

risk. Dalgety's must have taken a risk in this matter, but the risk must surely have turned out a profitable one. It appears to me that the good concerns are handed over to other people while the State has to carry those concerns from which there is no chance of any profit accruing. One of the largest pig raisers of the State operates in and around Boulder. One can imagine what that man pays for his wheat when I have to pay 5s. 6d. in Perth. If some of the inferior wheat I have seen sold is worth 5s. 6d. on its milling value, then f.a.q. wheat based on a fair milling value would be worth from 15s. to £1 a bushel.

Hon. J. EWING: There is a great deal in what Mr. Cornuell is striving to do. I have had numerous complaints with regard to the high price which is being charged for inferior wheat. Only this afternoon, coming up in the train from the South-West, I was approached by several people who asked what members of Parliament were doing to permit that kind of thing to go on. I understand that this inferior wheat is mostly sold to the mills, where it is graded and the rubbish is disposed of for poultry feed. I do not thoroughly understand the position myself and I think, therefore, that the Minister might explain it. The millers are the largest purchasers and, as I have stated, they dispose of the rubbish after they have graded the wheat. This is a matter that the Government should certainly deal with because it is a form of profiteering. I consider we should report progress so that the matter might be placed properly before us. I want to see the wheat producer get all that he is entitled to, but we find that a profit is being made and that it is going to someone outside of the pool. It is a peculiar thing that the subject should have been mentioned to me coming up in the train from the South-West this evening and on my entering the House, I should find it was the very matter that was under discussion.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have just had a file placed in my hands dealing with the whole matter.

The Honorary Minister: I laid it on the Table this afternoon.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: How can members attempt to follow the business that is going on when information like this is held back? One of the first things that I noticed on this file is a report of a deputation of produce merchants which waited on the Minister, dealing with the question of the disposal of inferior wheat. This is the answer of the Minister as it appears on the file—

Mr. Baxter, in his reply, stated that it had been found that, through competition in the selling of inferior wheat, the Scheme, and through it the farmer, had suffered.

Just consider the position of affairs! Unfortunately, both my colleagues are absent and I know that Mr. Duffell is particularly interested in this question. To expect us to discuss the situation properly until we have

thoroughly gone through this file is asking too much. I have quoted enough from the file to show that it is worth studying. If I had made such a statement in reply to a deputation, I think I would have kept it off the file. The mover of the amendment is out to throw the responsibility back on the Government and see that the consumer gets a fair deal, which I think is perfectly right.

Hon. J. EWING: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 29th October, 1919.

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

QUESTION—HAMPTON PLAINS, GEOLOGIST'S REPORT.

Mr. DUFF asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the very strong opposition to the Government Geologist's statement that the recent gold discoveries on Block 50, Hampton Plains, are not on a continuation of the Boulder, Horseshoe, and Ivanhoe line of lode, will he state (a) on what geological data Mr. Maitland bases his opinion? (b) Did he devote sufficient time in his examination of the field to justify the expression of such opinion?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: (a) The Geological data upon which the Government Geologist based the opinions set out in his recent report were based upon a personal inspection of the area, together with investigation of the data in the

office of the department. (b) The Government Geologist has at different periods during recent years examined the district, and asserts that he has devoted sufficient time to work, both in the field and in the office, to justify the opinions expressed in his recent report.

QUESTION—WHEAT BUYERS, COMPENSATION.

Hon. P. COLLIER (for Hon. W. C. Angwin) asked the Premier:—In view of the promise made by the Prime Minister, and accepted by the State Government, in connection with the National volunteers re work on the wharves, and the Government having appointed a Royal Commission to make inquiries as regards compensation, will the Government extend the powers of the said Commission to ascertain whether compensation should be paid to the wheat buyers on the promises made by the Prime Minister and accepted by the Government regarding their trading in wheat after the war, and not put into effect owing to continuance of the wheat pool?

The PREMIER replied:—No.

QUESTION—WHEAT SALES, WEST- ERN AUSTRALIA'S QUOTA.

