

doubt that when the line is constructed, blocks will be quickly applied for and occupied. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [10.38]: I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill. I know the country well; it is fair wheat-growing land. A report from a farm some 14 miles south of where the line will run came to hand today, and the owners of the property advised that the crops, as far as they had gone, had yielded eight bags to the acre. The land through which the proposed railway will run is similar, and the rainfall statistics, which have been accurately kept, show that the average, spread over 11 years, has been 14 inches. Of course in the drought year only three inches fell, which had the effect of somewhat reducing the average. The crops in the district this year are very good, and with reasonable rainfall they may be expected to continue satisfactory.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time, and passed.

BILL—WICKEPIN RACECOURSE.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [10.43] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is to permit the Wickepin Race Club to dispose of their present racecourse on Wickepin agricultural lot 3821, containing some 106 acres on Reserve 13036, and to expend the money raised by that sale in the purchase of another property, adjoining the town of Wickepin, for a racecourse. Races have been held at Wickepin, I believe, for many years past; and the existing racecourse was established a long time before there was any railway to the district. When the railway went to the present town of Wickepin, it established a centre there which is some seven miles distant from the present racecourse site. The Wickepin people have continued to hold their races at this distant place, but of course it is very inconvenient and unsuitable for the purpose. The present intention is to sell the old site, and invest the money in a new site in the district. The Wickepin residents have asked the Government to permit them to sell the present site. Without a Bill of this kind it is impossible to effect a sale, the land being a reserve for the purpose. The object of this measure, therefore, is to permit the Wickepin people to establish a racecourse on a site adjoining the town and handy for the purpose. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time, and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [10.46]: In accordance with the intimation I gave earlier in the evening, I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 3 o'clock to-morrow afternoon.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.47 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th December, 1919.

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

BILL—TRAFFIC.

The Governor's Amendment.

The SPEAKER: I have received the following Message from His Excellency the Governor—

His Excellency the Governor desires an amendment to be made in the Traffic

Bill, in consequence of the amendment whereby licenses in the metropolitan area will be granted by the Minister, as follows—

Clause 19: Add a paragraph as follows:—Provided also that such proportionate part as aforesaid of the license fee paid in respect of any license renewed by the Minister as the licensing authority in the metropolitan area shall be accounted for by the local authority in receipt thereof, and paid by such local authority to the Minister, and shall be disposed of under Section 13.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Amendment—Clause 19: Add a paragraph as follows:—Provided also that such proportionate part as aforesaid of the license fee paid in respect of any license renewed by the Minister as the licensing authority in the metropolitan area shall be accounted for by the local authority in receipt thereof, and paid by such local authority to the Minister, and shall be disposed of under Section 13.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The municipal year begins on the 1st November, and ends on the 31st October of the following year. Under the Traffic Bill the licenses which have been issued and are still being issued by the Perth city council and other local authorities, will end on the 30th June, 1920. The local authorities are taking a full year's license fee. The licensing by the Minister will start from the 1st July, 1920. At that date there will still be four months of unexpired licenses issued by the local authorities. The Minister will be prepared to issue licenses for the full year from the 1st July, but will require to recover from the local authorities the unexpired license fees. This amendment, which has come from the Governor, will provide for that. I move—

That the amendment be made.

Question put and passed; the Governor's amendment made.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly transmitted to the Council.

QUESTIONS (2)—POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Methods at Bicton.

Mr. LUTEY (for Mr. Jones) asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is he aware that the police "bailed-up" a two-up school at Bicton on Sunday last at the point of the revolver? 2, Is it a fact that shots were

fired by them at the retreating men? 3, Is two-up the sort of offence that it requires firearms to suppress? 4, Does the department intend to extend the same practice to poker and bridge parties, race-course and other betting, and the stock exchange?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: 1, 2, 3, and 4, I have not been able to confirm the statements set out in the hon. member's queries. The cases are now before the police court and the evidence will doubtless disclose the full information required by the hon. member.

Minimum Rates of Pay.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, In view of the recent award to railway men, is it the intention of the Government to give the police force at least the same minimum rates of pay? 2, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1 and 2, A request has been received from the police association to have their pay and allowances reviewed, and the matter is now under consideration.

QUESTION — SEWERAGE SYSTEM, TENEMENTS NOT CONNECTED.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Works: 1, How many city tenements have not yet been connected with the sewerage system? 2, The names of the owners of these properties? 3, The reason why special consideration is being shown in not compelling them to instal the service? 4, In view of the recent breakdown in the pan system, does he not think it would be better to insist on all premises being connected with the deep drainage?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, (a) Within sewerage areas, Perth 133. (b) Within sewerage areas, Fremantle 26. 2, (a) Fremantle.—The Harbour Trust, Government of Western Australia, Railway Department, Fremantle Council, Tramway Trust, Stone and Burt, W. Padbury, Wills & Co., and others. (b) Perth.—Perth City Council, Public Works Department, Government of Western Australia, and about 50 private owners. 3, Many of the properties controlled by Government departments have been resumed for contemplated public works, and may be demolished at any time. With regard to private owners, the difficulty in financing cost owing to war conditions. 4, Steps are being taken to complete connection of all properties in sewerage areas, each case being taken by itself and the circumstances fully considered.

QUESTION—POTATO SHORTAGE.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (without notice) asked the Premier: Seeing that for the purpose of keeping up the price of local butter the Government took action to prevent butter

being imported into the State, will the Government take action to prevent the export of potatoes until the residents of the State can obtain potatoes at a reasonable rate.

The PREMIER replied: We did not prevent the importation of butter for the purpose of keeping up the price of the local article. Sufficient butter, including local butter, was in the State, and therefore it was unnecessary to import further butter, especially when other goods were being shut out for want of shipping space. We certainly desired that the local butter should be sold, but our action was not taken with a view to affecting the price. Just as we control the use of the shipping space from East to West so, I presume, the authorities in the Eastern States control the use of shipping space from the West to the East. Therefore I cannot prevent the export of potatoes. In the case of butter coming West we were able to make an arrangement, but we could not make a similar arrangement in the case of any commodity going East.

MOTION—STATE CHILDREN DEPARTMENT.

Evidence of Select Committee.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [4.45]: I move—

That the Clerk of the House be authorised to produce the evidence taken before the select committee appointed to inquire into the State Children and Charities Department before any Royal Commission which may be appointed to inquire into the same question.

Question put and passed.

BILL—ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.47]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. SPEAKER: I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that it has been found necessary to make a consequential amendment altering and limiting the title of the Bill owing to a clause having been deleted from the Bill. A consequential amendment to limit it should have been made in Committee, but that omission has now been made good and the alteration effected.

Question put and passed.

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

BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and returned to the Council with an amendment.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.50]: Although this is a comparatively small Bill it deals with matters of a highly controversial nature. I venture to say it will be impossible for this House in the time at its disposal to do justice to some of the provisions of the measure. The first four clauses, perhaps, can be passed in Committee, because they contain very little matter of a debatable nature, but that part of the Bill dealing with pastoral leases members will agree it will be impossible at such short notice, and having regard to the interests involved, to do justice to. I regret that the position has arisen.

