.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not think so. The railways have all the facilities necessary for handling wheat throughout the State, and the harbour authorities have the necessary facilities at the ports. What is wrong with allowing the railways to handle the wheat to the ports, and the harbour authorities to deal with it there? I find that view was actually voiced in the Eastern States. On page 28 of the report submitted by the departmental committee to the Government, Mr. Shaw, referring to the position in New South Wales, remarks—

From conversations I had with officials of the railways and the wheat scheme, it was fairly obvious that there is a little feeling between them. The railways consider that they should handle the wheat system in conjunction with the railways, and the wheat scheme people feel at times that the railways do not do all they can to assist them. I discussed this phase with certain business men in Sydney, and the opinion is held that better results would possibly be obtained if the railways did control the wheat scheme. It was no reflection upon the wheat scheme to say so, but the thought was prompted by the fact that the railways and the transport of wheat are so interwoven that one department would probably handle it more satisfactorily.

I submit that that phase should receive consideration.

Mr. Doney: Would you support bulk handling if the railways had control of it?

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I do not know; I want more information.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I would support it under those conditions, in preference to the proposal embodied in the Bill.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Several authorities are handling the wheat now, and under

the provisions of the Bill, after 10 years, the trust will be formed into a company and there will be no monopoly. On the other hand, there is no provision for other farmers to become shareholders in the company after the 10-year period. What happens regarding other farmers? Are they to become shareholders? The Bill contains no provision whereby they will be able to join the company. I hope that in the course of his reply, the Minister will supply some explanation as to why he abandoned his own proposal which, according to his own figures, would mean a saving of £145,000 a year to the farmers on a 40-million bushel crop, compared with the position under the scheme that he asks the House to agree to. Why has he sacrificed the farmers and placed a scheme before the House such as is embodied in the Bill? Parliament and the country are entitled to an explanation. I hope I have furnished some information and pointed out some difficulties in my endeavour to show that it is not safe and will be most improper, for the House to pass the Bill as it stands at present. The measure warrants the widest and fullest investigation, particularly with regard to the railway and port phases. If we were to do anything rash, we might find the State involved in the expenditure of over £1,000,000, with an interference with all our existing practices, with thousands of men thrown out of work, and with the farmer ultimately no better off than he is to-day. We must safeguard the position in every direction. The Bill is extremely far-reaching. I think I have shown its ramifications to be so wide that they are interwoven with every avenue of trade and commerce, and Parliament cannot be too careful in dealing with it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Lindsay—Mt. Marshall—in reply) [9.56]: I want the House to understand I am not one of those who have said that the Labour Party were opposed to bulk handling. I have read a number of speeches delivered in 1921 when the Leader of the Opposition definitely announced himself in favour of the principle of bulk handling. The member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) at that time stated that the Labour Party were definitely in favour of bulk handling. The member for Geraldton

(Hon. J. C. Willecock) also spoke to the same effect. I have copies of their speeches, but I do not propose to read them. Because of those earlier statements by members opposite, I expected the Bill would secure a reasonably quiet passage, and it has done so. Many objections have been raised and I will refer to the statement by the member for South Fremantle that my proposal showed a saving of something like £140,000 compared with that embodied in the Bill before Parliament. When my statement was made originally, the Westralian Farmers intended to charge 3¼d. per bushel. To-day the proposal is for 2½d. per bushel, which makes a big difference. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) twitted me with having changed my views. I have not done so. The views contained in the report I submitted to Cabinet are still my views. The position I have been faced with is that bulk handling is in the interests of the farmers of Western Australia, and that they have decided—I have 69 resolutions dealing with the matter—in favour of the Westralian Farmers' proposal, which is that of the Trustees of the Wheat Pool. I have not dealt with the details, because it was the intention of the Government from the start that they should be considered by a select committee. I agree with many of the statements made indicating that the Bill in its present form is rather risky. My idea is that if the Bill is finally agreed to, another board will have to be set up somewhat along the lines suggested in 1921 in connection with the Grain Bill, to deal with standards, grades and the protection of interests apart from the trust controlling bulk handling. The member for South Fremantle dealt extensively with the railway question, and in my second reading speech I also dealt with that phase and read letters from the general manager of the South African railways, which put a different complexion altogether on the statements made by Mr. Poynton. May I repeat a few words? In South Africa the bulk handling system, which is for maize, is controlled and managed by the Railway Department. In his letter to me the general manager says this—

I must say a bulk handling scheme is essential to ensure efficiency and economic working on any railway system which is faced with seasonal rushes of a large volume of grain traffic requiring to be transported from inland producing areas to coast ports for ship-

ment within a specified period. Our elevator system has also been the means of minimising cross-haulage of grain traffic resulting in substantial savings being effected in the actual ton mileage hauled as compared with the mileage charged for, and this is an important economic factor which cannot be estimated in terms of £ s. d.