Mr. JONES (for Mr. Roche) asked the Premier:—1, What is the quantity of West Australian wheat included in the 56-million bushels sold by the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) in Great Britain during July of this year? 2, In view of the statement made in the Federal Parliament on the 22nd inst., by the Federal Treasurer (Mr. Watt), to the effect that Mr. Hughes will receive remuneration for services rendered in connection with those sales, what is the approximate amount of money that the people of this State will have to pay towards Mr. Hughes' commission?

The PREMIER replied:—1, Not yet known. The allocation of the respective States quotas will probably be determined at the next meeting of the Australian Wheat Board. 2, The Government does not know of any proposal to pay Mr. Hughes for services rendered by him in connection with the sale of wheat, nor do we believe that any such exists.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Loan Act Amendment.

2, Treasury Bonds Deficiency.

Introduced by the Premier.

PAPERS — STATE STEAMSHIP "EUCLA'S" ITINERARY.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [4.37]: I move—

That all files dealing with the suggestion to extend the itinerary of the s.s.

"Eucla" to Carnarvon be laid on the Table of the House.

Members realise that for some time past there has been a considerable shortage of shipping for the North-West coast. Some months back I asked the manager of the State Steamship Service to supply me with the timetable of the s.s. "Eucla" which is trading from Albany to the South-East ports, and I was surprised to find that two-thirds of her time she is tied up to the Albany jetty. I discussed the matter with the manager of the State Steamship Service, and he agreed that this vessel could be employed by extending her run to Carnarvon once a month. This would necessitate very little alteration to the mail service on the South-East coast. The Deputy Postmaster General showed me a protest from the people at Israelite Bay against the "Eucla" being otherwise employed, but those people would not have been affected to the extent of one hour per month. Under my proposal the people of Esperance would have had the same number of mails during the month, but not quite so regularly as at present. The effect to the North-West would have been considerable so far as the earning capacity of the steamer is concerned. At the present time the "Eucla" is making a loss of about £3,000 a year and, if my suggestion were acted upon, that loss would be turned into a profit of probably £3,000 or £4,000. In addition, the one trip a month would have been of great advantage to the far Northern ports because it would have relieved the "Bambra" of considerable freight and saved the time now lost by the vessel going in and out of Shark Bay. The steamer "Bambra," thus relieved, would have been able to make 12 trips a year instead of 10, because she now loses two days a trip going into Shark Bay and unloading cargo at Carnarvon. She takes 200 or 300 tons of cargo for Carnarvon every trip, and thus more space would have been available in the "Bambra" for the North-West ports if the "Eucla" relieved her of this work. The Minister for Mines, who is in charge of the State Steamship Service, agreed to the suggestion but referred the matter to the Deputy Postmaster General. I had seen the Deputy Postmaster General on the matter and he showed me a long urgent telegram from the people of Israelite Bay protesting against the proposal, but that was the only objection he could advance. I showed him that, according to the suggested timetable, the people of Israelite Bay would not have been affected to the extent of one hour per month. The Minister for Mines said he would do all he possibly could, and I was surprised a week or two back when I received a letter from him, stating that the proposition had to be turned down because the Deputy Postmaster General would not agree to it. I am asking for the files to be placed on the Table in order to find out what the Deputy Postmaster General has to do with the matter. The Estimates for the

Colonial Treasurer's Department show that there is a subsidy of £1,150 for the "Eucla" carrying mails to the South-East ports. Later on I shall ask what that means. From what I can gather, the Government are paying for the subsidising of this boat to carry mails to the South-East ports. If this is a fact, I shall want to know what the Deputy Postmaster General has to do with the matter. I have not one word to say against the Minister for Mines. He has done all he could to carry the proposal through; but the Federal Government or the Deputy Postmaster General is raising objection to it.

Hon. P. Collier: Our Government have a contract with the Federal Government for the carriage of mails, and you cannot move that ship without their consent.

Mr. ANGELO: I wish to read the files so that I can satisfy myself what reasons have been advanced against this very good business proposal. I have no hesitation in asking the House to agree to the motion. I fear this will prove to be another of those many pinpricks that the State has to suffer at the hands of the Federal Government.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.43]: I have no objection to placing the files on the Table. I hope it will be possible, as the hon. member said, to get all those thousands of pounds for the Treasury. I shall be very glad to have them.