The Premier: I do not mind.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No matter what views one may hold with regard to the legislation passed during 1917 concerning our pastoral leases and the effect of that legislation as disclosed by subsequent events, it cannot be denied that the matter is of a highly debatable character. The fact that we have this clause in the Bill is due to the manner in which the House did its work in 1917. It was on the last day of the session that an amendment to the Land Act dealing with pastoral leases was passed through this Chamber.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Forced through this Chamber.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It took place in the small hours of the morning. Already we see results which Parliament at the time never intended to be brought about. The Act governing the conditions of tenure and the holding of pastoral areas is not what Parliament intended. I would be justified in saying that there were in the House at the time some members who were not unconscious of the fact that Parliament was passing something which it did not intend to pass.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We tried our best to block it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The late Attorney General was the principal agent in securing the passage of that amending Bill. Trained lawyer and King's Counsel as he is, he ought to have been in a position to correctly advise this House as to the interpretation that could be placed upon the various clauses the House was called upon to deal with. It is impossible for a layman to thoroughly analyse amendments of this kind and decide what they mean. I have spent some time in reading Clause 5 to-day. It is difficult for me as a layman to thoroughly understand that all that one wants to secure is embodied in this provision. If we were to deal with these pastoral clauses now we should probably find next year when they come to stand the test, as the Bill of 1917 did, that we had passed something we did not intend to pass, and had complicated rather than rectified the errors made in the past and intensified the position that exists to-day.

The Premier: I do not agree with that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I think they did intend to pass it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The clear intention of Parliament in 1917 was that no person should be beneficially interested, whether as a shareholder in a company or otherwise, in more than one million acres in any one division.

Mr. Johnston: We meant in the whole State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But the Bill was so drawn that we find there is no limit whatsoever to the area which may be held by any individual even in any division. He may hold an interest in a limited liability company operating a larger extent of pastoral country in any division or in the whole State. The Attorney General: Only as a shareholder.

Hon. P. COLLIER: As a shareholder in a company, but we know what that means.

Mr. Gardiner: That was a direct violation of the intention of this House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: A pastoralist can turn himself into a limited liability company and take in three or four others so as to get the necessary number of shares required by the Act, and can acquire an unlimited acreage of country. The matter was fully discussed in the House. The clear intention of Parliament was that no man should be interested in any way either as owner, shareholder, or otherwise in more than one million acres. The House thought that by the inclusion of the words "beneficiary interest" it would safeguard the situation as it affected companies or the individual.

Mr. Gardiner: A lot of them have dodged that.

Sir H. B. Lefroy: The hon. member is quite correct.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but it turned out otherwise. We were advised by responsible Ministers, who were acting on the advice of the Crown Solicitor, that the position was that which was intended by the House. During the past two years, up to the beginning of the present session, something like 22 pastoral companies have been formed in this State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If we pass this it will limit it to some extent.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Act of 1917 allowed 12 months to the then lessees in which to take advantage of the Act, and to apply for a new lease.

Mr. Gardiner: I think an extension was granted.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In 1918 a further amendment was made extending the time for 12 months after the proclamation of peace, which is still unexpired. The time in which the leaseholders might avail themselves of the 1917 Act, in order to apply for a new lease, has not yet expired. I do not know if the proclamation has been issued. Many of the lessees of pastoral areas took advantage of the 1917 Act at once, and decided to apply for new leases. I suppose the great majority have availed themselves of that Act. They have formed themselves into companies:

it got around as to what the intention of Parliament was.

Mr. Smith: They did not form themselves into companies to evade the Act.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think they did.

Mr. Johnston: They did in some cases.

Mr. Smith: I do not think any of these companies hold a million acres.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think they do.

Mr. Gardiner: Do not make any mistake about that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think the hon. member will find that the incentive to form a company lay in the desire to evade the Act.

Mr. Smith: Many of them are old stations.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Many of these are over a million acres.

The Attorney General: New companies cannot hold more than a million acres, but the old ones can.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Many of the holders of these leases have taken advantage of the Act, but others have not done so. Because they have not done so, believing that they have nearly 12 months' grace in order to decide whether they should come under the Act or not, they will be limited to an area of 500,000 acres. It will not be possible after the Act is passed to acquire more than that area. To that extent they would be penalised, because they had not taken advantage of the Act, whilst others who did so can acquire and hold an unlimited area. In that respect, therefore, while believing in the smaller area that it might be permissible to hold, I consider it would be an injustice to some of those who have not taken advantage of the provision simply because they thought they had another 12 months to decide the matter.

The Honorary Minister: They did not want to pay double rents.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Many of them probably did take that view of the matter, but they were perfectly entitled to do so. The amendment Act has given them the right to decide within 12 months.

The Honorary Minister: I do not say they are doing anything wrong.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They did what was human; they tried to avoid payment of double rent. They held off until the last moment. This Bill will apply to those who hold leases to-day and have not already taken advantage of the 1917 Act. It will limit them to 500,000 acres, and in that respect it may work an injustice. One needs only to touch on a phase or two of this Bill to realise its importance, and I regret that the House has not had an opportunity of dealing with the measure earlier in the session. Subject to doing justice to all concerned, we should endeavour as soon as possible to rectify the errors committed in 1917.

Mr. Gardiner: We were distinctly wrong in the passing of that Act.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Any legislation which we might pass now to adjust the situation could not be made retrospective. We cannot take away any rights acquired under the 1917 Act. But the Minister ought to exercise all

the powers he possesses under that Act, in order to refuse transfers. All his powers under this Act ought to be exercised in order to see that the intention and will of Parliament are carried out. It is most regrettable that we have practically given away vast areas of our pastoral lands for another 20 years under conditions which Parliament never intended.

Mr. Maley: But subject to appraisalment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I refer to the question of areas. The matter of appraisalment stands as the House intended. The areas which may be held, however, are not what the House intended or desired. We were misled in the last sitting of the 1917 session; and the responsibility for that must rest largely, if not entirely, upon the then Attorney General, who was the principal legal adviser when the Act was going through this Chamber.

Mr. Johnston: He was the facilitator that time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He facilitated matters in a way beneficial to interests which, in my opinion, he desired to benefit.

The Minister for Works: That is a most serious thing to say.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I go further and say that the then member for Gascoyne, Mr. Butcher, entered this House, as I believe, for the specific purpose, a legitimate purpose no doubt, of seeing that the interests of the pastoralists were conserved in any amending legislation that might be passed.

The Minister for Works: There is a difference between conserving interests and robbing the country.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Anyhow, Mr. Butcher did not stand for re-election after the amendment Act had gone through. He was a member of this House for only a very short period. When that Act had passed, he retired from the scene. I believe it is a fact that the firm of solicitors of which the late Attorney General is a member are solicitors, or were solicitors, for Mr. Butcher.

Mr. Nairn: But I think the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) agreed with the opinion of the then Attorney General.

Hon. T. Walker: What opinion?

