dispute, and sometimes to effect a settlement, are very much better. If the parties come to terms, the result can be made an award of the court. Conciliation boards are a waste of time to both parties. The Bill gives the right to the secretary of the union to supervise the carrying out of an award. For this purpose he can go into a factory. The representative of the union should have that power. The man who is out to better his fellow workers and makes himself conspicuous in the eyes of his employer is generally kept on the tramp. The secretary, however, is in a different position, and is an independent official. No one would take on the policing of an award unless the union he represents were prepared to pay him. The man best able to do this work is the secretary. The Bill is one that is best dealt with in Committee, when there will be plenty of opportunity for members to apply themselves to the different clauses. We all know the anomalies of the present Act which has, to a large extent, outlived its usefulness. The arbitration laws have not been amended for some years. If it had not been for the Arbitration Court, it is hard to say how many disputes might have occurred. When there is a big industrial dispute between employers and employees, there is stagnation in the State. The court has been the means of keeping the wheels of industry going, the workers have been able to exist, and everyone in the State has benefited, There are, however, many defects in the Act. Some allegations were made to the effect that the larger portion of the Bill has been compiled by the aid of scissors and paste. Personally I am not concerned as to whether the measure was compiled wholly by scissors and paste and contains nothing original. Every one of us must recognise that if he was carrying on an industry, and saw in another factory a machine giving much better results than the one he was using, and if he could fairly, and without jumping anybody's patent, apply that machine to his work, he would assuredly do it. And so, if we can beneficially apply sections of the Arbitration Acts of other Australian States and New Zealand to our conditions, we would be very foolish not to do so. Those other countries have had experience of the working of industrial arbitration, and we should take advantage of the improvements which have suggested themselves in those countries. Wages boards have been in operation elsewhere, while here we have been restricted to the Arbitration Court itself. I have long had a good deal of regard for wages boards, and I am indeed pleased at the introduction of a comprehensive measure like this, which embraces the present Arbitration Court and also the boards, thus providing against the congestion from which we have suffered for years. I intend, therefore, to vote for the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS RATES.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 17th September, 1924.

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

QUESTION—CREAM SEPARATORS.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Colonial Secretary: Will he lay on the Table the file containing the correspondence connected with the agency acquired and the purchase by the State Implement Works of Swedish cream separators referred to in answer to the question of the Hon. H. A. Stephenson on the 11th instant?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: As the State Implement Works might be placed at a disadvantage with its trade competitors were the details of its agency arrangements made public, there is an objection to placing the correspondence on the Table, but the papers will be made available to the hon. member for perusal, if he so desires.

QUESTION—RINDERPEST, CLAIMS FOR LOSSES.

Hon. G. POTTER asked the Colonial Secretary: What moneys, if any, are at present available from the Commonwealth Government for distribution to meet claims for losses incidental to the outbreak and control of rinderpest in Western Australia?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: No sum is yet available, but the Commonwealth has agreed to provide, approximately, £12,500. The Government has suggested that this be distributed through a Commonwealth committee.

PAPERS—ARBITRATION ROYAL COMMISSION.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell (South), ordered:

That all reports, papers, and other documents collected by Mr. Frank Walsh, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Arbitration, and matters incidental thereto, as a result of his inquiry into such question in the Eastern States, together with a copy of the report thereon, if any, submitted to the Government or the Minister for Labour, be laid upon the Table of the House.

BILL—PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 10th September.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.39]: This Bill comes to us again this session after having been thrown out by the House on a previous occasion. It is a Bill which has had two fathers, and one always knows what sort of messes are likely to arise with two fathers in a family. This Bill is in a similar position inasmuch as it will create a good deal of trouble. It reminds me of the couplet:

> Our fathers who were wondrous wise
> Did wash their throats before they washed their eyes.

I think that is what must have happened in regard to the constructing and drafting of this Bill. Last session's Bill provided that a person might have an 8ft. scaffolding or step ladder to mount in order to clean his walls or windows, but that provision does not appear in this measure, so that now if a person desires to clean the windows of his house, he may not use even a kerosene box on which to stand unless he first goes to the scaffolding department, pays his fees and gets his certificate. Under this Bill anything upon which one may climb will come within the category of scaffolding. I do not think members will approve of that. We pointed out last session that the Bill would establish a new department and this measure emphasises that fact, because, under Clause 3, provision is made for the expenses of it. The definition of inspector has been enlarged. To last year's definition it is proposed to add—"The term 'inspector' with respect to any mechanical gear, as prescribed, includes the chief inspector and inspectors appointed under the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1921." Following that are provisions setting forth that where mechanical gear is used a person must obtain the permission of an inspector of machinery in addition to that of the ordinary scaffolding inspector. It is not shown whether such a person will be required to get two certificates, one from each department, and pay two fees, but it is perfectly clear there must be two inspections when the scaffolding consists of anything like mechanical gear. Last session a majority of the House held that the proper official to look after scaffolding was the building surveyor, the man who passes plans for structures about to be erected, the man who has to see that the walls of a proposed building are sufficiently strong to carry the superstructure and the roof. We thought that this official, while looking after the construction of the building, might well supervise the safety of the scaffolding. Therefore, we threw out that Bill, and proposed another Bill, which gave to the municipal authorities the power to make by-laws and regulations for ensuring the safety of scaffolding. That Bill went down from this House as an alternative to the present Bill, and for some reason best known to the then Government that Bill was simply laid aside. I for one regret very much that it was laid aside, because a death has since occurred which might not have happened had that measure which we sent down been passed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Or had we passed the original Bill.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No. If the original Bill had been passed, the accident would have happened just the same, because the very scaffolding that caused the accident was passed by the Inspection of Machinery Department; and the gear would have had to be passed by that department. It was so passed, and the contractor held a certificate for it; and that is the very gear which was responsible for the accident: it was not safe. Now probably the Inspection of Machinery Department are not altogether to blame, because it appears that they gave a certificate for that same gear when in use at the Swan Brewery, and that it was removed without the machinery inspectors being consulted or advised as to the removal. The gear was then in exactly the same condition with regard to strength as it was when erected at the brewery, since the accident was due to the giving-way of the iron anchor rod, which was not strong enough to bear the load. That same anchor rod had been passed by the In-

spection of Machinery Department, at the brewery. If the building surveyor who, as it were, was living on the job in Forrest-place, looking after the construction of the buildings, had had it as part of his duty to examine also the gear, he would no doubt have examined it, and then probably this unfortunate accident would not have occurred. I am still of the opinion that the proper person to look after the scaffolding is the person who is looking after the buildings and the strength of the buildings. But it is said that the reason why we should not place this duty upon the local authorities is that not all local authorities have building surveyors. Therefore, it is contended, we must have some authority which is more cosmopolitan, and which will be able to provide inspectors. But the present Bill, according to the Minister, is to apply only to the metropolitan area. If it is to apply to the metropolitan area only, there is no reason why we should create another department, at the same time taking the job out of the hands of the right man to do it. When the Minister says that the measure is only to apply to the metropolitan area, I have my doubts. At any rate, this Bill does not say that it applies only to the metropolitan area. If it is to apply only to that area, we should state that in the Bill itself, and not leave the matter open as it is now. Clause 2 of the Bill does not say that the measure shall apply only to the metropolitan area. It says—

> This Act shall be in force and have effect only in such parts of the State as the Governor shall by order in Council constitute and define as districts for the purposes of this Act.

The present Government may intend to confine the operation of the measure to the metropolitan area; but the next Government are not bound by that, but by the Act, and they can by an Order in Council at any time apply the measure to Albany, or Katanning, or Wagin, or any other area they please throughout the State. It is unthinkable that we should attempt to apply such legislation as this to the country districts, at all events. In the country there would be difficulty even as regards getting inspectors. There are haystacks to be built, and all manner of things to be done.

Hon. T. Moore: Will the measure apply to haystacks?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I understand that under this Bill anything is a scaffold upon which a man may get up in order to raise him in height. If members will look at the definition of "scaffolding" on page 2, they will see that it means anything one likes to get on for the purpose of lifting one's height.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A haystack would be a structure within the meaning of this measure.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes. It does seem to me absurd that we should impose all these petty obligations upon the people. If there were any need for that kind of thing, one could understand the introduction of this Bill. But, as the Minister has said, there are no accident figures which show that there have been any scaffolding accidents.

Hon. T. Moore: The other day a man dropped four feet, and broke his arm.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: In view of the Workers' Compensation Act, there was not much harm done if a man did sprain his arm. No doubt under the new Workers' Compensation Bill many men would be glad to sprain an arm under similar conditions.

Hon. H. Stewart: Would a piece of orange peel be a scaffolding under this measure?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Perhaps such an interpretation would be possible but strained. From the "Labour Report" for 1923 I see that during the period from 1919 to 1923 there have been all over Australia only 77 accidents in connection with buildings and scaffolding. As far as I can learn from the insurance companies, no claims have been made in respect of scaffolding accidents.