Mr. Willcock: The "Eucla" will not make them while she is tied up.

The PREMIER: No. If it is found we can earn these thousands of pounds, I shall be very pleased and the hon. member will have proved himself fully justified in moving the motion.

Question put and passed.

RETURN—PASTORAL LEASES.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [4.44]: I move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing: 1, the acreage and the value of improvements, where ascertainable, of all pastoral leases outside the South-Western division within 50 miles on either side of the Geraldton-Meekatharra and Magnet and Sandstone railways, and within 50 miles of new termini; 2, the number of sheep, cattle, and horses on all of the above-mentioned leases.

This is an old motion which I think the Premier will be able to accept without any difficulty. There has been considerable controversy as to the area necessary to support a man in a decent manner in the pastoral areas of the Murchison district and it is necessary, in order to be able to discuss the matter intelligently, to have some authentic information with regard both to the areas leased and the stock running on those areas. It has been stated that about 14 men hold a million acres each in this particular area and, on the other hand, there are 20 or 30 men who are able to make a good living

with holdings of about 30,000 acres. In order to obtain reliable information on the matter it is necessary that we should have a return. I do not want to anticipate a motion appearing on the Notice Paper immediately beneath mine. I presume there will be no objection on the part of the Government to giving whatever information may be available, and I do not expect them to go to any considerable expense in the matter. There should not be much expense involved. If I had the necessary latitude under this motion, I should be quite prepared to debate the question of resumption. However, if the Government agree to my motion, I think there will be no need for that.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.47]: I do not know that I need offer objection to the motion. The word "ascertainable" is rather a wide one. I understand that what is wanted is the area held by each person, the value of his improvements, and the number of stock held on his lease. I shall endeavour to supply the information as soon as possible. If it has to be obtained from the holders themselves, it will take some time.

Mr. Willcock: All the holders are registered.

The PREMIER: I appreciate the hon. member's motive in asking for the information, which I shall be very glad to supply.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kalgoorlie) [4.49]: It is only a small matter, but I think we might as well have the motion correct. The word "new," in the sixth line of the motion, should be "their." In order to avoid the risk of misunderstanding on the part of those who will have to compile the information and of those who refer to the matter in future, I move an amendment—

That the word "new," in line 6, be struck out, and "their" inserted in lieu.

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

MOTION—BASE METALS, SMELTERS.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [4.52]: I move—

That in view of the avowed policy of the Federal Government to have refined within the Commonwealth all base metal ores, and as in furtherance of that policy they have announced their preparedness to advance to this State Government the necessary capital for the erection of a modern smelting plant, it is in the opinion of this House essential that these works should be placed in a central position within this State, and that the site selected therefor should be the port of Geraldton.

As hon. members are aware, the Federal Government have decided as a matter of national policy to remove the handicap im-

posed upon producers of base metals in this State, and to break down the monopoly which was created by reason of all our base metal ores being exported to the Eastern States to be smelted there, and have expressed a willingness to advance to this State sufficient capital for the erection of smelting works in Western Australia. Decentralisation is in my opinion a matter of essential policy for the Commonwealth and for each of the individual States, and I urge that Western Australia should do its share towards breaking down the system of centralisation by establishing smelting works for base metals in the most convenient situation. It will be within the recollection of all members that the vested interests of Perth and Fremantle have pulled the strings to such an extent that only one port of Western Australia is being utilised to-day—the port of Fremantle. All products of the Geraldton district, whether minerals or wheat or wool, are railed from that district, frequently past the port of Geraldton, to be shipped via Fremantle, at a considerable increase of cost to the producers.

Hon. T. Walker: And to the consumers also.