Mr. COLLIER: I do not think the member for Kanowna did agree with that opinion. A reference to the "Hansard" report will show that the measure, as finally passed, was opposed by this side. I believe that two members then sitting on this side of the House were appointed on a committee in connection with the measure.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No. They were not appointed. They made themselves a committee.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Whether they were appointed or not, they got on to a committee somehow. The members of that committee appointed by the other side of the House were, I believe, the then Attorney General—

Mr. Nairn: And the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley).

Hon. P. COLLIER: The committee discussed the matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was a committee consisting of the member for Leonora, the member for Pilbara, the then member for Guildford, and the then Attorney General.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. Mr. W. D. Johnson, Mr. Underwood, Mr. Foley, and Mr. R. T. Robinson by some means became a committee or appointed themselves a committee, to consider the Bill.

The Minister for Works: We thought they were a properly authorised committee.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but they were not. They came to a decision which recommended the measure to the House, and the House thought it was all right. But it was all wrong, and the House ought to take the first possible opportunity of rectifying the error which was then committed. It has been allowed now to go on for two years. I do not know the law, but I think that rights acquired under that legislation cannot be taken away. All we can do is to safeguard the future. If that can be done under this Bill without causing injustice, there is no reason why we should not go on with the measure.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.10]: I agree with the remarks of previous speakers on this Bill. It is not right that a measure of this importance should be brought down at the last moment, and the Government will be well advised to withdraw what I may term the pastoral clauses of the measure until such time as more consideration can be given to them. The Bill does not appear to have been carefully considered. The fixing of a limit of 500,000 acres for the whole of this State is not right. There should be differentiation between the various districts. In the Gascoyne district, for instance, 250,000 acres would be ample; whereas in other parts of the State 500,000 acres would be too little. The plains of the Gascoyne river consist of about 100 miles by 80 miles, which means an area of about five million acres. To divide that area up into stations of 500,000 acres each would limit the area to 10 holders, whereas there are already 15 stations on it. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) has asked why a man should not be allowed to hold one million or even two million acres so long as he stocks the country. But a station of one million acres would have only one homestead and would employ hardly more men than a station of 250,000 acres. Therefore the cutting up of an area of one million acres into four stations of 250,000 acres each would mean four homesteads, four shearing sheds, and four times as many men employed. If we are going to populate our North-West, we must have stations of smaller size; and it is absolutely necessary to populate our North-West, from a defence point of view and also for the sake of the development of the State. There should be a limit for each district. For the Gas-

coyne I would suggest a maximum of 250,000 acres, for the eastern district one of 500,000, and for the Kimberleys one of a million acres. The report which is expected to be made by Mr. Canning shortly would be of great assistance to the Government in deciding on the maximum areas for grazing purposes to be allowed in the various portions of the State. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) appears to think that it does not matter how much land a man holds so long as he improves it. But I consider that it is far better for 10 separate holders to be making £2,000 or £3,000 a year each than for one holder to be making £20,000 or £30,000 per annum. If we want to populate our northern areas, we shall have to do something tending in that direction. I hope that during the recess the Government will go into the question with the various members interested in the pastoral industry, and also ascertain the views of the pastoralists themselves, and, further, the views of people not directly concerned in pastoral pursuits but with a knowledge of the subject. Thus the Government will be able to obtain a consensus of opinion, which will enable them to bring down a more suitable measure next session. I certainly consider that those clauses of this Bill which deal with pastoral leaseholds ought to be withdrawn for the present.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East) [5.15]: I hope the Government will persevere to carry this Bill through, even if it means sitting another week. I believe it is of greater importance to the country that Parliament should sit another week to pass a Bill like this than that it should adjourn to leave things as they are at present. When the measure dealing with pastoral leases was before us in 1917, I moved "That the Bill be read a second time this day six months." As the leader of the Opposition said, the Government of the day came down with a set purpose to hand over the assets of this country to a few people by extending their leases, which had 10 years to run, for an additional period of 20 years. The policy of the Labour Government, prior to leaving office, was that the whole of the pastoral leases should be classified and divided into smaller areas to be thrown open when the leases expired and, if the Farmers and Settlers' Association had been interested in and desirous of looking after the affairs of the country, instead of seeking a little temporary personal gain, it would have been carried out. That was a right policy in the interests of the State. In the northern portion of this State we have a very small population; the danger to Australia lies in the northern portion. I pointed out at the time that the only opportunity we had to increase the population of the North was by subdividing these large areas of a million and a half or a million acres into smaller areas in order to get greater settlement. On that occasion I made a prophecy and though I very rarely quote what I have stated in the House previously, it is well to do so on this occasion because, according to the Government, my prophecy has been ful-

filled. According to the "Hansard" report, I said—

What will be the position? Much of the land will be transferred to the American Meat Trust. If the Bill passes, the American Meat Trust will get vast areas of the land at once, and in years to come the people of the State will find that this Parliament sold them.

We now have evidence brought down by the Government that the last Parliament sold the people. I did not know that my prophecy would come true at such an early date. In my opinion, this clause does not affect the present holders. It only deals with any person who wishes to transfer his interest. No new person will be able to acquire above 500,000 acres of land if this clause is passed. Immediately the additional 20 years was given to the pastoralists, a number of them sold out at a large profit. They increased the prices of their holdings considerably immediately they got the extension of 20 years' tenure. The question was discussed a few weeks ago in the Legislative Council, and some of the statements made there were astonishing. There was no reason for the increased values except that the Government of the day handed over the extended tenure to a few people before they were justly entitled to it. It is not many years since the late Lord Forrest tested a case in the court to ascertain the position regarding these areas. The court laid down the position, and yet the Government two years ago overrode the decision of the court and gave lessees a 20 years' extension of their leases. This action was detrimental to the State. It would be far better if the Government asked members to remain here for another month to ensure that these areas are subdivided into smaller holdings. The clause states "No person shall acquire," etc. Those who hold leases to-day have already acquired. The previous Act gave them 12 months after the war in which to take up their leases under the conditions laid down in the Act. But no transferee will be able to acquire. Holders will not be able to rob the State by selling out at a largely increased value a million acres of the State's property. They will be able to sell only 500,000 acres and thereby subdivision will occur automatically without interfering with their position in any way whatever. If they want to get away, let them go; the State will get the benefit. If they want to remain, they can retain their holdings as they exist to-day. I hope the Premier will stick to the Bill and will push it through because, by doing so, he will accomplish one of the finest things that has been done for the State for some years. He will remedy the wrong done by the Government in 1917. He was a member of the Government in 1917, and no doubt he has weighed this matter very carefully. He would not bring in a Bill, which really is condemnatory of a previous Government with which he was associated, unless he had realised the injustice done to the State under that measure. I am confident the Pre-

mier has well weighed the matter and realised the urgent necessity for action. Parliament, as representing the people, should not allow this sort of thing to continue for probably another 12 months, when a good many of these holdings may be transferred, because we are afraid to sit here for another two or three days. The Premier has acted wisely in introducing the Bill and I am confident it has received his careful consideration. In 1917 it was pointed out that the well known firm of Vestey Bros were trying to obtain interests in this State. It has been said since that they obtained the right over $4\frac{1}{2}$ million acres. I would point out to those who claim to be patriotic, and who think it necessary that the first thought should be for the British Empire, that Mr. Vestey of this firm left England and went to America in order to avoid war taxes. Yet some members would have us continue a policy which would benefit a firm of that description. I compliment the Premier on having introduced this Bill and I hope members will assist him to get it through.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [5.23]: I regard this Bill as one of the most important which has come before us this session. We have a very large area of land in the north and, according to the varying conditions of soil and water, some of it is suitable for cattle and some for sheep. If we do not pass this Bill, is it not possible that a number of people will take advantage of the Act of 1917, and thereby gain advantages which we are now in a position to prevent? We realise that there are disadvantages to the State in consequence of the Act of 1917. The pastoralists have taken advantage of the Act in a way we never contemplated. Will not they continue to do so if we do not pass this Bill; seeing that their attention has thus been directed to it? It would be advisable to pass this measure right away. Generally speaking, 500,000 acres is too much for one holding, though it might be fair enough in some centres. I should like to know how many sheep 500,000 acres in one holding would carry.