The member for South Fremantle, after reading that, said it was going to cost the railways more money, that more shunting would have to be done. But the letter proves that is not the case. I also dealt with a pamphlet I received from the United States Department of Agriculture dealing with the question, and they treated it in somewhat similar terms. That report issued by me as Minister also refers to statements made by Mr. Box, the chief railway construction engineer in Victoria, who states that the saving by bulk handling to the department will be at least 10 per cent. We have been told in the quotation taken from the report that the Railway Department of New South Wales showed certain losses on the transport of wheat because they could not carry full loads. The member for South Fremantle did not finish that quotation. Let me finish it for him, as follows:—

The chief disadvantage is the loss in the average freight-earning load of "U" trucks. The provision of a suitable facility to be attached to the gunwale of the wagons in order to obtain the necessary cubic capacity to carry as much bulk wheat tonnage as bagged, is now under consideration.

That is the position over there, and when I was in Sydney there was a dispute between the two departments as to who should pay it. But when they are drawing that amount of truck tare without having any wheat in it, one would think they would increase the size of the wagons in order to carry out the position properly. Even Mr. Cleary, in his statement, gives many of the advantages derived by the railways from bulk handling. He shows the great facilities in the unloading of trucks and also that the trucks do not have to be remarshalled. One of our great advantages will be this: At the present time at the Fremantle wharf there are four or five wheat buyers and four or five wheat sheds, and when the train gets to North Fremantle it has to be reshunted into the various sidings. Under a bulk handling scheme a full train load is taken direct from the country into the silo and unloaded without being uncoupled. In conse-

quence, the empty train is returned to the country. Mr. Cleary says—

- (a) A more expeditious loading of trucks.
- (b) When the whole of the traffic from country silos is being sent to terminal elevator (being from one consignor to one consignee) shunting operations are reduced to a minimum.

The member for South Fremantle quoted from this report in regard to the cost of railway alteration. He mentioned that at present there is a charge of £29,000 odd made for shunting charges.

Hon. A. McCallum: No, switching charges.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is a switching charge from North Fremantle on to the wharf. This is the only State in Australia where that charge is made. It never has been made in New South Wales or Victoria. It is made here for the reason I mentioned, namely, that the trains must be broken into sections and the sections reshunted on to their own positions.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And the producer pays.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And the producer pays. The member for South Fremantle suggests that that charge should be abolished. It should be abolished under a proper bulk handling scheme, because the work is not being done by the Railway Department and therefore they ought not to be paid for it. It takes considerable time now to break up those trains and send them along to North Fremantle. The member for South Fremantle quoted figures showing that the railway alterations would cost £320,000. One of the items therein contained is £15,000 for additional maintenance. The hon. member might have quoted Mr. Cleary's statement to me when I asked what was the cost of maintenance of bulk trucks in New South Wales. He said the average cost over three years was £1,918. Yet in this statement we are asked to pay £15,000.

Hon. A. McCallum: They were new trucks.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Some were built for the job, but 950 of them were reconverted trucks, and the work was not very well done. The Commissioner of Railways was chairman of the committee, and the Railway Department did give the committee certain information, but the committee did not agree with that information, and only referred to it in their report. It might be a just charge to say to those people, "If we have to alter our system you should pay part of the cost of the alteration of the

trucks," but to say "You have to find 500 new trucks, and the freight will be the same," does not seem to me just or fair. Then there are 1,500 tarpaulins required at £5 each. We are charged a rent on tarpaulins, but now we are to be asked to pay the total cost. I think this railway question should be regarded in a broader way.