Hon. T. Moore: All the same, the insurance companies charge pretty high premiums to cover men who go up on scaffolding.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Whether they do or not, I do not know.

Hon. T. Moore: I can assure you that they do.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not know what the rates are, and therefore I cannot argue that question with the hon. member. However, when we had this Bill before us last session, I made inquiries of all the insurance companies, and from those I learnt that there had been no scaffolding accident here within the memory of their officials. The Australasian figures recorded in the "Labour Report" from 1919 to 1922 show 68 accidents in connection with buildings and scaffoldings; and during 1923 there were nine additional accidents, making a total of 77 accidents up to date in connection with buildings and scaffoldings, for the whole of Australasia. Yet in this State we are to pass a Bill to regulate scaffolding and create a new department, and put the people to any amount of unnecessary trouble for evidently no good reason whatever. Building accidents, so far as I can learn, have been due to men slipping with hods, dropping stones, and so on; but there has been no accident whatever due to faulty scaffolding, which this Bill is intended to cover.

Hon. J. Ewing: If the measure saved one life, it would be worth while.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes, if it saves one life; but apparently we have no record of any life at all up to the present having been lost owing to faulty scaffolding.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about the 77 accidents?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Those were 77 building and scaffolding accidents. So far as my inquiries have gone, there is no record, going back as far as one likes, in this State of any accident, or of any claim having been made upon an insurance company for an accident, due to faulty scaffolding. There are a number of minor amendments which I think must be made in the Bill if we pass the second reading. Those smaller amendments I will pass over at the present stage: such an amendment, for example, as that proposed by Clause 7, to enable the inspector of scaffolding, if he desires it, to call in a policeman for the purpose of having the unfortunate person who is erecting scaffolding put through the third degree—for what purpose the Bill does not say. Clause 10 provides that all scaffolding and all gear shall be of the description prescribed in the regulations, and that it shall be set up and maintained in accordance with the provisions of "this Act." There is nothing that will be "in accordance with this Act" except the regulations, with regard to the setting up of gear. It is all left to regulations, and the words "in accordance with this Act" therefore mean in accordance with the regulations, which of course become part of the Act. It has been for some time the policy of the Labour Party, as far as I understand it, to oppose all legislation by regulation. I consider that a very good plank of the Labour platform. What legislation there is should be legislation enacted by the Parliament of the country, and put into Acts of Parliament, which the people can get, thereby learning exactly what they have to do. But if we are going to have legislation by regulation —I do not know whether it is intended to promote the circulation of the "Government Gazette" in this way—every person who is thinking of cleaning his windows or his walls will have to buy the "Government Gazette" to find out from time to time what new regulations have been promulgated under this measure. If the regulations can be framed later on, they can be framed now, and put into a schedule of this Bill, so that every one who runs may read. There is no hurry for the Bill; it has been absent from the Statute-book for many years, and there is no immediate need for it, because, as I say, there have been no accidents. Therefore the measure, if it is necessary at all, ought to be delayed in the interests of the people of this State until the regulations have been framed and the Government are in the position to put them in a schedule to the Bill, so that those who are called upon to comply with them may know what they have to comply with, without the possibility of having the regulations changed on them from day to day. Another point in the Bill which will have to be amended when we come into Committee on it is in Clause 11, under which, by regulation, the Government are not only going to prescribe the method by which people shall erect scaffolding, but also the method by which questions arising under this measure may be judicially determined. Clause 11, paragraph (c), says—

> The matter shall be referred to such police magistrate or resident magistrate, who shall hear and determine the dispute in manner prescribed.

That is, prescribed by the regulations. Regulations are to prescribe how the magistrate who is to administer the law shall determine the matter. That seems to me quite new legislation, and legislation to which the country ought not to submit. Another amendment which I suggested last year should be made is still omitted from the Bill. The particular clause states that a person is liable to a penalty of £20 if no other penalty is provided. Fancy putting that into the Bill, as if we could not look through it to see whether any other penalty is provided! Why not make the clause declare the penalty that we wish imposed? That is one of the small things in the Bill that shows it has not had the consideration that should have been given to it. Clause 14 sets out:—

> In the event of an accident happening to scaffolding or gear, or where any loss of life or serious bodily injury has occurred, as in the last preceding section mentioned, the Minister may direct an inquiry to be held before a court. . . .

Does it mean an accident to scaffolding, or in the event of an accident happening due to faulty scaffolding? That is a matter that ought to be cleared up when the Bill is in Committee. Clause 17 contains another one of those pinpricks that appear to be common to a Bill of this kind. It says:—

> Every owner of scaffolding or gear shall cause to be affixed and maintained in such place or places as the inspector directs, the prescribed abstract of this Act.

I may have a step-ladder that I may use sometimes to clean my outer windows. Under Clause 17 I must affix abstracts of the Act in some conspicuous place. I may have a picture or two in my house, but I do not want to placard alongside them the regulations, merely because I own a step-ladder and desire to use it to enable me to clean my windows.

Hon. J. Ewing: You would not put the abstract in your drawing-room.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It may be prescribed that it shall be put anywhere. If we are to have regulations, the statute is the place in which they should appear, so that people might know exactly what the will of Parliament is subjecting them to. Again, in Clause 24 we find this provision:—

> The authority of any inspector or other officer of the State to take any

proceeding or to do any act shall be presumed until the contrary is shown.

Then, if we look at the preceding section, we find this:—

No prosecution for any breach or contravention of this Act shall be instituted without the authority of the Minister or the Chief Inspector.

That needs to be looked into. Is the inspector to have authority to institute proceedings against a person, or is the Minister to have the authority? Presumably all these things will again be by regulation. It is also provided that they shall determine the methods by which a magistrate shall decide an issue, and then there follow the provisions applying to legal proceedings to be taken, supplemental to which are to come other provisions under regulations. Why cannot we put in the Bill all the conditions that we desire to impose. I have already referred to what is contained in Clause 27 which reads—

Nothing in this Act shall affect the provisions of the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1921.

This means that we would have two Acts running on similar lines, two sets of inspectors, and two sets of fees. We should not permit that to pass. I do not propose to labour the Bill, because in my opinion it is a perfectly ridiculous measure. It is not wanted, but there might not be much objection to it if it applied solely to the metropolitan area, because with some amendments it could be made reasonable. I do, however, protest against any application of such a Bill to country districts. As I pointed out, to-morrow or the day after, by the whim of some Minister, it may be made to apply to a small town or hamlet in the State. I intend to vote against the second reading.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [5.6]: We had this Bill before us last session in practically the same form, and the debate on it will be found in "Hansard" of that session. I do not think there is much that any of us can say in regard to the Bill that was not said last year. I went to some trouble to find out what Acts were in force in the various States, and how they were administered. Mr. Lovekin has not on this occasion raised some of the objections that were advanced last time, although he has raised others that were brought forward. I went to a great deal of trouble to find out how many inspectors held appointments under similar legislation in the other States and whether new departments had been created. It was in that respect that the previous Government were criticised last session. I found that very few inspectors indeed had been appointed in any one of the other States. As a matter of fact I do not think there were more than two in any one State. Legislation of this kind is in force in all the States except Tasmania, and it is also in force in New Zealand, and no new departments have been created anywhere. In Queensland a subdepartment was formed. A similar objection was raised when the Factories Bill was under discussion. It was stated that we were going to establish another huge department with an army of inspectors. I have found out that only one new inspector has been appointed since that Factories Act has been in operation, and I believe that the services of that inspector were obtained on loan, although the work increased to a considerable extent. I cannot understand why there should be so much opposition to a Bill of this nature. In connection with every other class of employment, not only that in which tradesmen engage, but in respect of the professions of dentistry, law, and many others that could be enumerated, and in fact almost every vocation, some scheme has been before Parliament to ensure protection for those engaged in them. And this has been brought about almost since I have been in Parliament. Why, therefore, should we seek to divide the protection that we afford? I am prepared to repeat, in spite of what the insurance companies declare in regard to there being few accidents, that they are charging high rates for the insurance of workmen. This statement has never been contradicted.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They state that in six years only 77 accidents occurred in Australia.

Hon. J. E. DODD: That seems to me to prove the efficiency of the inspection of scaffolding. If there were not efficient inspections, we do not know what accidents would occur. It is most remarkable that almost immediately after we threw out the Bill last session a very serious accident did occur. I do not mean the accident that took place recently in Forrest-place. I cannot quite recall to memory where the accident happened, but I think all members who were interested in the Bill at that time will remember it.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That was not through faulty scaffolding.