The Honorary Minister: Fifteen acres per sheep on the average.

Mr. HARRISON: If so, a family could do remarkably well on 500,000 acres and even less. I trust the Bill will be passed at once. If it is not, there are men who assuredly will take advantage of the existing Act.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [5.25]: I do not wish to labour the question. There are four clauses in the Bill and it is very important that they should be passed. The fifth clause is certainly debatable. Members must not run away with the idea that the Act of 1917 was all bad. The compulsory improvement conditions and the provision for rent to be determined after inspection, so that we shall control the amount of rent paid, were good features of the Act. Members should remember that re-

appraisement is provided for every 15 years, so that we do not lose control. Some members must have forgotten that there are advantages as well as disadvantages in connection with that Act. I know what the intention of Parliament was, and I think it is my duty to see that the spirit of that Act is given effect to if we can possibly do so by legislation. This question has caused me a good deal of anxiety. I have thought over it for months. We are not entitled to injure any men who went out into the back country and pioneered and developed it. I made that statement when the original measure was under discussion here, and I repeat it now. But it is the duty of Parliament to see that the aggregation of pastoral areas is not continued. I am not in a position to prove it but I believe that, in the Kimberleys, land is being acquired in large areas by people outside this State and not always under the same name, and I believe it will be found that they are operating in conjunction. This sort of thing is undesirable. The House is perfectly justified in saying that the business with our pastoral leases shall be done in Western Australia. It is so in connection with other leases. A man living in Adelaide, Melbourne or in England may acquire any number of stations here and the business is done outside of Western Australia, so that the advantages to this State are nothing like what would accrue if the whole business were centred in this State. The Bill clearly refers to land acquired by any person from now onwards, that is land of over 500,000 acres acquired by transfer or direct from the Crown. I have some powers under the Act which I shall exercise at my discretion until some measure is passed by Parliament. I do not propose to press this clause, but I wish it to be distinctly understood that we shall bring down a Bill next session to deal with this question.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you want us to take charge of it for you?

The PREMIER: The hon. member can if he likes. A great deal of consideration has been given to this matter, but more consideration is necessary. In the meantime, we shall have a classification of some of the districts by us. I shall bring down a Bill not with a view to injuring any man—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I shall make you vote against your own Bill now.

Mr. Pilkington: The Government have power to refuse transfers.

The PREMIER: Yes, and I propose to exercise the power. Furthermore I shall see to it that next year a Bill is brought down to cover the whole question, and it shall have for its object the enforcement of the conditions which have been imposed. Something has been said about the reservation of areas for returned soldiers. We have undertaken to settle returned soldiers on pastoral lands, and they are to have the first opportunity of selecting. We have a committee engaged at the present time on the work of dealing with the question of settlement in the Kimberleys. We have also a committee dealing with the

question of the settlement of returned soldiers in these areas, and we hope to get useful information from both those committees. I think I was justified in holding back the selection of these areas because soldiers had not been provided for, and also because we wanted to get fuller information for the purpose of subdividing the land. I know there are some members who consider that the pastoral areas should be cut up into small holdings. That, however, is not advisable.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3, Cost of survey:

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 2 be struck out.

The subclause was inserted by mistake. If those words are permitted to remain in the Bill it will mean that we shall not in the future be able to accept interest on the cost of survey.

Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5, Pastoral land:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I must admit at once that this clause is very important in its bearing upon the future acquisition of pastoral lands. It is a clause about which opinions may differ. The principle which runs through it is as far as possible not to interfere with those who have already acquired rights under previous legislation. I must candidly admit, however, that the rights of sale now possessed by them would be restricted. This is a matter which could be more safely thrashed out with calm consideration during the recess in conference with all parties who are interested. The drafting of a clause of this nature is not an easy matter. I must take the responsibility for this, but I am well aware of the difficulties which exist.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is about the clearest clause I have read here for a long time.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I accept the compliment from the hon. member. It has been found possible to drive a coach and four through the legislation which was passed by this House two years ago. I have myself discovered that it would be possible to drive a whole menagerie through my own Bill. It may be, too, that if we pass a measure of this description without the fullest consideration a mistake may occur. If the clause under discussion goes through, there are four amendments it will be necessary to make. That shows what may be done by passing a Bill of this description. I will ask hon. members to turn to paragraph (b) of the last clause of the Bill, wherein we provide that

a shareholder in an incorporated company, holding pastoral land, shall be deemed to be beneficially interested in such land to the extent only of an acreage proportionate to his interests in the share capital of the company. That looks perfectly simple. When we speak of the capital of a company we speak of the nominal capital. That might be £100,000, but the issued capital might be £10,000.

Hon. P. Collier: A company can fix a high nominal capital, even a million.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, and thereby reduce the shareholder's proportion. However, I do not think that any harm will be done by allowing the clause to stand over for further consideration. If this House plainly intimates its desire that the Minister for Lands shall strictly exercise the power given to him under Section 142 of the Land Act, 1898, he can refuse to approve of any transfer. Section 142 relates to transfers, and it says—

"Subject to the restrictions contained in Parts 8 and 9 of this Act any holder of a lease or license under this Act, except licenses to quarry, and licenses under Part 11 thereof, may transfer all his right, title, and interest in his land provided the Minister's approval in writing is obtained."

Therefore they must get the approval of the Minister in writing. So the Minister can refuse to approve a transfer, and no court could force him to approve it.

Hon. P. Collier: If a strong case were put up for a transfer it would be hard to refuse it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is so. It is a moral difficulty, not a legal one. I am not trying to block the clause.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, but you are putting up reasons why it should be thrown out.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, only why it should be further considered. I have simply made my observations on the legal aspect of the Bill.

Mr. PILKINGTON: This clause is very important and is likely to have all sorts of effects not contemplated. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) has been considering this question for at least two years in connection with the old Bill, and even to-day he has not realised what would be the extraordinary result if that which he says was the intention of the House had been embodied in the Bill. I understand that it was intended that a shareholder of a company should be regarded as a beneficial owner of a lease owned by the company. See what would happen: Suppose I were a partner in a leasehold of a million acres. My partner, without my knowledge or consent, buys a few shares in Dalgaty & Co., who hold a certain lease. My whole interest at once becomes liable to forfeiture. Take another case: I am the owner of bank shares in, say, the Union Bank. I become a leaseholder of a million acres in accordance with the Act. Without my knowledge or consent the Union Bank forecloses mortgage on lease-

hold property, whereupon the whole of my interest becomes liable to forfeiture under the old Act. It is merely an illustration of the danger of this class of legislation.