Mr. MALEY: Yes. I think the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) will recollect how the vested interests of Perth and Fremantle have crippled the port of Esperance. It is absolutely a fact that when the important Australian firm of Burns, Philp & Co. were going to establish themselves in this western State, they first selected Esperance for that purpose. When the vested interests of Perth and Fremantle prevented any development of the port of Esperance, and any possibility of a railway being constructed from Esperance to Kalgoorlie, the firm had another look at the map of Western Australia and saw the port of Geraldton in the heart of the State, with the Murchison goldfields at the back of it. Messrs. Burns, Philp & Co. accordingly established their second branch at Geraldton. Subsequently they established themselves in Fremantle. This is just one instance of how the vested interests of the capital city have crippled two outports of the State. I fear hon. members may think that the question raised by this motion is one for an engineer to decide. They will remember that last session the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) moved in the direction of having State smelters established at Geraldton. The present proposition is not exactly similar to that one. The present proposition is the outcome of national policy, and I suggest it is the duty of hon. members to see that the policy of centralisation is broken down in this State. At the wish of the House, expressed in the motion of the member for Geraldton, the State Mining Engineer has made a report on the question of the erection of a State smelter at Geraldton. I have perused that report, and have found it just as convincing as the recent report of the Government Geologist on the Hampton Plains discovery. The opinion of the State Mining Engineer

appears to be that the fact of coke being necessary for smelting operations makes the establishment of smelters at Geraldton a matter of almost prohibitive cost. He appears to think that it would be better to continue hauling five tons of lead or copper ore over 400 or 500 miles of railway, than to ship to Geraldton the one ton of coke which is sufficient to flux five tons of ore. Let hon. members picture to themselves the position of Geraldton, right in the centre of the State, with five separate lines of railway converging upon it. Apart from the Phillips River field, all the base metal mineral country in Western Australia is comprised within the hinterland of Geraldton, or to the north of that port. These facts must convince hon. members that Geraldton is the most suitable site in the State for the erection of smelters. It may be contended that the port of Geraldton is not sufficiently deep to accommodate shipping.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Whose fault is that?

Mr. MALEY: There was a time when not a single large steamer could be brought into the Fremantle harbour.

Mr. O'Loughlin: We are with you.

Mr. MALEY: It is an absolute fact that before the outbreak of war 70,000 bags of wheat have been shipped at Geraldton in one load, and that number of bags represents slightly over 5,000 tons. Let it be remembered that during the submarine crisis of the war, when the energies of all the allied countries were being directed to shipbuilding, the standard size agreed upon was 5,000 tons. Therefore it is almost begging the question to say that to-day the port of Geraldton is not suitable for the accommodation of shipping. Another argument which may be brought against the motion is that Geraldton lacks a water supply. It is an absolute standing disgrace to Western Australia that a town of the age and the size of Geraldton should have waited 70 years to secure a decent water supply for the promotion of its industries and for the establishment of homes by the people at that port. I am pleased to say that the difficulty has been overcome at last, that recently it has been discovered by some engineers—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the water supply of Geraldton under this motion.

Mr. MALEY: But how can we carry on any industry without a water supply?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member should have seen to that when framing his motion.

Mr. MALEY: Water supply is a very necessary factor in any industry. I wish to deal with the State's production of base metals, copper in particular, and the source and value of the production. My figures are taken from the mining report for 1918. In that year the value of the production of copper in the State was as follows:—West Pilbara, £28,961; Peak Hill, £2,480; East Murchison, £1,314; Murchison, £1,794, or a total value of £34,549. All these fields are in the natural zone that would be served by the port of Geraldton, with the exception of Pil-