Hon. J. E. DODD: Whether it was or not it shows that the scaffolding gear certainly requires some inspection. We might say the same thing in regard to mining, that while many accidents occur, they are not due to faulty gear under which the men are working but to breaches of the regulations. So it may be with scaffolding. It was suggested last session that the control of scaffolding should be handed over to the municipality. I pointed out that there were a number of objections to that course, one of which was that we would be handing over the scaffolding laws to a body of men elected on a more restricted franchise than that on which we in this Chamber are returned, and in addition to that where

plural voting is allowed. Of course a large number of these men are common sense people, but some are interested in the buildings from an employer's point of view only. If we hand over the control of scaffolding to the municipality, it will be implied that we must also hand over the scaffolding laws to road boards, even though it has been said that the Bill will operate only in the metropolitan area. But in the not distant future we will find that there will be many important buildings erected in road board areas and it will be necessary to have another Bill to permit of the road boards being given control similar to that handed over to the municipalities. Mr. Lovekin strongly objects to so much being left to regulations, but at the same time the hon. member would hand over our scaffolding laws to a body of twelve men and permit them to make regulations. If we are to hand this over to twelve men, it will all become a matter of regulation. And yet Mr. Lovekin objects to legislation by regulation. Neither the municipalities nor the road boards have asked for this. No conference of those bodies has ever sought to have scaffolding laws included in their administrative powers.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Perth said last session it was willing to take them over.

Hon. T. Moore: The Town Clerk may have said so.

Hon. J. E. DODD: An important conference was held on the 22nd and 29th August, 1923, at Claremont, representative of the municipal bodies. Although the very matter to which Mr. Lovekin directs attention was under discussion, not a word was mentioned of any scaffolding laws. Many of the municipal councils do not want this. A member of one of them told me they did not want it. If this matter is placed under the municipalities instead of being administered by a central authority, we shall have the law administered by many different authorities, inspectors, and building supervisors. These men may all have different ideas upon scaffolding and gear. If the matter is placed in the hands of the Government there will be one man operating upon all buildings wherever the Act will apply. These objections should be sufficient to induce the Council to pass a small measure like this. After all, it cannot be very oppressive. If amendments are desired there is enough common sense among members to make those amendments without denying a large class of building employees the right of protection. I refer to men who are tradesmen—masons, bricklayers, carpenters, plasterers, and many others. They should have the same right of having their lives protected and their limbs looked after as any other class of men in the community. I cannot understand the Bill in regard to the question of loss of life and the holding of inquiries. In 1920 or 1922 we passed a Coroners Act, the idea of which was to consolidate all the laws relating to the duties of coroners. There were many Acts in existence dealing with that question. In a good deal of our legislation there is an overlapping, and it is often very difficult to follow our laws. The same thing is being perpetuated in this Bill. It is provided that the Minister may order an inquiry wherever an accident occurs by which a man loses his life or suffers serious bodily injury. It is also set out how the inquiry shall be held, and that a medical certificate shall be secured showing the cause of death. That seems to be superfluous. Under the Coroners Act every time a man meets a violent death an inquiry must be held. I believe, in the Interpretation Act, the word "may" has the same effect as the word "shall," but I am doubtful if that would lie in the present instance. If there is going to be a provision of this sort, it should be mandatory upon the Minister to hold an inquiry. Very likely the Solicitor General can justify the insertion of this provision. We are a little too touchy over a small Bill like this. I cannot see how it will oppress anyone. Such an Act has not been oppressive in the other States, and in almost every civilised country the workmen engaged in the building trade are protected as they are in other trades.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—TRADE UNIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 11th September.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [5.25]: Having looked into this Bill I do not intend to raise any objection to it.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—CLOSER SETTLEMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.26]: I was absent when the Leader of the House moved the second reading of this Bill, but I have read the speech he made on that occasion. His opening remarks were, "For many years the country has been calling aloud for closer settlement." The Minister has been out of public life for six years. I should like to know if it is a fact that for many years the country has been calling aloud for a Closer Settlement Bill? I have heard very little demand for it, except from the leading daily metropolitan paper.

In season and out of season they have been advocating the introduction of such a Bill. It is an established fact that the morning paper, that ought to be the leader of public opinion, in nine cases out of ten backs the wrong horse.

Hon. H. Stewart: They will not report you to-morrow.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Let me give evidence of that statement. During the recent general elections that paper—I presume it is the authority quoted by the Minister as calling aloud for a Closer Settlement Bill—told the people what an awful thing it would be if the Labour Party came into power. The Labour Party did come into power. They told the country they considered the Official Country Party was a menace to it, and ought to be wiped out. That party, however, came back 100 per cent. stronger than when it went out. The Ministerial Country Party, which had the endorsement of the paper, came back shattered and minus a leader; and the Mitchell party came back with its leader, but minus a number of followers. It would, therefore, be unwise to follow the opinion of the metropolitan Press that meets with a disaster such as that.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The better paper to follow is the "Worker."

Hon. J. Cornell: It has its off seasons.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: A Bill similar to this was introduced by the Mitchell Government. I think amendments were made that rendered it an equitable and a workable measure, but it was subsequently dropped. I will tell the House briefly how this Bill appeals to me. The Minister said there were 19 million acres of land alienated, and only nine million acres partially improved. Most of the land has been alienated under conditional purchase conditions. If the land has been only partially improved, it is the fault of the Administration in not enforcing the conditions that were imposed upon the conditional purchase country. If the conditions are enforced the land will be improved; if not, it is the duty of the Government to enforce them, and make the man, who is holding land and not improving it, forfeit it. That is a different matter from acquiring freehold. It appears from the Minister's statement that 10 million acres of land have been acquired under false pretences, and that the owners have not carried out the conditions. These are the people who should be attacked for non-fulfilment of the conditions, without disturbing the freeholder who has always looked upon his title as 18 carat. I should like to know if the 19 million acres includes poison leases, grazing leases, and the whole of the Midland lands.

Hon. H. Stewart: Of course it does.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: A peculiar position has arisen. In the area covered by the Midland Railway Company's concession there are tens of thousands of acres of worthless land with which one could do nothing. There are other large areas of splendid land. The Midland Company never lose a chance of selling blocks when the opportunities offer. Under the Bill the Government could take over the whole of the Midland Company's area at the assessed value.

Hon. H. Stewart: Not only the present Government, but any other Government could do so.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That is so. They could take over the whole of that area on the land tax assessment plus 10 per cent. What effect will that sort of thing have on the people who are behind the Midland Company at the other end of the world? No one ever thought—certainly the Midland Railway Company did not think so—that when that concession was granted, the holders would be faced with Federal land tax, State land tax, road board and vermin board rates, and all the other forms of taxation that are imposed. They have to pay those imposts to-day. The only chance of holding on to the land successfully is by battling to get the assessment down to the lowest figure, and thus obtain a bedrock assessment. That, presumably, is what they have done, and they are paying taxation on that assessment. If the Bill be agreed to, the Government can take over the land at that bedrock assessment, plus 10 per cent. We know what happened in Queensland when the Government interfered with pastoral leases. Rightly or wrongly, the Bill excludes pastoral leases. Do the sponsors of the Bill think that as pastoral leases are not included, nothing will be said regarding the freehold land? Surely the objections raised to the Queensland measure, which forced the Government in that State to eat their own words and amend their own Act, must show what will take place! If that was the effect of interfering with pastoral leases in Queensland, what will result if this attack upon the freehold tenure of land is agreed to? Inexperienced people travel around the State and do not know what the country is or what can be done with it. They are apt to come to the conclusion that land is not properly utilised. The great difference between land in Western Australia and in the Eastern States is that, with perhaps the exception of the South-West, there is no continuity of good country here. It would be possible for any hon. member travelling through the country to run through land that one would grasp with both hands if it were offered to him at five minutes to 10 o'clock in the morning, and at 10 o'clock to pass through absolutely worthless land that one would not accept at a gift.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmett: And I got into great trouble for saying that our land was patchy.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: One cannot buy 100 acres or 1,000 acres of land in Western

Australia without personally inspecting the area. I do not care what part of Western Australia one may think of, it would not be safe to buy land without inspection. If one did not make an inspection, it is possible that the land might be first class quality or be such that one would not accept as a gift. In the Western districts of Victoria and along the Hunter River, the land is of a different quality. It would be quite safe for a person to go to a land and estate agent in Melbourne and buy the area he required and be safe in the knowledge that the land would be of uniform good quality. We talk about the wonderful land and pastures in the Eastern States. Those pastures have been built up. Fifty or 60 years ago that land had nothing like the grazing or productive capacity that it has to-day. It had to be built up —

Hon. T. Moore: Not by large holdings.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes, by large holdings and by judicious stocking. There is nothing that will improve country like sheep. Do hon. members realise that if they put 2,500 sheep in a paddock, the stock will drop a ton of fertiliser in 24 hours! Just imagine what effect that has upon the land and how it must improve it. Much of the land that is referred to as not adequately utilised, is being transferred from worthless country to land capable of production. Inexperienced people consider that it should be used for other purposes, for growing wheat and so forth, just when it is at the transitionary stage from pastoral to grazing country and ultimately arriving at the stage when it may be classed as agricultural land. People who have nothing, envy the other fellow, because he has land that he is building up. They wish the Government to rush in and take over what that man is entitled to. Mr. Moore told us there were hundreds of people looking for land.