The Premier: Will you during recess lend a hand to make it right?

Mr. PILKINGTON: Certainly. I hope that during recess the Government will let hon. members know the nature of the Bill they propose to bring forward, in order that anyone who can do so may lend a hand to make it right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have had to-day one of the most remarkable scenes I have witnessed in the House. We have had the Attorney General giving reasons why an important clause, containing the whole principle of the Bill, should be thrown out.

The Attorney General: For further consideration.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is generally supposed that, not only the Minister who introduces a Bill, but the whole Cabinet, first give the Bill due consideration. The Premier, when introducing the Estimates, said he proposed to bring down a Land Bill before the close of the session. So from that day to the present time Cabinet have had opportunity for considering the Bill.

The Premier: It has taken some consideration.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The question that concerns me and others is, are we going to hand over the whole of our North to a few people?

The Premier: No, we are not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am sorry the Minister for Mines is not in his place to assist his chief in getting the clause through. I should like to remind that Minister of what he said on a previous occasion.

The Premier: You cannot read "Hansard" of this session.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no occasion to do so, but I will read "Hansard" of another session. Speaking in the House on the 21st March, 1917, the present Minister for Mines pointed to the necessity for increasing the population of the North. I do not know that it is necessary that I should read his speech, but I notice from the "Hansard" report that he and the Attorney General got to loggerheads over the extent of land held by Vestey Bros. Only to-day the Premier said that Vestey Bros. would have no claim on any lease in 1928. Of course that was wrong. Parliament in 1917 perpetrated one of the greatest scandals we have ever had in Western Australia.

Mr. Hudson: You refer to the pastoral leases?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, and Parliament did not do it blindfold. It was even attempted to make the area which a man could hold 2,000,000 acres. The Government were defeated, and the present Premier was amongst the minority. The proposal was then reduced to 1,000,000 acres. Those on this side, and members of the Country party, voted in opposition to the Government. The division is here given in "Hansard," the

ayes being in favour of reducing the area to 1,000,000 acres and the noes in favour of a man being permitted to hold 2,000,000 acres. The division was as follows:—

Amendment (Hon. W. C. Angwin's) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	20
Noes	13

Majority for .. . 7

AYES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Carpenter
Mr. Chesson
Mr. Collier
Mr. Foley
Mr. Green
Mr. Harrison
Mr. E. B. Johnston
Mr. Lambert
Mr. Mullany
Mr. Munsie

Mr. Nairn
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Thomson
Mr. Troy
Mr. Walker
Mr. O'Lughlen
(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Allen
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Connolly
Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Hickmott
Mr. Lefroy

Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Robinson
Mr. Veryard
Mr. Willmott
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hardwick
(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Mr. Butcher, who voted with the "noes," came into Parliament expressly to get the Bill through, and had no hesitation in resigning soon after it went through. The interests of the State were of no importance.

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is true. The interests of the State were of no importance, and I daresay influence has been at work in regard to the present Bill since its introduction yesterday.

The Premier: It has not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Otherwise the Premier would not say to hon. members, "I have no objection. If you throw it out I will bring it down next year." Before next year the persons interested will have transferred their land to others.

The Premier: If they did that it would be all right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have expended in the North a very large sum of money in erecting the Wyndham Freezing Works, which have considerably increased the value of properties up there. We know that Vestey Bros., who hold the freezing works at Darwin, are encroaching on this State. It is rumoured that Vestey Bros. have an eye on the Wyndham Freezing Works.

The Premier: They will want a large purse for that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If they can get hold of a large area of land on which stock is grown for the purpose of supplying these freezing works they can push the Government into a corner, and tell them they must sell at a certain price, otherwise they will send their stock to Darwin. There will be nothing to block them.

The Premier: Oh no!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In my opinion Vestey Bros. will yet secure the Government freezing works at Wyndham for a small sum of money, or will force the Government into giving them their stock at a price at which it will be impossible for the Government to make the business pay. I am surprised at the Premier being led away by the Attorney General and one or two other members. Unless we pass the clause already in the Bill we shall not be protected in the future. I advise hon. members to vote for it. There is a danger of a great injustice being done to the people, and I would not be fulfilling my duty if I did not endeavour to prevent that.

The Premier: We will take the right action.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We want it to be taken now. Under the Act the Premier must transfer up to a million acres if called upon to do so.

Mr. Hudson: But he need not grant that area.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That sort of thing is impossible. If the Premier tried to do that his supporters would kick him from one end of the State to the other. I do not know how he has stood them as long as he has. The clause itself shows that he has no sympathy with them. He believes in looking after the interests of the whole State, but he is associated with a crowd who desire to see Western Australia in the position it was in 30 years ago.

Mr. Pickering: That is not correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If it is not correct every member present must support this clause. The safety of our children depends upon our populating the North-West of this State. The Bill, which has been introduced by the Premier—

Mr. Pickering: And drafted by the Attorney General.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Shows that the Premier's intention was to have as many people as possible in that portion of the State. He does not want it to be possible for a man to own 100 miles of a river frontage in that area.

Mr. Hudson: They are not going back on this clause.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Premier says he has no objection to its being struck out. This Bill is one of the best I have ever seen introduced in this House. It is the first time that any attempt has been made by some hon. members on the other side of the House to protect the interests of the State.

Mr. Pickering: And then they want to withdraw it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have along the North-West coast of the State some of the best pastoral country to be found in any part of the world. We were warned in 1915 by the Imperial Government that the meat trusts of America were endeavouring to get a foothold in Western Australia. They said it was necessary that the meat should be protected for the use of the British Empire. In response to that warning legislation was in-

troduced in the last Parliament to extend the leases for a further 20 years.

The Premier: That was all right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was a scandal.

The Premier: None of the provisions were wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It meant taking away the heritage of the majority of the people of the State.

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Since then it has been found that there was something wrong with the Bill. The Attorney General now says that the Minister for Lands has power to refuse to grant a transfer if he is disposed to do so. The Premier says he will exercise every power he has under the Land Act if hon. members will throw this clause out. Would the Premier have introduced this legislation if he had such powers already as would enable him to protect the interests of the State?

Mr. Hudson: What do you suggest?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I suggest that the Premier knew that this legislation was necessary in the best interests of the State, and that it was detrimental to those interests that pastoralists should hold more than 500,000 acres. He said the only thing to do was to ask Parliament to protect the State by limiting the area in regard to transfers. He will not interfere with the present holders because Parliament has conferred upon them a right, but he does desire to stop anyone else from having that right. He also desires to prevent large fortunes being made by the transfer of extensive areas of pastoral leases. Unfortunately, however, the interests of some companies are concerned, and the State has had to take a second place.

The Premier: You are wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is not a party matter.