bara, which in the event of smelters being erected in the southern portion of the State would have to send its ore past the port of Geraldton to Fremantle. The only other copper production in the State is that of the Phillip's River field, where smelting facilities have been provided by the State. The production of smelting ore in the Phillip's River field in 1918 was valued at £42,978. That is only slightly in excess of the value of the copper ore raised in the districts behind Geraldton and exported to the Eastern States for treatment. Having regard to the difficulties under which they have been working up there, it is only reasonable to suppose that if smelting facilities had been provided, as at Phillip's River, the production would have been doubled. A new discovery 40 miles east of Meekatharra has been described as a mountain of copper. Also copper ore occurs in the Northampton district and again in the Yandooka mineral area, where certain copper mining has been done. Unfortunately, the lodes there do not go down to any depth, although they are fairly rich on the surface. In 1918 silver lead ore was produced on the Ashburton fields to the value of £3,461. The lead ore production for the same period in the Northampton district was valued at £176,330. In that district mining is carried on within 10 miles of the port of Geraldton. It is the only portion of the State where mining and agriculture are within so easy a distance of a port and are in such close proximity to each other. All that production has been dragged 400 miles to be treated at Fremantle or, alternatively, shipped to the Eastern States through Fremantle. In the same year in the Pilbara district black tin was produced to the value of £20,984 and at Greenbushes to the value of £57,653. There is almost the entire length of the State between those two fields, which is a further argument in favour of bringing the product of both fields half way and establishing the smelter at Geraldton. There is more available flux at Geraldton than at Fremantle. Limestone is to be found in the town itself and in the hills surrounding the port. Ironstone occurs within seven or eight miles of the port. Lead, which is used for flux in the smelting of gold concentrates, is to be found behind the port of Geraldton. Coke is the key of the whole position. Unfortunately Collie coal is not a coking coal, and all the coke has to be brought from the Eastern States either to the Phillip's River smelters or to the smelters at Fremantle. When coke is being shipped from the Eastern States it is just as practicable to land it at Geraldton as to land it in Fremantle. Hon. members may say that the motion is taking what may be after all the task of an engineer and asking the House to accomplish it. But as I have pointed out, the total production of base metals within the State lies in the hinterland of Geraldton or north of Geraldton, and if the Commonwealth Government have seen fit in the development of a national policy to advance the State the money required for a smelter, it is the State's duty to

see that in the selection of a site due consideration is given to the undoubted claim of the port of Geraldton.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [5.10]: I have pleasure in supporting the motion. I spent some little time in the Geraldton district when the mines were working at full blast. Unfortunately as the result of the prohibition by the Metals Exchange of the export of lead, those mines were shut down. In the Geraldton district, which is one of the oldest mining districts in the State, there was a resuscitation of the industry a year ago, and it is safe to say that in the opinion of experts the Surprise mine was unequalled in prospects by any similar show in Australia. The extent of lead-bearing country from Geraldton north right through the old Northampton district and also up through Ajana and to Geraldine is of a most extensive character, and the argument used by the hon. member that if smelting works were erected at Geraldton there would be plenty of ore to keep the furnaces in constant employment is undoubtedly well founded. It is regrettable that in this respect Western Australia has met the fate that seems to have dogged her footsteps in other directions. While the industry in the Eastern States has not suffered to any appreciable degree by the restrictions placed upon the industry by the Metal Exchange, in Western Australia since the industry was shut down because of the high smelting charges at Fremantle, the mines have been at a big disadvantage. The smelting works at Fremantle are not of an up-to-date character. While I have in mind some base metal shows on the eastern goldfields, I frankly admit that Geraldton has the greatest claims to a smelter. It is essential that this industry should have similar encouragement to that meted out to the farming industry. In my opinion the motion should commend itself to every hon. member. I regret to find that this industry recently had to shut down, though not because of any great fall in the price of lead.

Mr. Malcy: It is going up to-day.

Mr. GREEN: It is £29 per ton to-day.

Mr. Malcy: Forward.

Mr. GREEN: It has rarely exceeded £35 a ton, even in war time. The position to-day, immediately after the war, when we might have expected a big slump, is really very satisfactory in regard to prices. From that we might argue that the future will be exceedingly promising so far as the lead mining industry in Western Australia is concerned, especially if we can get up-to-date smelting facilities. It does not require much argument from me to convince every hon. member in the Chamber, who is interested in seeing that the secondary and primary industries in the State are pushed ahead, that they should welcome the motion moved by the hon. member, in order to show their appreciation of the idea. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [5.15] I have pleasure in supporting the motion. It must be distinctly understood that one can only support it in an abstract way. It would be nonsensical on the part of members not to appreciate the many factors which would lead to the success or non-success of smelting in this country under either favourable or unfavourable conditions. It was brought home to me by the remarks of the Speaker himself when he called the member for Greenough to order while he was dealing with one of the main factors in connection with this question, namely that of water in the district.

Mr. Mahey: You sometimes transgress in these matters.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am supporting the hon. member because a water supply is one of the main factors which would affect the industry. The water question is all important. So, too, is the question of flux and the question of accessibility. The question of a central smelter erected to deal with certain ores in the State is also all important. One can only support an abstract motion of this description if these factors are taken into consideration, and a proper investigation and report made upon them by responsible officers.