Hon. T. Moore: And that is true, too.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I suppose they are looking for land around the Trades Hall, where the Premier says they are looking for work. The Premier told them they should go into the country and get work there. I believe that if they did go into the country, they would find there was plenty of land for them to take up. That does not satisfy them, however; they wish to go round Perth looking for land like other people go round the city looking for work. I compliment the Premier on the attitude he adopted when he told the so-called unemployed to go to the country and get work there. We are told that there are people who want land

Hon. T. Moore: That is the point.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: How do they want to get it? They want the Government to make the purchase, take the land from the man who is using it now, provide capital for the new comer on the holding, and help him to carry on. Our experience in the past, which will be our experience again, is that settlers who are put on the land under such circumstances get behind in their interest and become financially involved, and then apply to the Government for a reduction in the price of their holdings. That is the experience in connection with all the land settlement we have had.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Can you name one estate where it has not occurred?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It has occurred in connection with every estate.

Hon. T. Moore: What about Yandanooka?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: That cost £25,000.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: There is an impression that a man who is carrying sheep on his property is not using his land as it should be. It is also considered that the Government should take over holdings that are being used for sheep grazing and cut them up so that a larger number of small people will settle there. They consider that if that were done, the small people would do well. That is not the experience of the past. I would take the Leader of the House back to the time when the Land Act was agreed to. The hon. member told us that between Geraldton and the Murchison there were millions of acres of land that the Government should take over and cut up into holdings of 20,000 acres each, so that small sheep farmers could be placed on them. If that had been done the position to-day would be that the State would have been bankrupt. That would be so, because throughout the whole of the Murchison area to-day, despite the large holdings, the conditions are such that they can hardly shear the sheep. After the wool is taken from the sheep the stock can hardly walk away. I was told by one person that in one day 57 trucks of starving stock had passed along the Murchison railway, looking for feed in order to keep them going until the rains come next season.

Hon. T. Moore: That would apply during drought periods.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: But the big man can stand up to those conditions.

Hon. T. Moore: He is not doing it too well now.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: He does stand up to it and when good times come he pays big income taxes.

Hon. T. Moore: The big man is losing stock now.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Of course, and losing money, too. The point is, that if we put small men on such holdings, as was advocated, whose money is lost when the droughts come?

Hon. J. R. Brown: Are not 10 small men better than one big man?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Ten small dairy farmers in the South-West would be better than one big man, but when dealing with pastoral areas, one large holding backed by the owner or some financial institution, is of more benefit to the State than a whole lot of small pastoralists backed by the State,

which has to accept the full responsibility, and in time of drought has to foot the bill.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Pastoral holdings are not included in the Bill.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Why not?

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Because they can be resumed for agricultural purposes under another Act.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That is so, but why cannot land be resumed for pastoral purposes?

Hon. W. H. Kitson: It is not proposed to do so.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: No, because of the experience in Queensland. Pastoral leases have not been included because in Queensland the Government got into trouble when they dealt with them. There will be trouble if the Bill before us now is agreed to without amendment. Where are the men Mr. Moore referred to?

Hon. T. Moore: They are not around the Trades Hall, but back in the country.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Are they married or single men?

Hon. T. Moore: Plenty of them are married.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Then why do not they go to the group settlement areas? They could get a four-roomed house, free water, free firewood and £3 a week. They could keep their eyes on the papers and if they saw an advertisement regarding a job that suited them, they could walk off the group and take the better job.

Hon. T. Moore: My men are not like that.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: In some instances I believe these men do not want hard work. They want land that some other fellow has been battling with for 50 years or more and has brought to the productive stage. They want land that is near a railway station and near a picture show. That is the sort of land they are after. They want the Government to buy the land, find all the plant, from the State Implement Works presumably; they want the Government to establish them and give them financial assistance. When the group settlement scheme was started I said that it was the last part of the circle to complete the nationalisation of agriculture, our principal primary industry. We began with the Agricultural Bank, and followed it up with the Industries Assistance Board, the Soldier Settlement Scheme and now the Group Settlement Scheme. If we agree with our eyes open to the continued nationalisation of the principal primary industry of this State, what objection can we raise to the Government selling separators, as was done to-day, by way of a question put to the Leader of the House? Do hon. members realise how much the Government have involved in the agricultural industry to-day? I say nothing about the Agricultural Bank, the Soldier Settlement Scheme or the Industries Assistance Board. Let us consider the Group Settlement Scheme for a moment or two.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Why object to the other institutions?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am pointing out that 350,000 people are carrying quite enough in connection with the nationalisation of the primary industries without being asked to go any further. The Bill means that the owners of resumed land will take their money and get out, and the Government will get in. We have some 2,500 group settlers. Their settlement appears to have cost about £1,600 each, or a total of £4,000,000. We are finding that money and are getting nothing more than a rebate of two-thirds of the interest for the first five years, after which we are to carry the whole responsibility. If we honour our obligations with the Imperial Government, we shall get a rebate of interest amounting to 2½ million pounds. So there is this State, with its 350,000 people, putting £4,000,000 into the melting pot, and all we are to get out of it is a rebate of interest on 2½ million pounds over a period of five years.

Hon. J. Ewing: The settlers will pay it all back.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not know how they are to do that. In the Governor's Speech of 1922 we were told that the members of the earlier groups had reached the productive stage. Here we are in September, 1924, and, so far as I can gather, not one of them has yet reached the productive stage, although each of them has been receiving £3 weekly ever since. The last I have seen in the Press is that cows are now being bought and sent to the Avondale estate until the pastures of the South-West are ready for them. We are putting four millions into that scheme and, not satisfied, we propose to grab people's land and put other fellows on to it and finance them into prosperity. In all seriousness, I look upon the Bill as another joke put up on this Council.

Hon. J. Cornell: The last thing its sponsors want us to do is to pass it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Let me take hon. members back to September, 1922, when we had the Pemberton-Denmark railway before us. Mr. Colebatch told the House it was a new departure altogether, that there were millions of acres of good land available along the line, and that they were going to build the railway in 10-mile sections from either end, holding on to the freehold land until the railway was built. For 12 miles on either side of each 10-mile section the land was to be settled before the next section of line was put in hand. That scheme was swallowed by the House in order to provide for the people going on the land. The State is committed to that railway. Fortunately, this House said, "This is too big a proposition, from Pemberton to Den-

mark. We have at Bunbury a port for Pemberton and at Albany a port for Denmark; consequently we will give you authority for a section of the line at either end, and you can come along for the remainder later." Up to date very little has been done at either end of the line. We were told that none of that land would be alienated. If the Government have men wanting land, and have also land on which they wish to put men, where is the decency or the common sense in taking land from private owners and putting other men on to it? Let us first utilise the land we have available, after which I am sure the House will not object to a Closer Settlement Bill. Reference has been made to the estates purchased by the State—Avondale, Peel, Bacton, Yandanooka, and several others. All those estates have been purchased by the Government, and the money paid. In some instances the vendor has taken his money and invested it elsewhere. When we come to look at the opportunities offering elsewhere for investment, we cannot wonder that men of capital should seek investment elsewhere. I have no hesitation in saying that if we deprive landholders of their land and pay them cash for it, they will liquidate the whole of their assets and take the cash out of the country, as they are doing at present, and invest it in Victoria.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is a wicked thing if they are investing it elsewhere.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: They are quite prepared to remain on their land, land that has come down to them from their forbears. Why did Mr. Drew's father and mother, or my father and mother, leave Ireland and come out here 60 years ago? They came out here to make a home for themselves and their children. These are the people, these pioneers, that will be forced to realise on their assets. Yet Mr. Ewing says it is a wicked thing if they invest their money elsewhere! If I were placed in the position of those landholders who will have their land taken from them, I would do the same. When we take a man's freehold security we are taking what has always been considered as a security unassailable. I should like information from the Minister, when he replies, as to the recent purchase of the Bacton estate, where Mr. G. J. Gooch, of Mingenew, ran a stud farm and sheep station. The Government acquired that estate and cut it up into 10 farms. The other day I passed through one of those farms. It has been abandoned. The man who had it put in 200 acres of crop, but the rain came late, he did not regard the prospect as hopeful, and so he went off.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is some of the best land in the State.

Hon. H. Stewart: It makes the argument all the stronger.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is land on which the poor man cannot successfully produce, for it has to be systematically farmed, and that with a full equipment of appliances. It is a treacherous rain area, and only a big man with big appliances and modern equipment can successfully farm it. The small man with a single-furrow plough and a couple of ponies will never get any results on such land. These settlers come and go, and every time they go out a compromise has to be made with the new man coming in. All the time the original proprietor has got his money, and the State is finding interest on the amount paid for the estate, while any deficiency must necessarily be reflected in the State's deficit. There are in the Bill four clauses to which I object. In the first place I want to see a definition of "land to be acquired." Under the Bill everything, except pastoral land, is land. If a merchant were holding a site in West Perth, or some other factory locality, with the object of building a factory, the board could say the land was not being used for proper purposes, that it was better suited for workmen's cottages; and as a result the Government could acquire it for that purpose. Under the Bill the board can do anything with any block of land in the State. What is the composition of the board? An official of the Agricultural Bank, an official of the Lands Department, and a third person nominated by the Government. Any Government can get a board like that to do anything they want it to do. We had some experience of this in the Peel estate. Land was offered to the State, but the Mitchell Government changed the board whenever they thought fit. There is a bad example for future Governments to follow. As I say, land was offered to the Government, and a board consisting of Messrs. Venn, Craig, and Robinson reported that they could not recommend its purchase. Further negotiations took place, and the board was reconstructed, Mr. Camm taking Mr. Venn's place. The new board recommended the purchase of that land. So it will be seen that, if the Bill goes through, the Government will be able to do anything.