The Premier: Of course not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We are justified in acting on the warning given to us by the British Government. We should see that our interests are maintained for the people of Australia and of the Empire. We should not allow men to take up perhaps millions of acres of land in Western Australia to the detriment of our own citizens.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Before tea I was pointing out the effects of the last amendment Act. That measure has handed over large areas of our pastoral country to persons who left Britain for the express purpose of escaping war taxes. There is another reason why the Premier may be congratulated on the introduction of this clause. The clause gets over the difficulty of protecting Australia from foreign invasion. The British Government, having realised the sparsity of population in Australia, sent out Admiral Jellicoe to advise what should be done. But we could not settle many of the admiral's blue-jackets on our pastoral areas, under the

present conditions of holding. The admiral's report states—

Australia in common with the rest of the Empire is dependent on the security of her sea communications, but Australia is also faced with the problem of invasion, due to the attractions offered by the great potential value of the land and the very small population occupying it.

No doubt our Premier convinced Admiral Jellicoe of Western Australia's need for largely increased population, and also convinced him that we have available land which will carry vast numbers of settlers. The admiral seems to be greatly impressed with the need of protection for Australia and the adjacent islands, as he has recommended heavy expenditure on the provision of naval forces. One reason for the introduction of this Bill is to be found in the need for more population in our north. Now, the smaller the areas into which pastoral country is divided—in reason—the larger will be the white population on it. The admiral's report goes on to point out that the final result of any war must depend on what happens in the principal theatre of war, but that none the less great damage might be suffered by Australia before the Mother Country could intervene. This, he says, is the reason which renders necessary the location of strong military and naval forces in Australia. The admiral says—

It will be seen that the Far Eastern naval problem is one which concerns the Empire as a whole.

I will not read at greater length from Admiral Jellicoe's report.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member's references to that report have so far had nothing to do with this clause.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am trying to bring home to the Committee the opinion of our greatest admiral that Australia is suffering from want of population, that Australia's danger arises from her want of population, that there is a possibility of invasion as an effect of her sparse population. I ask hon. members to assist not only the Premier of this State, but also Admiral Jellicoe, by passing such legislation as will prevent large aggregations of land being held by individuals and companies. I want hon. members to pass legislation which will result in settling a large population on our pastoral lands, so that this State, in the case of either invasion or foreign war, may be able to furnish large naval and military forces. The Premier has done right in bringing down this Bill. He realises the necessity for increasing production. The clause is well thought out and, with the addition of a few words, will overcome any difficulty. The sooner we rectify the wrong done in 1917, the better it will be for the State. We should not defer action for 12 months. Prior to the 1917 measure being passed, one small station was sold for £16,000. Soon after the Bill became law, it was transferred to another person for £32,000.

The Premier: We shall get good rent from it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We really made a present of £16,000 to the seller.

Sir H. B. Lefroy: Perhaps the stock had been killed by drought.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I can quote other cases. If the clause is passed, we shall block other persons from reaping an undue advantage. This clause will protect the people and the State, while everyone who at present holds land will be protected, and it will prevent present owners from passing on their rights to other people.

The PREMIER: I shall see that the spirit of the 1917 Act is observed and that the rent is fixed in accordance with the value. The man who bought the station for £32,000 will have to pay a reasonable rent for the use of the land. The stocking provisions and the improvement conditions under the 1917 Act are good. The clause is not perfect and I propose to bring down another Bill early next session.

Mr. Harrison: What will you do in the meantime?

The PREMIER: I have powers under the Act to prevent the aggregation of holdings. I am exercising that power already.

Mr. Johnston: You cannot prevent new companies.

The PREMIER: Yes, I can object to a transfer to anyone. I have done so.

Mr. Harrison: You will have to give some good reason.

The PREMIER: Oh no.

Mr. Hudson: As long as rents are paid, you cannot very well refuse.

The PREMIER: Next session we can rectify the position. This provision is not perfect and may work some hardship.

Mr. Hudson: Why are you abandoning it?

The PREMIER: Because it is not perfect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have a few words to insert which will make it workable.

The PREMIER: Probably the hon. member would like to see the areas reduced to 100,000 acres. I brought the Bill down because I realised something should be done. The measure refers entirely to land from now on.

Mr. Lambert: They will throw it out in another place.

The PREMIER: I do not want that to happen.

Mr. Lambert: They throw out everything useful.

The PREMIER: Sometimes we undo a bit of what they do. It will be in the interests of the country if this matter is deferred till next session. It is unusual for a Minister to admit that something better might have appeared in one of his Bills, but we must realise that whatever we do now must stand.

Mr. Hudson: What is to happen in the meantime?

The PREMIER: Nothing much can happen. I can and shall prevent the joining together of stations and the accumulations of large areas by one person; particularly

am I determined to do it in the case of persons who live outside the State.

Mr. Lambert: Will you keep them to the million acre basis until we can amend it?

The PREMIER: Lessees can hold a million acres under the Act and what they have to-day is preserved to them. This only deals with land to be transferred or selected from now on.

Mr. Johnston: Will every transfer be submitted to you personally.

The PREMIER: It is now. I believe in having as many stations as possible. If a man has land to carry 20,000 sheep, that is sufficient to make a good living. I intend to use the powers I have.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That will mean a million acres.

The PREMIER: It does not mean that anyone can select a million acres because, for months, I have reserved all the pastoral lands of the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They can transfer a million acres.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Lambert: Have you had any applications for the land reserved?

The PREMIER: Yes but except in the case of returned soldiers, these applications have been refused. If the land is thrown open, I shall see that it is taken in 300,000 or 500,000 acre blocks. If there is any indication of persons trying to get possession of large areas, I can prevent it. I now have the sense of the House and I shall see that the country is protected. I do not wish to go on with the clause because it is not perfect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What is wrong? Let us put it right.

The PREMIER: It cannot be put right in five minutes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes it can.

Mr. Hudson: In what respect is it wrong?

The PREMIER: Next session I shall bring down a Bill which will meet the situation fairly and reasonably. We cannot alter the rights of people session after session. I have given the matter months of thought and have discussed it with the Attorney General, and I thought we had a perfect clause. I ask that the clause be negatived. I want to see areas limited, population increased, stocking increased, and wealth increased, and the country properly controlled.

Mr. ROBINSON: I am given to understand that hon. members have been making statements in connection with the Act which was passed in 1917. I regret I was not present to hear what was said, but I desire to give my version of what took place. A Bill was brought down by the then Minister for Lands, and there was a great deal of criticism in regard to it from the benches opposite. That criticism came from Mr. W. D. Johnson, the then member for Guildford, from Mr. Underwood, and Mr. Foley. Mr. Underwood was not quite so extreme in his criticism as some of the others, and I made it my business, in talking in Committee, to say that I would be glad to discuss

the clause with hon. members for the purpose of trying to arrive at a common understanding. I received permission from the then Premier, the late Mr. Frank Wilson, to do so, and Mr. Underwood and I retired to a room opposite. We discussed the matter, and he afterwards brought in Mr. Johnson and Mr. Foley. The result was that we came to a common agreement as to how the set of clauses should be rectified.