Mr. Mahey: They are actual and not potential.

Mr. LAMBERT: I believe that the Geraldton district, on account of its central and geographical position, particularly lends itself to the erection of smelters. The time has gone by for us to tinker any longer with this question. It must be tackled in a comprehensive manner so as to allow of the many valuable and varied ores which we possess in the State being properly dealt with. In the Northampton district we have valuable lead deposits. With regard to these deposits, I would remind hon. members that the Tasmanian Electrolytic Company only the other day, after expending half a million of money in the erection of electrolytic works for the production of white lead had to send to Northampton for their supply of lead sulphate. This shows that in the production of white lead as a pigment, we have valuable deposits. I agree that the earliest opportunity should be taken to impress upon the Federal Government the necessity for tackling the base metal industry in this State. It is shameful that we should have had to rely upon the Eastern States for so long for the smelting of these ores. It is not long ago that it was looked upon as a fallacy that we could produce electrolytic copper in Australia. The big copper companies, after a good deal of negotiation, agreed amongst themselves to form a company to produce from the copper matte electrolytic copper. So successfully have they done that that it has been unnecessary, from the time when the electrolytic company was established, to send any copper matte out of Australia. The same thing applies to lead. We are a small State and have not the facilities to

smelt base metals. The responsibility of some definite and clear policy being announced in this regard rests with the Minister for Mines. The Federal Government, in their assumed generosity, have stated that they will find money to enable us to erect central smelters in Western Australia. Some time ago the Minister for Mines said that he would get the best possible information, and go outside the department to fortify himself with the necessary facts and figures to enable him to arrive at a proper decision, if he could not get the data within the department. The House should clearly illustrate its desire to delay no longer in this connection. Our lead ores are going out of the country and so are our copper ores. In fact, from all the base metals which we produce we get little or nothing other than the ordinary value of the primary production. I hope that hon. members will support the motion and show their desire for a comprehensive report dealing with this important matter. There are many other factors which could be touched upon, such as subsidiary factors in the creation of a central smelter. These could be touched upon particularly as they apply to Geraldton, much to its credit. The member for Greenough pointed out that it is cheaper to take one ton of coke to Geraldton than to cart five or six tons of ore to a central smelter. That is about a fair ratio in the accepted practice of smelting ordinary base metals. The Government should be urged immediately to get the best possible advice as to the establishment of the smelter referred to by the hon. member. There are not only lead and copper but many other valuable base metals, which will increase the commercial activities of the State as they are developed; therefore, the sooner we tackle this question the better. I hope the House will accept anything I may say in regard to the selection of a site as contingent upon the furnishing of a proper report, and the giving of advice upon the many factors which would go to make or mar smelting operations in any one centre. I believe the geographical position of Geraldton makes it a suitable centre for the erection of works. At the same time I hope that the carrying of the motion will spur on the department to do something, and, if there are no officers available, that the Government will go outside the Department and endeavour to show our independence of the Eastern States. Let us show the Federal Government that we will no longer put up with their intolerable attitude towards this State, and that we are going to smelt our base metals in the State if possible. I believe, if this motion is supported by the full voice of the House, some tangible good will be the outcome.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kalgoorlie) [5.26]: If I were anxious to take a text in respect to

the motion, it would be from Carlyle, who, many years ago, wrote—

Produce! produce! produce! Were it but the pitifulest infinitesimal fraction of product, produce it! in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee. Out with it then!

The object of every Treasurer, since the member for Moore (Sir H. B. Lefroy) occupied that position, has been to induce the people of Western Australia to produce. Production is nothing without the facilities for getting the products into a profitable market. It is the benefit of production that is to redeem this State. I regard the motion as a step in that direction. The object is to have production distributed throughout the State, and wealth created, not in one centre where it has to filter through a vast variety of channels—delaying and oppressive channels.

Mr. Maloy: Intercourse between towns.