Mr. Withers: Hand it over to private enterprise and see how you will get on.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Private enterprise does a bit of carting on the roads by motor truck, but when a man gives me a price to cart my goods he does not say, "and buy me a truck to do it." I realise the difficulty and that it will have to be met, but I do not agree that we should have to pay the whole cost of the alteration. The member for South Fremantle talked about 77 per cent. storage in the country. But that 77 per cent. is not only the country storage for it includes the terminal as well. And instead of its being provided that 23 per cent. has to be moved during the 10 weeks of harvest, it is 34 per cent. that has to be so moved.

Hon. A. McCallum: That makes it worse.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position is that the Commissioner of Railways was chairman of the committee which dealt with that phase of the question. The whole position of storage can only revolve on one point, namely what can the Railway Department move in a certain time? And country storage will have to be provided for that part of the crop which the railways cannot move. That is why that was done. Back loading was also mentioned—the question of superphosphate. In New South Wales bulk trucks have not been used for back loading, and when I discussed the question with the Officer-in-Charge of Transport, he said the only reason they did not use trucks for back loading was that it did not pay to break up the full trains. They had plenty of spare trucks for other purposes. Still, bulk trucks could be used for back loading. The member for South Fremantle mentioned that 55 per cent. of the total tonnage was wheat, and that superphosphate represented only seven per cent. Consequently only a small proportion of trucks would be required for use to haul the superphosphate. The hon. member also spoke about the cost of bags. I do not

propose to enter into the question of the displacement of labour. Last year 320 farmers in my electorate handled their wheat in bulk. I have met scores of those farmers and I have not come across one who was dissatisfied. Last season it saved them $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel. The charge made for bulk handling was 2.772d. per bushel and the farmers received $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel less for their wheat, making a total of $3\frac{3}{4}$ d. Nevertheless, the farmers, by bulk handling, made a saving of approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel. Last year 1,300,000 bushels of wheat were handled in bulk. This year it is estimated that at the same sidings over 2,000,000 bushels will be handled in bulk. That shows what the farmers in the district think of bulk handling. It has been said that we should have appointed a Royal Commission. Perhaps a Royal Commission would have been more satisfactory at the time, but there have been scores of Royal Commissions and every one has reported in favour of bulk handling. I have been twitted with not having shown what the saving would be. I laid on the Table a report by Mr. Stevenson, a Commonwealth investigating officer, who was instructed to investigate bulk handling in this State. Surely he could not be accused of bias, he had no axe to grind; and he in his report said the saving to the farmer by bulk handling represented from 2d. to 4d. a bushel. The member for South Fremantle spoke of a report by the Chamber of Commerce. I have replied to that report and I do not intend to reply in detail again. The Chamber of Commerce, in quoting 6.54d. per bushel, for bulk handling costs, included the estimated saving of 3.385d. to be effected by the bulk handling scheme. That was the estimated saving on the scheme now being considered by the Victorian Government. If members turn to the last page of the report they will see that the committee appointed by the Government in this State estimated a saving to the farmer of approximately 4d. per bushel. The information supplied to members by the trustees of the wheat pool estimate the saving at 3.33d. That should be sufficient to lead the House to pass the Bill and give the farmers the benefit of that saving. I hope members will agree to the second reading so that the Bill may be referred to a select committee for inquiry.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	31
Noes	..	..	..	..	17
Majority for					14

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Munslie
Mr. Brown	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Church	Mr. Parker
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Davy	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Doney	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Johnson	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Wells
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. Wilson
Mr. McLarty	Mr. North
Mr. Millington	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hegney	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Miss Holman	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Willcock
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Corboy
Mr. McCallum	

(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

Referred to Select Committee.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [10.18]: I move—

That the Bill be referred to a select committee.

It is not necessary to give any reasons in support of the motion, because I am convinced that the Minister and all other members are satisfied that the Bill should be referred to a select committee.

HON. A. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [10.19]: I wish to know whether I shall be in order in moving that the select committee also inquire into ways and means for finding employment for the men displaced if any bulk handling system be adopted.

MR. SPEAKER: I am afraid that would be out of order.

HON. A. McCALLUM: It would not be within the scope of the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: It would not be within the scope of the Bill.

HON. A. McCALLUM: If a select committee be appointed, I should like to know whether they will be given the powers of a Royal Commission to place witnesses on oath

and to demand certain evidence. In many ways select committees are restricted.