Mr. Lambert: Our leader knew nothing about it?

Mr. ROBINSON: I am stating what took place. The result of that conference was that a modification of the clause was agreed to, so that no person should hold more than one million acres.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Two million acres.

Mr. ROBINSON: Two million acres was in the Bill, but one million was agreed to. Neither one side nor the other had power to bind the respective parties, and we agreed that we would see the respective parties to arrange whether a common agreement could be arrived at. I reported the matter to Mr. Frank Wilson, the then Premier, and Mr. Lefroy, the then Minister for Lands, and they were agreeable to what had been arranged being carried out. The other members reported to their side, and they too agreed with what was done.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They did nothing of the kind.

Mr. ROBINSON: You, Mr. Stubbs, were in the Chair.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How could he be in the Chair when he voted? His name appears in the Division List.

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Stubbs was in the Chair. Having arrived at that common agreement, instead of debating it in the House, as it was getting late in the night, and so that each party could see and discuss plainly what was talked about, it was agreed that Mr. Stubbs should leave the Chair for half an hour—which was an extraordinary thing to do. The House was in Committee. All members interested in the pastoral clauses fled out of the Chamber, went into the room opposite, where I told them what we had agreed to do. It was then suggested that, as the hour was late, and that it was difficult to draft a complicated clause of this description, we should postpone the further consideration of it until the following morning, when these same members should meet me in my office, and talk the matter over in the presence of the Solicitor General to arrive at the best way of giving effect to the determination which had been come to.

Mr. Lambert: You know it was bludgeoned through in a shameful manner.

Mr. ROBINSON: I am relating facts, not fairy tales. On the following morning, Mr. Underwood, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Foley—I have an idea there was someone else also—met me in the Attorney General's office.

Hon. P. Collier: What authority had they? Whom did they represent?

Mr. ROBINSON: I have no idea who appointed them, except that at the meeting it

was agreed by common consent to accept the draft clause and submit it to the House. We were at my office for a couple of hours, and all kinds of suggestions were made. A common agreement was arrived at, and the clause was the outcome of the discussion of the brains of the four or five who were there, each endeavouring to give effect to the million acre limitation and to prevent other persons or companies from combining. We drafted a clause and the Solicitor General settled it. That clause was not bludgeoned through. It was submitted to the Committee by Mr. Le-fray as Minister for Lands, as the outcome of the common agreement. I cannot say from memory, but "Hansard" will show what took place then. At all events the clause was passed with very little discussion.

Hon. P. Collier: It was not passed by common agreement.

Mr. ROBINSON: It was passed with very little discussion. I understand that during the debate this afternoon hon. members charged me with having failed to insert certain words which were understood and agreed to. I never did any such thing. What was inserted was the common agreement of four men and those men will not deny it. It was thought by all concerned that we had made a good job of it, but it was soon found that the formation of a company would get through this, and that the proper thing to do was to alter the clause so that that could not be effected. There are very few people in the world—I doubt whether there are any—who can draft a Bill that others cannot find fault with. I hurl back in the teeth of those who made it the charge that was levelled against me in the House this afternoon. You yourself, Mr. Stubbs, were in the Chair, and you must know what then took place, and that what I have stated is an absolute fact.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He voted against it so could not have been in the Chair.

Mr. ROBINSON: Another hon. member was in the Chair on the following day. I think it was Mr. Holman. It ill becomes any member of this House to make reflections on other members who honourably try to do their duty, and do that in conjunction with members from the other side of the House. Amongst those men was Mr. Johnson, one of the cleverest men we ever had in this House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I am glad you admit it now.

Mr. ROBINSON: I have always said so. Mr. Underwood is a man than whom probably no member of the House has had more experience of the divisions of the North.

Hon. P. Collier: His experience of the North would not help you in drafting an intricate clause.

Mr. ROBINSON: No, but he knew what was wanted, and legal men were there to give effect to the common intelligence. We endeavoured to frame the clause in such a way as to meet the case. The Premier and the

present Attorney General now bring down a Bill with the best intentions. They admit that after six months careful study, the Bill is not what they thought it should be, and they desire to amend it.

Mr. Lambert: There is no one blaming you in connection with the matter.

Mr. ROBINSON: I understood I was blamed from the front Opposition benches.

Mr. Lambert: I never heard it.

Mr. ROBINSON: Would any hon. member be justified in blaming the Premier or the Attorney General for bringing down a Bill which was not perfect? There never was an Attorney General who brought down a Bill which was perfect, and there never will be. The only fault I have to find with the Bill is that we are not being given sufficient time in which to consider it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We did not make a good job of it when we did have the time. You made a mess of it.

Mr. ROBINSON: We did not make a mess of it. One point escaped notice, and it even escaped the eagle eye of my friend the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: I am not a legal man.

Mr. ROBINSON: But mighty little escapes the notice of the hon. gentleman. Besides, it is scant courtesy to the intelligence of this House to say that a clause submitted in plain English was not understood, and was scamped through. I agree that this is one of the most important measures which deals with one of the most important industries in the State. Where would Western Australia be without its great pastoral industry. We do not want to injure those men engaged in the industry, and we want to do a fair thing by the people of Western Australia. We also desire to see the North-West developed to the fullest extent, and I am with the Premier in his desire to carry out that object. But let us not do it in the dying hours of the session by means of a Bill that has been on the file only 24 hours. The Bill of 1917 was on hon. members' files for weeks. Now, at the end of two years they say they do not understand it. How, therefore, can I expect the same gentlemen to understand in twenty-four hours a Bill which the Attorney General admits is complicated. That is ample reason why hon. members should permit the clause to be withdrawn, and why we should accept the assurance of the Premier that he will give the matter further consideration, and give us an opportunity in the early part of the next session to deal with the matter as carefully and as seriously as the subject warrants.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member is entirely wrong. The clause in the 1917 Bill, providing for the holding of 2,000,000 acres, was inserted in the Council. When the Bill came back, an amendment was moved to reduce the area from 2,000,000 acres to 1,000,000 acres. The hon. member voted against that amendment. It was the Minister for Lands who moved that the Coun-

cil's amendment be agreed to. It is true that the amended clause was drafted by a self-appointed committee, of whom the hon. member was the only legal member. The object of the clause was to prevent any man getting more than one million acres. It has since been proved that a carriage and pair can be driven through the clause. In the present Bill we have a clause which is almost perfect.

Mr. Pilkington: How would you provide for a contract now pending?

Hon. P. Collier: That is what the Premier wishes to stop.

Hon. W. C. ANGWYN: The Premier says he has given the clause months of consideration. I propose to move an amendment which will perfect the clause. I should not care a hang about the clause if the State were not going to lose by it. Are we to discourage population? Are we to leave the State open to invasion by allowing the spaces to be unoccupied? I am disappointed in the Premier, who after spending months on the Bill, now asks leave to withdraw its most important clause.