Hon. T. WALKER: Undoubtedly. And this in itself is a means of distributing wealth. The object of the hon. member is to diminish the cost, I take it, of production. He proposes to have at Geraldton the means of creating wealth, derivable not only from the neighbourhood of Geraldton, from the lead fields and the copper fields about Northampton, but right away from the Murchison. His proposal, if carried, will serve Peak Hill, the East Murchison and the Murchison itself, and by diminishing the costs it will of course enable the works to continue at a greater rate. What has been the cause of the decline in our marketing of lead during the past few years, and also in our marketing of copper? The cost of transit and the handling between the mines and the smelting works. During the war, as we are all aware, we had to take all our base metals eastward to get them to the markets through channels that were not particularly sympathetic to Western Australia. Even if they had been sympathetic the cost of transit and intermediate handling was so great that it did not pay. We could not produce under such circumstances; that wealth was absolutely lost to us. I notice in the returns of the Mines Department, Table 11, the Northampton mineral field produced lead ore of the value of £176,330 in 1918. Those are not large figures, though at the end of the war period after the operations of the base metals exchange, they reveal to us possibilities. If we had proper facilities close handy, ten or even twenty times that yield could be put on the market and it could be rendered of service to all who required those metals. But not only do we lose in actual wealth to the extent I have mentioned, and perhaps twenty times more, we lose also in the employment of men, and in the building up of small towns. We talk of populating the State and becoming a great State through our products when we render it impossible to go on with production of this character by the narrow spirit of centralisation which takes everything to Fremantle, or for that

matter, away to the Eastern States, instead of Fremantle. Fremantle and the metropolitan area are suffering from that which they themselves have cultivated in the past. This State can never be made great until we distribute the population and the industries through all the areas. We must not grow one big stomach, so to speak, in Fremantle, to swallow everything. We must have division. We must cover the country with toilers, with industrial bodies who alone produce the great wealth which the world enjoys. We cannot localise products if we are to become a State and not a mere little centralised township. I rejoice in the motion of the hon. member because it points out how we are to carry out our policy of production, build our corn mills in the country, and have our manufactures for our wool where the wool is produced, our towns right away in our pastoral areas living upon the wool products of the State and thriving and becoming prosperous. Build our smelters where the base metals are most easily procured, where there is less expense of transit and of handling, and where all the incidental agencies connected between the mines and the smelters are to be found. Carry out that policy and we will make it then possible to have the whole of Australia a hive of busy toilers, whereas we must exhaust our possibilities if we centre everything in one city or in one district. This is a policy that we should support if we want to see Western Australia and not a particular constituency go ahead at the expense of others. There must also be some driving force in the Assembly applied to every Government that comes in to carry out this policy of making every part of the State prosperous and not making one section a mere sponge to exhaust the vitality of all others. If there be any virtue in the metropolis at all it should be in distributing impulse to outlying districts and stimulating them, encouraging them, fostering them, and building them up. That is the true way of building a nation. An advantage is that the proposed smelters will be near the source of supply. An advantage also is in being close to a port which I hope will rival Fremantle, because, if it rivals Fremantle, it must benefit Fremantle. Every spot that is prosperous in Western Australia radiates its prosperity. It cannot confine prosperity to itself. Therefore, if Geraldton becomes a rival port of Fremantle, if its harbour be made and ships go there to carry away the metals, and if factories are built there, and a large population extends there, we shall have the means of interchange and of reciprocity between port and port, and it will be the whole of Australia instead of this little centre that will go ahead and become prosperous. By decentralisation we encourage the circulation of the life-blood of the community, interdependent of all the parts, each part strengthened by the outlying part, every part strengthening every other, and every single one depending upon the strength of the rest, and growing to grandeur and prosperity. I hope we shall

get the motion through and that we shall not stop there. We must make it imperative that the Government pursue a policy of decentralisation, that we do not leave the country merely to the farmers, that we do not leave Geraldton a mere calling port for the North-West—

Mr. Willcock: Not even a calling port.