Hon. J. Ewing: Was the price reduced?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes, but that does not come into the argument. The board first said they could not recommend the purchase.

Hon. A. Burvill: Why?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Because it was unsuitable.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The matter was reconsidered by the new board, who reported that it appeared the land would be required for the economic settlement of swamp land and flat land on the Peel Estate, and recommended its purchase.

Hon. J. Nicholson: At the same price?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: No, at a reduced price. In the first place the land was considered unsuitable by the board, and the board was reconstructed. Mr. Venn, who was an outside man, went off and Mr. Camm, the Surveyor General, came on, and the land was purchased.

Hon. J. Ewing: Do you suggest the Government instructed Mr. Camm to do that?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not say so, but if it rested with me, it would be quite possible for me to look around and see what officers of the department would be favourable to such a purchase, and having made the discovery, I could proceed to appoint a man to adjudicate on the land. I suppose the Government considered it necessary to buy the land, and they got over the difficulty by reconstructing the board. Having had that experience of one Government, surely we should be careful before giving similar power to another Government. I want a properly constituted board, and I want the owner to have some say as to the price at which his land is to be taken. The worst feature of all is the distribution of the proceeds from the sale of the land. The board may acquire any land if it is not put to reasonable use. What is reasonable use?

Hon. J. R. Brown: They would acquire land lying idle. There are thousands of acres of it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We should insist upon a proper definition of "reasonable use" before the measure is passed.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: You would have 30 different opinions in this House.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Quite likely, but with so many different opinions, it should not be difficult for the Government to select a board whose views coincided with theirs. The Bill proposes to take land from one freeholder and give it to another freeholder. That principle is wrong. If the State is going to take this land, it should be converted into leasehold. There is no justice in taking land from one freeholder and giving it to another. If it be necessary in the interests of the State to acquire this land and to take freehold security, the State should deal with it only as leasehold. Mr. Moore spoke of areas that in the future would be found too large.

Hon. A. Burvill: We shall be turning the Government into a kind of Irish landlord to put up the rent.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: That does not apply, because in Ireland rent is not paid.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The argument is that the country is entitled to the unearned increment. If the House can convince me that there is any justice in taking land from one freeholder and giving it to another freeholder, I am open to conviction. If we intend to abolish the freehold principle now, we should do so for ever.

Hon. H. Stewart: Not only do they propose to give the land to another freeholder, but they will give him 30 years in which to pay for it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That is so. Let us experiment with this system of leasehold and see how those hundreds of friends of Mr. Moore, who are rushing about looking for land, will get on. Will the leasehold system help them? It will be of no use whatever to them.

Hon. T. Moore: Leasehold is not contemplated under this Bill.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: No, but my proposal is to turn the land acquired from freeholders into leaseholds. There would be some justice in doing that. There is no justice in taking from one freeholder and giving to another freeholder. Suppose the Government offered it to leaseholders; we would then see how much improvement we would get along the railways. We would see how the hundreds of friends of Mr. Moore would rush to take up leaseholds. No one knows better than he that they would not look at leasehold. This brings me back to the point regarding the damage that must ensue to the country if we attack the freehold system on which the country has been built up.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I suppose there is nothing to prevent estates that are subdivided reverting afterwards to the present holders.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: There is nothing in the measure to prevent a man who is compelled to sell his land putting up a dummy and buying the land in on behalf of his children or his friends. Having done that another two years must elapse before the new owner could do anything with it, and the same red tape of boards, etc., must be gone through before finality is reached. This Bill simply gives power to grab land and take it by force. A freeholder could acquire a whole lot if he liked, and there would be nothing to prevent him.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is what happened in Canada. The land has gone back to the big freeholders.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Colonial Secretary in his speech said, "The Bill casts the responsibility upon the board to decide whether land is unutilised or not." I do not suppose any board or any three men were ever armed with more authority than that. They will have full responsibility to decide whether the lands of this State, excluding pastoral leases, are unutilised or not. Surely if we are going to have a board vested with such powers over other people's freehold, the freeholder should be entitled to nominate someone to represent him. The Crown should also have a representative, and if the two parties cannot agree as to the price, an umpire should be appointed, and his decision should be final. The Colonial Secretary was asked what area would be exempted under this measure, and he promised to deal with that question later. This raises an important point. Under the measure the board can take the whole of the land of an estate. The only redress the owner has is if the board propose to take a portion of the land, he can tell them to take the lot. The owner cannot tell the board to leave a certain portion to him for his family. All he can say is, "You are going to ruin my estate; take the lot." Is

that fair? The Minister was asked by way of interjection whether the owner would be allowed to put a reserve on his land, and replied, "He must sell the land at a reasonable upset price according to the values of the board." In accomplishing this end, what shall we be doing? We shall be dispossessing people of land they have worked for, lived for, and brought their families up on. Many of these people are carrying on with the assistance of the Associated Banks. They have had very little or no help from the State. Yet we propose to dispossess them of their land and set up a lot of indigent people——

Hon. T. Moore: Not necessarily.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not say it offensively—and the newcomers will be financed into prosperity by the Government. Again, it will be a case of "heads they win, tails the Government lose." Suppose a man approached any one of us about embarking on a certain enterprise. The first question asked would be, "How much capital do you want?" Suppose he required £2,000, the next question would be, "How much are you going to put in?" If he answered, "I am not going to put in anything," no sane business man would consider such a proposition. Yet it is under that system that the whole of the agricultural industry of this State is to be nationalised. The Government are putting in all the money. In 99 cases out of 100 the people are not finding anything. In the group settlements none of them are finding money, and it is a question of "heads they win, tails the Government lose." We are now asked to go one step further than that and dispossess the rightful owners in order to put other people in their places.

Hon. J. R. Brown: If they are making use of their land, it will not be taken from them.

Hon. H. Stewart: Not if they are under the Industries Assistance Board.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: When one considers the financial position of the State, the obligations cast upon the Government, the difficulty of carrying on with the limited amount of money at their disposal, the number of railways authorised, and the public works in hand, one must conclude that we have gone far enough with group settlement. We will have to put four millions of money into the South-West, and that four millions will be required to finance the 2,500 group settlers already there, even if we do not bring out any more people. If we pass this Bill, what will be the result? We shall ruin the freehold security of the country and the country's credit. The method of acquiring the land is to take the unimproved value, plus 10 per cent. That is plus 10 per cent. on the land, but there is no question of plus 10 per cent. on the improvements.

Hon. J. R. Brown: That is not reasonable, is it?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the land be taken, of what good are the improvements to the owner. He has to take for them anything the board like to give him. They can take buildings, shearing sheds, yards and fences.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Would not the fixed improvements go with the land?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the Government acquire the land, as they will have the right to acquire it, of what use will the improvements be to the owner after he is pushed off?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Before tea I was dealing with the matter of acquiring land under this Bill. I pointed out that the proposal was to take the land at the unimproved value, plus 10 per cent., and that the sale of the improvements would become a matter, presumably, between the owner and the Government, and that if the owner was not in a position to pull down and take away his buildings and fences, the only course open to him would be to sell them to the acquiring board at whatever price they chose to offer.

Hon. T. Moore: A just price.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If that just price is in accordance with the justness of this Bill, I have not much faith in it. Before dealing with the unimproved value of land, I think it fair to tell the House exactly how the unimproved value has been arrived at. According to the information I have been able to obtain there has never been any systematic method of arriving at the unimproved value. In the first instance, the taxpayers some years ago were asked to fill in a schedule showing the unimproved value of their land and the unimproved values. In recent years, to simplify matters, they have been supplied with a form showing the same figures as the previous years. When all these returns had come in, the Taxation Departments, both Federal and State, started out to fix their valuations, I understand.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They made a Doomsday Book.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: They adopted a zone system. In one area a group of people would put in the unimproved value of their land at 15s. per acre, another group in the same area would assess the unimproved value at 25s. per acre, another at 30s., and yet another at £2. Then, under the zone system, the Taxation Department assessed the whole area at 30s. per acre. The taxpayer certainly thought, "For once, at all events, the Taxation Department have been reasonable, and have assessed me at 30s. per acre, whereas my return showed £2." Under the system of acquisition proposed by the Bill, the