HON. M. F. TROY: You could move an amendment.

HON. A. McCALLUM: A lot of information may be required which it would be impossible to get but which a Royal Commission could get. The Government may be prepared to create the select committee an honorary Royal Commission, clothed with powers to enable it to get that information. Before I support the motion to refer the Bill to a select committee, I should like to know what powers that committee would have, and whether it would be possible to give them the powers of a Royal Commission.

MR. SPEAKER: I should like to hear something from the Government side of the House on that point.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [10.21]: I do not know that a Royal Commission would have greater powers than a select committee.

HON. P. COLLIER: Oh yes, it would.

THE PREMIER: A select committee can take evidence on oath. The member for South Fremantle wants the evidence submitted to the select committee given on oath.

HON. A. McCALLUM: I want the select committee empowered to compel the attendance of other witnesses.

THE PREMIER: We want the fullest inquiry into this matter. There is some merit in the suggestion that the select committee should be appointed an honorary Royal Commission.

HON. A. McCALLUM: A funny thing, such a suggestion coming from a Scotsman!

HON. P. COLLIER: Is it to be a joint select committee of both Houses?

THE PREMIER: That can be moved later on. The Government have no objection to appointing the select committee an honorary Royal Commission if it be an advantage to do so.

MR. SPEAKER: Does that satisfy the member for South Fremantle?

HON. A. McCALLUM: It would be an advantage. The Premier has qualified his remarks by saying, "If it be an advantage." I take the Premier's statement to mean that if the select committee can show that they require the powers I have referred to, the Government undertake to clothe the committee with such powers.

The Premier: We want the fullest possible inquiry.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I accept that assurance.

Question put and passed.

Ballot taken and a committee appointed consisting of Hon. W. D. Johnson, Mr. J. I. Mann, Hon. A. McCallum, Mr. W. Richardson and the mover, with power to take evidence on oath, to call for persons and papers, and to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned; to report on the 1st November.

Council's Concurrence requested.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [10.34]:
I move—

That a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council acquainting it that the Legislative Assembly has agreed to refer the Bulk Handling Bill to a select committee of five members and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint a select committee with the same number of members and with power to confer with the committee of the Legislative Assembly.

In connection with a measure of such transcendent importance it is desirable that the two Houses should act together if it is possible, and this motion is the best means for this Chamber to take for ensuring uniformity of action.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.36 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 12th October, 1932.

	PAGE
Motion: Wheat production, Federal bonus	1099
Resolutions: Bulk Handling Bill, to inquire by joint	
Select Committee	1101
State Forests, to revoke dedication	1114
Bills: Marriage Act Amendment, 1R.	1101
Government Ferries, 3R.	1113
Special License (Waroona Irrigation District),	
Recomm.	1113
Fruit Cases Act Amendment, 3R., passed	1114
Reduction of Rents Act Continuance, 3R., passed	1114
Brands Act Amendment, report	1114
Dairy Cattle Improvement Act Amendment,	
report	1114
Health Act Amendment, 2R.	1114
Road Districts Act Amendment, 2R.	1114
State Trading Concerns Act Amendment (No. 1),	
2R.	1118
Justices Act Amendment, 2R.	1120

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

MOTION—WHEAT PRODUCTION, FEDERAL BONUS.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East)
[4.43]: I move—

That in view of the parlous position of the Western Australian wheatgrowers, and because the welfare of the State is dependent so largely on the wheat industry, this House considers that the Federal Government should immediately find the funds necessary to provide a bonus of not less than 4½d. per bushel on the same lines as those that operated last year, and that this resolution be telegraphed, through the Premier, to the Prime Minister.

The motion has been framed in accordance with the desire of some members of this House, and those representing the Country Party in the Legislative Assembly. We are desirous of strengthening the position of the Government. In the reply given to a question I asked in the House, the Minister stated that the Government had been urging the Federal Government to provide a bonus on wheat this year, as they did last year. We felt that if we could secure the concurrence of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the motion I have moved, and it was forwarded to the Federal Government, it would materially strengthen the request which will be made by the Premier when he attends the next Loan Council meeting to discuss matters of finance. I do not think it is necessary to impress upon the House the absolute necessity for something being done to assist the