The Premier: I promise you a better one in six months time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWYN: Before the six months shall have elapsed the same influence will be at work which has wrecked previous attempts. I move an amendment—

That at the end of Paragraph (b) of Subclause 7 the words "already issued" be added.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. PICKERING: I will support the Premier in his desire to withdraw the clause. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) has given illustrations showing that had the clause desired by the Assembly of 1917 been in operation it would have acted unjustly to those already holding the land. The Premier says the clause is not perfect. Is there any advantage in passing, in the closing hours of the session, an imperfect provision? We have the Premier's assurance that he will take every precaution to prevent abuse of the existing provision. I think we should allow him to withdraw the clause.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	16
Majority against	..	..	..	5

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Davies	Mr. Roche
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Hudson	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Brown	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Draper	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Duff	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Seaddan
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Willmott
Sir H. B. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)
Mr. Money	

Clause thus negatived.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILLS—RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

- 1, Electoral Amendment.
 - 2, Carnarvon Electric Light and Power.
 - 3, Northampton Mechanics' Institute.
 - 4, Roads Closure.
- Without amendment.

BILL—PRICES REGULATION.

Council's Message.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the modification made by the Assembly in requested amendment No. 3 of the Legislative Council.

BILL—PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [8.36] in moving the second reading said: This is a simple Bill, designed to amend the Presbyterian Church Act, 1908. That Act provides for the government of the Presbyterian Church. The officers duly elected for the control of that church are incorporated under the title of the commissioners of the Presbyterian Church in Western Australia. The property of that church vests in the commissioners. In Section 6 of the Act provision is made that the commissioners shall keep a register of all their lands and personal property. Some of that property is subject to certain trusts. The first amendment which is sought to be effected by this Bill is to change some of the words in Section 6 of the Act. Towards the end of that section members will find that the trusts on which property may be held cannot be altered except with the approval of a two-thirds majority of the members and adherents present at a meeting to be specially called for that purpose, as provided for in Section 11, of the particular congregation

entitled to the benefits of the said trust. It is proposed to strike out these words, at is has been found in practice that it is not a very satisfactory method of obtaining the views of any particular congregation as regards a change in the trust upon which any property is held for that congregation. In lieu of those words it is desired to insert that the trust shall not be changed except by petition in writing signed by a majority of the members and adherents of the congregation entitled to the full benefits of the said trust, and with the approval of the commissioners. It is thought that by this means they will get a better expression of opinion by any congregation as regards a change in the trust that affects that body. The Act goes on to provide that the property may be held by the commissioners for certain purposes. For instance, it may be held for specific purposes for a congregation, or it may be held for general purposes for the church itself. It may also be subject to certain declared trusts. The commissioners, under Section 11 of the Act, have power to deal with the property for congregational purposes. The next amendment which is sought to be effected is an amendment to Section 11 of the Act. This provides that the commissioners shall, whenever directed or requested so to do by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority, deal with the property in the manner which is so desired. Instead of that method of dealing with the property it is sought to amend the section by saying that "the commissioners may act in their discretion, whenever requested so to do by a petition in writing signed by a majority of the members and adherents of any congregation, and provided that such petition shall be approved by a majority." It has been found in practice that a better method of obtaining the approval of the members of the congregation is that they should sign a petition and send it to the commissioners. There are other provisions of the Act which this Bill seeks to amplify. In Clause 4 hon. members will see that a very useful power is inserted to effect a consolidation of mortgages secured on the property of any congregation or several congregations, or of any other property held in trust by the commissioners. This is also desirable for business reasons. Instead of handling a lot of small mortgages at varied rates of interest they can obtain a consolidated mortgage at less interest, and therefore on better terms, which would be of greater advantage to the church. Clause 4 Subclause 2, requires a certain amount of explanation. It provides for property which is held by different congregations. If the property of one congregation is free from encumbrances, or there is a large margin of security, which is fixed according to a percentage, should a majority of the members of that congregation approve, that property may be mortgaged for some other church purpose, provided of course that the money so borrowed has to be used in the purchase or the erection of a permanent

building required for the extension of the work of the church in Western Australia. All the other provisions of the Bill relate to the formation of a sinking fund. This is a very desirable thing to have where churches borrow money for the purposes of the church. In practice I have found that, generally speaking, a mortgage given to bodies controlling the church generally provides for a reduction every year in repayment of the capital, in addition to the payment of interest. This Bill provides for a sinking fund, which will be a more effective way of attaining the same object. The conditions of contribution to such sinking fund are set out in Clause 6. The other provisions are really machinery provisions. I should also like to inform hon. members that all the alterations that are proposed in this Bill have been unanimously approved of by the general assembly, in which each congregation is represented. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Message from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Bill subject to an amendment now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; Hon. W. C. Angwin in charge of the Bill.

Clause 7, omit the second proviso and insert the following in lieu thereof: "Provided also that this subsection shall not apply in respect to any portion of an allotment upon which a building was erected before the commencement of this Act";

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This refers to that re-subdivision of land which frequently takes place without the consent of the local authority. The clause as it left this Chamber might have permitted of two houses being built on a small block of land, whereupon if, after deposit of the plan, one of the houses was sold, the Titles Office would have to give a separate title for that portion of the land. The effect of the new proviso is that in future land cannot be subdivided without the consent of the local authority being first obtained. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Bill subject to three amendments, now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 2, strike out the word "board" in line 1 and insert the words "principal Act":

The PREMIER: This is a necessary amendment, correcting an obvious mistake. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2.—Clause 4, add the following proviso at the end of the clause: "Provided that the board in its discretion may allow the whole or any portion of the proceeds of the sale of dairy produce, pigs, and poultry":

The PREMIER: As regards pigs and poultry, I requested the Minister in another place to secure this amendment. "Dairy produce" has been included, but not at my instance. As regards pigs if a man kept, say, 10 pigs, he would be allowed all the proceeds; but if he kept, say, 100, the board would require portion of the proceeds. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3.—Insert a new clause to stand as Clause 3: "A printed report and audited balance sheet of the operations of the board shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament, by the Minister in charge of the department, on or before the thirtieth day of September, 1920":

The PREMIER: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Legislative Council.

BILL—DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly.

MOTION—DISCHARGE OF ORDERS.

On motion by the Premier, the following Orders of the Day were discharged:—

- 1, Factories and Shops Bill. Second reading.
- 2, Dog Act Amendment Bill. Committee.
- 3, Pure Seeds Bill. To be read a second time.
- 4, Government Railways Act Amendment Bill. To be read a second time.
- 5, City of Perth Endowment Lands Bill. To be read a second time.
- 6, Trading Concerns Bill. Second reading.
- 7, Firearms Bill. Second reading.
- 8, Dentists' Act Amendment Bill. To be read a second time.
- 9, Bunbury Common Bill. To be read a second time.
- 10, Marriage Act Amendment Bill. Second reading.
- 11, Hospital for Insane Select Committee. Consideration of report.
- 12, Base Metals, Smelters. Motion.
- 13, State Smelting Works, treatment of ores. Motion.
- 14, Trade with Straits Settlements and Java. Consideration of Council's Message.
- 15, Pastoral Leases and Closer Settlement. Motion.
- 16, State Forests Improvement Scheme. Notice of motion.

Sitting suspended from 9.2 to 9.45 p.m.

House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.