man who originally fixed the unimproved value of his land at £2 per acre but had it reduced by the Taxation Department, to 30s., would receive 33s. per acre, being 30s. plus 10 per cent., for what he himself has originally assessed at £2 per acre. Is there anything equitable or just or fair about that? The worst security a man can hold in this country is unimproved land. To tell me that men with money are holding unimproved land without proceeding to improve it or use it to the best advantage, is to tell me something that I know is not true. The only hope a man with unimproved land has is to start out to improve it. In any case, he has got to pay interest on the money invested in the land. Further, he has to pay taxes which possibly do not exist in any other part of the world. He has to pay State tax, Federal tax, road board tax, and vermin tax. Any man who pays those taxes without attempting to improve or use his land should be put in the lunatic asylum.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He may be holding it for speculative purposes.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have had a turn at many things, including the buying of land, both country and city, and holding it for speculative purposes. As the result of my experience I now do not hold one bit of land, either in the city or in the country that is not being developed, and developed in such a way that it will yield a return on the capital invested. If this Bill goes through, it will present an opportunity for holders of unimproved land who have not the money necessary for its development, to get rid of it to the Government; and the Government will see exactly where they will get to by spoon-feeding settlers on such land. To say that a man must sell his land to the Government at a reduced valuation fixed by the Taxation Department, would be to create an appalling position. What happens is that when an estate in a particular town or district changes hands, the owner has to supply the Taxation Department with full particulars of the price he has received for the property, and has to set out how much he received for unimproved value and how much for improvements; the purchaser being required to furnish similar information. As soon as the returns come in, the Taxation Department grab them and compare them wit the zone valuations, and then they raise the valuations in the particular zone. It is presumed that the purchaser has come into that zone because it is prosperous, and therefore the people in it have their assessments raised by the department. If the Government went into a locality where a purchase had recently been made, the owner of the land which the Government wished to acquire would be on pretty safe ground, because the Taxation Department would have put up his valuation to harmonise with the sale notified to them. But if the Government got into a district which was at a standstill, which had been up against difficulties such as a drought period, and in which there had been no reassessment, there they could purchase at the values originally fixed by the Taxation Department. Thus the people in a less favoured locality, people who had never had a chance to sell their land or to improve it, would be forced to sacrifice their properties at the lower valuations fixed, not by them, but by the Taxation Department. In view of all the taxes I have mentioned, is it unreasonable that owners should keep the unimproved value as low as they can? If they did not do that, there would soon be nothing left for them. Is there any objection to it? What does the merchant do at the end of the year? He takes stock, and writes it down to prepare for contingencies. The land owner does the same thing, keeping down his unimproved value for fear the district might go back. Would any hon. member say that it would be just if the Government should walk into the premises of a wholesale merchant and examine his stock sheets and say to him, "We are going to confiscate your stock at the assessed value plus 10 per cent."? Even that would not be too bad, because the merchant would not have held the stock for more than 12 months, and 10 per cent. on cost might not be a bad sale. The land owners, on the other hand, have held their lands and battled on them for years, paying interest and rates and taxes, and spending money to improve their holdings. Yet they are to get only 10 per cent. on the land, and nothing on the improvements. Unquestionably this Bill is based on the modern social desire to grab what the other fellow has got and is legitimately entitled to, and give it to somebody who has nothing, and then finance and spoon-feed that somebody into prosperity. That is the socialistic spirit which is growing up, and which should not be encouraged. The other day we had evidence of it, when the House Committee agreed to recommend the giving away a portion of Parliament House grounds for the purpose of widening Hay-street.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Is not that reasonable?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is reasonable from the modern socialistic standpoint. The man who has not got anything is always prepared to give away some other fellow's property. If Mr. Gray or any other member had a bit of land either east or west of Parliament House, and was asked to give away a slice of it to the City Council or to the Government for the purpose of widening Hay-street, he certainly would refuse. The rebellious spirit that is extending ought not to be encouraged. It is a spirit which suggests taking from the other fellow what justly belongs to him and giving it to somebody else. That is modern socialism and I cannot illustrate it better than by relating a story of two Irishmen, Pat and Mick. Pat said to Mick, "What is socialism that I hear so much about"? Mick replied, "I will tell you. It is this way. If you had a couple of horses and I said to you, Pat, will you give

me one?'' Pat answered, ''Of course I would give you one.'' Mick then went on, ''If you had a couple of cows and I asked you whether you would give me one, would you do so?'' Pat answered, ''Why, certainly, nothing would give me greater pleasure.'' Then Mick said, ''If you had a couple of pigs, Pat, would you give me one''? Then Pat replied, ''Ah, Mick, don't you know that I have two pigs.'' Pat, of course, was prepared to give away anything that he did not have, but when it came to giving something that he did own, it was quite another affair.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: That is not socialism.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That is modern socialism. Pat would have given away a horse, if he had one, or a cow if he had one, and not having either he was safe in making the promise. But when it came to the two pigs that he did really own, it was quite another matter. In my opinion, the only two crimes that one can commit in this country are, first, to succeed, and the other, is to pay. If you succeed there will always be one section of the community after you, and if you fail there is also another section of the community after you. There is an idea growing up that if you bankrupt the individual you will have a prosperous nation. After all, what is a nation but a combination of individuals. Therefore, if you bankrupt the individual you will bankrupt the nation. There are four lines that I once pasted in my hat and that I have never forgotten:

> Feast and your halls are crowded.
> Fast and they pass you by;
> Succeed and give and they'll let you live;
> Fail and they'll let you die.

The worst feature of the Bill is the proposed distribution of the proceeds of the sale of the land. If the Bill passes with that provision in it, if my interpretation be correct, it will do more damage to the reputation of the State than anything I know. First of all, the first mortgagor comes in with every other person having a claim for compensation. That is my interpretation of the clause. Could anything be more dangerous to the welfare of this country?

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Will it apply to the Agricultural Bank?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: You cannot apply it to Crown lands. Take the financial institutions. They create an asset by advancing money on first mortgage. But for the advances made by the bank there would be no assets, and but for the security the banks would not make any advances. Yet the Bill proposes that the land shall be taken and that the banking institutions shall be brought in with all the other creditors in respect of claims for compensation. I need not stress that point any further. I have given my interpretation of it, and if it is correct it will be another step in the stage of bringing about the nationalisation of the agricultural industry, because no banking institution will lend money under such conditions.

Hon. H. Seddon: Would not they call up their loans?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am not dealing with that aspect of the position, I am dealing with what will happen. The banks undoubtedly will have to pull out; they must demand their money, because they will not leave it in an investment if the land is to be taken by the State and other creditors are coming in, with the bank, for compensation. The banks have done a great deal for this country. People can say what they like about the associated banks, but I have nothing but good to say of them. Even when they were up against a shortage of money, through no fault of their own—the State and the Federal Governments having borrowed extensively locally—the banks always found money for developing country land, because they realised that that was the best of all assets. Take away that security and it is good-bye to assistance from the associated banks. The Minister told us there were thousands of acres of land in the Geraldton district not being utilised. I have not looked up the statistics during the last couple of years, but I know that there were more sheep south of Geraldton than there were north of Geraldton. We boasted about the great pastoral industry of the North, and at the same time we knew the sheep members were south of Geraldton. I presume, of course, that the Minister is of opinion there are thousands of acres of land in the Geraldton district on which nothing has been done. Land has been improved by the people who own it and made productive from the standpoint of the owner. If members read yesterday morning's paper they will have noticed what was being done there in the way of growing lupins, which a few years ago was regarded as a noxious weed, but which is now looked upon as being better than peas for fattening sheep.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: It is the best nitrogenous fertiliser in the world.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The hon. the Leader should know, if he does not know, that there are hundreds of people in the State now fertilising virgin country with superphosphate and they get a growth that is of advantage to the country in its production of wool and wheat. The real reason why a lot of country is not cleared is that it is not possible to get men to work.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You do not pay them enough money, that is why.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Fifteen years ago, in the district represented by the Leader of the House, I had hundreds of acres ring-barked and chopped for 3s. 6d. an acre. Six months ago I let a contract for 9s. 6d. an acre for chopping and ring-barking, and the man who took the contract chopped 400 acres out of 1,000 and then cleared out.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Was he a pommy?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not know; I presume he wanted to come down to Perth to get a Government job, perhaps laying the new tramline in Barrack-street and working 44 hours a week. The fact remains that 20 miles from a railway line there are thousands of acres that 15 years ago could have been rung and chopped for 3s. 6d., and which cost 9s. 6d. to-day. For the land I have, in regard to which I let the contract, I paid 6s. an acre to the Midland Railway Company. Add 9s. 6d. an acre to the price, and of course you cannot do anything but leave it in its virgin state or broadcast it with super and run sheep on it. In my opinion the State has more financial agricultural obligations at the present time than it should be expected to have. Our population of 360,000 people is footing the bill connected with the expenditure of four millions of money in the South-West to establish 2,500 farms. That is a pretty big undertaking. We are certainly getting a rebate of interest, but we only get that rebate for five years, and two years have already gone and nothing has been done. Presumably the interest has been paid to somebody. The interest on four millions of money means a charge on our revenue of a quarter of a million a year. That is surely enough for one venture, and we say nothing of the others that are being carried by 360,000 people. I know this country from A to Z, and if I started to look around I might find half a dozen estates that could be taken. But are we going to jeopardise the freehold security? And are we to let it go out to the world that freehold country in Western Australia can be seized under terms of the kind suggested in the Bill in order that half a dozen people might be dispossessed of their land? Farmers established in this way would never compensate the State for the harm that would be done. Reading carefully through the speech of the Minister, I have come to the conclusion that he has not too much confidence in the Bill. I do not object to land being acquired for closer settlement if hon. members agree that it is necessary to secure estates, and I do not object to land being acquired for closer settlement if there is an equitable board appointed to deal with the resumptions, and if the owner has some say in the valuation of the land to be taken. If an owner is put on the board, and there is a representative of the Crown and an umpire, then the position will be improved. I want to see a proper definition of the land that it is intended to bring within the scope of the Bill. I would like hon. members to walk along Colin-street and see the land adjoining Mr. Lovekin's house. It is a beauty spot and is an asset to West Perth. Under the Bill the board could come along and say that that block was not being put to reasonable use, and that it should be utilised for growing potatoes and cabbages. That is what could happen under the Bill and there would be no redress. I have explained to the House how values have been arrived at and amended from time to time. I want an equitable method of arriving at the values, not that which is provided in the Bill. I also want absolute security for the first mortgagee. If I get an assurance from the Leader of the House that he will agree to amendments of the Bill on these lines, I will vote for the second reading; if not, I have no option, holding the views I do, but to vote against the Bill.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.0]: I have listened with interest to Mr. Holmes's speech, with a good deal of which I am in accord. His remarks seemed to me to have underlying them the assumption that this is a Bill for the purpose of taking land that is being used productively, away from one man and giving it to another or several others. If I thought that was the object of the Bill, or that it would achieve such an object, I would vote against the second reading.

Hon. J. Cornell: Can you give an interpretation of "reasonable use"?

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I will try. Some of these things may be amended in Committee. I will support the second reading because I gave a pledge to my constituents, when I was standing for re-election some three years ago, that I was in favour of a Bill for closer settlement. I intend to fulfil that pledge by supporting the second reading of this measure. The Bill does present certain dangers. I am in favour of some amendments to it. I intend to indicate briefly some of what I consider are the main defects of it. The first defect is that there is no appeal from the board. That is wrong. I realise, after looking at the constitution of the board, that it will be created by the Government and consist of three men—two civil servants, and one having local knowledge. My experience since I have been in Parliament, having watched public affairs more closely than I did before, has taught me that when we made the retiring age of civil servants 60, and gave the Government the option of continuing their employment up to 65 or later, we placed a big stick in the hands of the Government. As I have watched the various Governments preceding that now in power, I have noticed that they do not scruple to use that stick. From the present indications I would say that the present Government have every intention of exceeding what their predecessors did in that respect. I allude, of course, to the first administrative action taken by this Government in retiring the police magistrate, Mr. Walter, and a little while ago to their having dealt with an inspector of police,

and put him back to the position of first class sergeant.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Bill before the House.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I will, Sir. Civil servants are included in this Bill, because two will be on this board. They will be men who will be approaching the retiring age. Knowing the power that Governments have over civil servants when they arrive at the age of 60, when they can be retained if they have done what the Government wish, and have been subservient to them, or can be retired at that age, I feel that this is one of the dangers of the Bill. Members of the board will be subject to political pressure, and there should be an appeal from that board. I hope the Bill will pass the second reading. If it reaches the Committee stage, and those who are more concerned with country lands than I am, will bring forward an amendment providing for an appeal court, preferably in the charge of a judge, or possibly of a country magistrate, I will support such an amendment. Of course, a judge would be better because he is not removable at the will of the Government. Mr. Cornell asked me to define "reasonable use." It is rather difficult to give a definition of those words. I suggest, although it may not entirely remove this difficulty, that after the words "reasonable use" there should be added the words "having regard to its economic value." In this country there is a great deal of land that is most suitable for agriculture. There is other land that is suitable only for the pastoral industry, and other land that is entirely useless. Between the agricultural and pastoral land there is a good deal of intermediate land, which is suitable perhaps more for one pursuit than for another, but can be used to a certain extent for either or both. I should be sorry to see an owner holding land of the intermediate description, land that in his opinion is most suited for pastoral pursuits, deprived of that land. Perhaps he would be a large holder who is doing well, having embarked upon the pastoral industry. I should be disinclined to see him dispossesed of his land in order that half-a-dozen agriculturists may be put upon it, and who may possibly starve upon such land. Very often a small holder cannot make a success of his undertaking, and is pushed out by another man, and ultimately several small holdings come back into one large holding. I should be sorry to see that happen, and that is why I suggest a better definition of the words "reasonable use." I shall be prepared in Committee to move an amendment along these lines. I am inclined to think it will at all events show the opinion and intention of Parliament. On the question of large holdings, I was struck by an interjection of Mr. Brown, who said, "Is it not better that 10 men should be on an estate instead of one?" I do not agree with that. One large holding in possession of one man, who is utilising the land to its greatest economic capacity, is just as sound a proposition as is a large store or factory with its massed production. There may not be 10 men making a profit out of the undertaking, but because a man has a large holding he is able to make his land more profitable. Very often a capable man with a large estate does work it properly, but when he dies it reverts to his sons amongst whom it is cut up, and who cannot work it profitably as a number of holdings. After a time the sons are squeezed out and other people take possession, and ultimately it may revert back to the one large holding. There is no economic loss in a large holding provided it is worked properly.

Hon. T. Moore: The Bill does not deal with land that is worked properly.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: There is no harm in an estate being in the possession of one man, provided it is put to its proper economic use.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The large holder employs labour.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: He works it more profitably and is of great use to the State.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And he pays on a higher income.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: There is the question of the sum to be paid on the resumption of land on the unimproved value. The amount that the owner has paid by way of assessment on his land is taken as prima facie evidence of its value, and he receives the assessment value plus 10 per cent. There is a misunderstanding on the part of members as to the precise meaning of prima facie. It does not mean that this is to be the sole standard valuation of unimproved land. The definition of prima facie in the Standard Dictionary is "the first view or as it first appeared." The standard dictionary gives prima facie evidence, which are the words used in the Bill, as "evidence which, if unexplained or uncontradicted, would establish the facts alleged."

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: You do not give him a chance to work the land because you cut out the appeal.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I would provide an appeal. I regard an appeal board as vital to the Bill. If we pass a provision for an appeal board, and it is not agreed to by another place, I should say, "Perish the Bill." I heard Mr. Holmes say that he might possibly have seen six properties that would come under this Bill as being land not put to its proper use. The President on the floor of this House has said he has never seen any land that was worth cultivating that was not being utilised. I do not profess to be a judge of country, but I have travelled about this State a great deal. I have also

talked with many country people who are judges and are farming their land most successfully. They have told me there is a great deal of land that is not being put to proper productive use. Because I believe their statement, I am in favour of this Bill. A new organisation in London is forming a branch here with the object of inducing young men from Great Britain to bring their capital here. These men will want land. We know what has happened in closer settlement and other land settlement schemes, and how country land has been foisted on to settlers at more than its value. I hope that will not happen under this Bill. Every Government that has been in power of late has said that such a Bill as this is vital to the progress of the State, and I appeal to the House to forward that movement with proper safeguards. I ask them not to let it go abroad that this House is willing to coerce those people who are holding land, and not properly utilising it, by putting it to proper use. Even in the case of people who are not utilising their land properly compensation should be paid. They bought the land as freehold, and should receive the compensation to which they are entitled if their land is resumed. That is why I want an appeal board, so that these people may not be at the mercy of the other board, two-thirds of whose membership will be represented by civil servants. I have nothing to say against civil servants, for I have the greatest respect for them, but I have recognised for the past 10 years that owing to their position in relation to their Ministers they are amenable to pressure. I suppose every one of us in the same circumstances would be amenable in the same way.

Hon. J. Nicholson: All the members of the board are to be Government nominees.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Perhaps that cannot be avoided, but it is all the more reason for having an appeal board. I should like to deal with the two other Closer Settlement Bills that have come before us. A malign influence seems to have followed the efforts of the Mitchell Government in promoting closer settlement. The Bill of two years ago passed through the Assembly and reached this House, and Mr. Lovekin pronounced it out of order on the ground that it amended the Constitution, and should have passed the Assembly on the second and third readings by an absolute majority of members. The President, Sir Edward Wittenoom, ruled that the Bill was in order. Mr. Lovekin dissented from that view and, after a debate, a majority of the members of this Chamber supported Mr. Lovekin. The Bill was therefore ruled out of order. Another Closer Settlement Bill was introduced subsequently, and it was first placed before hon. members of this Chamber. Various amendments and safeguards were introduced, and the Bill was then sent down to another place. There the Speaker found that it was a money Bill and it was again lost. I was interested when Mr. Lovekin on the second day of the present session laid on the Table of the House a constitutional opinion that he had obtained through Lord Burnham from Sir Howard D'Egville who, I understand, is an eminent constitutional lawyer in London, Counsel to the Speaker of the House of Commons and the holder of other high and important positions. We are indebted to Mr. Lovekin for that opinion. I want to point out to the House, however, that in Mr. Lovekin's brief introductory address, when he asked leave to lay the paper on the Table of the House and moved that it should be printed, he fell into an error. That error is likely to mislead members of the House, particularly those who may not have read the opinion of Sir Howard D'Egville, or have studied it closely. In the course of his remarks Mr. Lovekin said that the opinion was important in view of the fact that another Closer Settlement Bill was to be introduced. Undoubtedly the opinion is important because one of the points on which the point of order was raised, and which ultimately decided the fate of the Bill, related to the clause setting out that the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act was incorporated in the Closer Settlement Bill. As there is a similar clause in the present Bill, I beg leave to dissect somewhat the opinion that has been expressed by Sir Howard D'Egville. Mr. Lovekin, when moving that the papers should be tabled, said:—

> During the session before last we had a discussion over a clause in the Closer Settlement Bill placed before us by the then Government. We contended that any member who offered his land to the Government and whose offer was accepted, vacated his seat under the provisions of the Constitution Act.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is right.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I need hardly tell you, Mr. Deputy President, that that is a truism or, in the language of Sairey Gamp addressed to her crony, Betsy Prigg, "Who denies of it?" Mr. Lovekin went on to say:—

> That view was combated very strongly by the then Leader of the House, and he was supported in his views by yourself, Mr. President.

Mr. Lovekin referred, of course, to Sir Edward Wittenoom. I regret to say that that statement was not absolutely true.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why?

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: No member of the House, so far as I can recollect—I have reread "Hansard" and have closely read the speech by Mr. Colebatch—contradicted such a self-evident proposition. Certainly Mr. Colebatch, who had one of the most acute

intellects that ever graced this Chamber, never denied such an obvious fact.

Hon. A. Lovekin: He said that Clause 13 was an amendment.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Mr. Lovekin continued:—

> I moved that your ruling be dissented from and the House did dissent from it. In order to make absolutely certain that we were right, or to be convinced that we were wrong—

That was a very laudable attitude to adopt. I may say that in the following extracts of Mr. Lovekin's speech, I have made a summary of his statement which I believe is correct, although not all of his exact words—

> ——I got the opinion of Sir Howard D'Egville, Counsel to the Speaker of the House of Commons, who has given his opinion in favour of those of us who contended that a member who offered his land to the Government and whose offer was accepted, would vacate his seat as suggested.

If that is all that Mr. Lovekin wanted from Sir Howard D'Egville I believe that he simply wasted his fee.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is what Mr. Colebatch challenged.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I deny that. No doubt, however, the hon. member will have an opportunity to prove what he says. However, I believe that Mr. Lovekin wasted the money he paid for the opinion on this point, because I believe he could have gone to the nearest solicitor's office and asked the opinion of the office boy. I think any boy would have given a perfectly good opinion in saying: "Yes, Mr. Lovekin, you are quite right."

Hon. J. Cornell: The money was his own.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Certainly, that is so. Mr. Lovekin asked Sir Howard D'Egville two questions. They are set out in the paper laid upon the Table of the House.

Hon. J. Cornell: What has this to do with the Bill?

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Another point of order may be raised in regard to the present Bill, and there is the question of the incorporation of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act in the Closer Settlement Bill.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Clause 13 is not in the present Bill.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I must ask hon. members to allow Dr. Saw to proceed.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I would be glad if hon. members did so, because this is an intricate question. Although I usually welcome interjections they may, at the present stage, tend to confuse the House. Mr. Lovekin asked two questions, and the first was:—

> Would a member who offered his land to the Government and whose offer was accepted under Section 6 of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, be deemed to be a contractor within the meaning of Section 32 of the Western Australian Constitution Act, 1899?

To that question Sir Howard D'Egville replied, "Yes." Mr. Lovekin then asked Sir Howard another and much more pertinent question. I am sorry that Mr. Lovekin in his remarks in this Chamber did not allude to that second question more fully.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The President wanted to stop me speaking on that.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Then I am sorry the hon. member did not have an opportunity to fully express his opinion. The second question was:—

> If the reply to the first question is in the affirmative, then is it necessary, in order to relieve a member from the consequences attaching to such a contract, that the Closer Settlement Bill (Clause 13 especially) should be passed by an absolute majority of both Houses as provided by Section 73 of the Constitution Act 1899?

This is Sir Howard D'Egville's reply to that question:—

> The answer to the first question, being in the affirmative, in order to answer the second question, it is necessary to consider to what extent the terms of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act are incorporated in the Closer Settlement Bill. Prima facie, save where there is a manifest discrepancy, every section of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act (including Section 6), is to be read into the Closer Settlement Bill. An analysis, however, of the clauses of the Closer Settlement Bill, especially Clauses 12 and 13, reveal several indications, that no such general incorporation could be held to be the intention of the Legislature, and, in my view, these indications taken together are sufficient to restrict the incorporation of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act to those sections dealing with the disposal of the land by the Government and the powers of the Land Purchase Board.

Sir Howard D'Egville then gave his reasons for his view and finally said:—

> It follows, therefore, that Clause 13 of the Closer Settlement Bill does not, in my opinion, include in its application Section 6 of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act and so operate to relieve a member of Parliament entering into a contract with the Government under the latter section from disqualification under the provisions of Section 32 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1899. If, contrary to my view, Clause 13 of the Closer Settlement Bill did cover a transaction under Section 6 of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, I am of opinion that it would constitute an amendment to Section 32 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act 1899, and that, consequently, to become law the Bill would, in its second and third readings, have to be passed by an absolute majority of both Houses.

You, Sir, will notice that the latter sentence is governed by the phrase, "If, contrary to my view."

Hon. H. Stewart: It would be easy to get someone of a contrary view.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Sir Howard D'Egville's opinion, therefore, is that Section 6 of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act was not incorporated in the Closer Settlement Bill; that the Closer Settlement Bill did not amend the Constitution Act; that the Bill need not be carried by an absolute majority of both Houses of Parliament; that the Bill was in order and the ruling of the President was correct; that the House was wrong in dissenting from the President's ruling.

Hon. H. Stewart: That is your interpretation of Sir Howard D'Egville's opinion?

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: That is so. I have submitted this opinion of Sir Howard D'Egville to three eminent lawyers in Perth and they assure me that my interpretation is correct, and that the Bill was perfectly in order, according to Sir Howard D'Egville's opinion. I do not think any member of the House would gather these important conclusions from Mr. Lovekin's statement that Sir Howard D'Egville gave his opinion as he indicated. I do not wish to say any more on this point. I merely desired to draw the attention of the House to this, because I regard it as an important constitutional point. Many members of the House have not taken the opportunity to read the opinion of Sir Howard D'Egville. I do not ask them to accept my word, but to study that opinion for themselves. I think they will find I am right in my assertion that the opinion of Sir Howard D'Egville does not bear the construction that Mr. Lovekin indicated in his brief remarks when moving that the papers should be laid upon the Table of the House. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. I hope the House will realise its responsibilities and will pass the second reading of the Bill, and do what it can to assure what I am confident is the object of the Bill, that people who own land shall not hang up and retard the development of the country but will be forced to relinquish their holdings with proper compensation paid to them for the land.

On motion by Hon. W. H. Kitson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.29 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 17th September, 1924.

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

QUESTION — WATER OVERFLOW, AVON AND MUNDARING.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: 1, What are the Avon River overflow gaugings at Northam 1914 to 1923? 2, What are the yearly overflow gaugings at Mundaring weir during the period 1914 to 1923?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM replied: 1, Avon River overflow gaugings at Northam, 1914 to 1923, were as under: 1914, five million gallons; 1915, 60,089 million gallons; 1916, 21,304 million gallons; 1917, 211,295 million gallons; 1918, 14,201 million gallons; 1919, 2,683 million gallons; 1920, 34,202 million gallons; 1921, 15,708 million gallons; 1922, 7,891 million gallons; 1923, 44,861 million gallons. 2, The yearly overflow gaugings at Mundaring Weir, 1914 to 1923, were as under: 1914, nil; 1915, 15,400 million gallons; 1916, 5,443 million gallons; 1917, 38,782 million gallons; 1918, 9,647 million gallons; 1919, 2,426 million gallons; 1920, 19,066 million gallons; 1921, 5,190 million gallons; 1922, 2,177 million gallons; 1923, 20,302 million gallons.

QUESTIONS (2)—WOOROLOO SANATORIUM.

Food Supplies.

Mr. MARSHALL asked Hon. S. W. Munsie, Honorary Minister): 1, Is he aware that dissatisfaction exists at the Wooroloo Sanatorium in regard to the supply of bread, meat and fish, these commodities being of inferior quality when served up to the patients? 2, Will he have a strict investigation made immediately to ascertain if the dissatisfaction is justified, and have it remedied if necessary? 3, Will he consider the proposal to purchase beef and mutton on the hoof, and slaughter it at the institu-