Hon. T. WALKER: But that we shall in every conscious pathway open to us build up our industries, secondary as well as primary, right away to the farthest borders of our civilisation. Let me hope that when the times comes, no member will forget the possibilities of other ports that are equally neglected.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [5.42]: As the member for Greenough said, there will be no difficulty in obtaining support for this motion. It gives me pleasure to support it and I hope the outcome will be the starting of the industry in Geraldton. During last session members will no doubt remember that I moved practically a similar motion. The object was to induce the Government to start a State smelter at Geraldton. During the debate on that motion an amendment was moved to the effect that a full report be obtained in connection with the matter, and I asked the then Minister for Mines that if the report stated that the smelter was found to be justified in Geraldton, whether he would proceed to erect it forthwith. I also said at that particular time that the base metal industry of Western Australia was absolutely in the hands of the Fremantle Trading Company, and if they liked to close down or make their charges prohibitive they could stop the mining of base metals in the State. Through the shortsightedness of the Government in not taking some steps to erect smelters at Geraldton at that time we find now that the whole of the base metal industry in Western Australia has been crippled.

Mr. Hudson: Do you ascribe it to that only? It is the same all over Australia.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is not exactly the same now. Had the Government gone on with a proper refinery at Geraldton, when the necessity for it was established, the district would have been producing lead ore at the present time, and we would not have had to face a spectacle of seeing 700 or 800 men thrown out of employment and having to clear out to other parts of the State. The motion last year was amended so that a full report might be called for, but apparently nothing of the kind was done. When the motion was originally moved, a report by the State Mining Engineer in condemnation of the proposal was brought forward, and that report is the only one which has been received up to date. That report was dated the 15th October, and the motion was carried on the 6th December. But the good which should have resulted from the full and free discussion has not been attained, because no report has been prepared in the terms of the amended motion. The present Minister for Mines, when asked if a report had been obtained, replied in the

affirmative, but when the report was laid on the Table of the House, I found it was an obsolete report which was obtained a week after the original motion was moved in the House. The most important feature of this proposal is the geographical position Geraldton occupies in relation to the base metal industry. Base metals are being produced in the far North. We have the Whim Creek copper deposits and deposits of copper at Meekatharra and beyond. We have copper at Arrino, and we have lead in about ten different localities within 50 or 60 miles of Geraldton, some of which deposits are payable and some of which, with encouragement by the erection of an up to date smelting plant, will develop into payable propositions. The objection to the erection of the smelter at Geraldton last year was that there was a plant at Fremantle capable of dealing with the base metals production of Western Australia. That plant has now been closed down on account of it being not up to date and incapable of properly refining the ore.

Mr. Hudson: Is that a fact?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes. A proper refining plant should be erected at Geraldton. The policy of the Federal Government, as enunciated by the Prime Minister and which effectually murdered the base metal industry in this district, was that no ore or metals of any description should be permitted to leave Australia except in a properly refined condition. The Fremantle works could not refine the base metals to suit the requirements of the Federal Government, and therefore could not continue. The ores then had to be sent to the Eastern States, and it was found that the freight charges were so high that the scheme was unprofitable, and the industry had to close down. We have heard a good deal during the past 12 or 18 months about repatriation. This is one means whereby we can repatriate at least 1,000 men. If the Federal embargo were lifted, there would be sufficient mining development and sufficient expansion of other related industries at Geraldton to employ 1,000 men. Some men would be engaged on the lime deposits in the vicinity of Geraldton. There is plenty of flux in the district and the charcoal and other industries incidental to the refining of the ore would all require labour and would absorb 1,000 men in a very short space of time. The Commonwealth, before giving permission to carry on the industry, are seeking to impose a condition that each proprietor or owner of a lead mining show shall guarantee to take shares in the plant proposed to be erected and to become a member of the Metal Exchange. The membership of that exchange or combine as I prefer to call it, costs £500. That is a considerable sum for any small mine owner, and the money could be much better expended in the development of a mine than in joining a combine where we should have no representation worth speaking of, owing to being outnumbered by the Eastern States magnates. The Metal Exchange impose a

charge on the export of lead ore in its refined state of one per cent. That is a disgraceful state of affairs and should not be tolerated. No Government should permit an industry to be handicapped in that way. We talk about freedom of trade and of contract, and yet we give the producers of one of our most important industries over to the tender mercies of a combine of Eastern States mining representatives, who do not care a rap for Western Australia or its interests. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) spoke about centralisation. He has had bitter experience of centralisation at Fremantle and of Esperance being deprived of the goldfields trade which rightly belonged to it. Something similar applies to Geraldton. It should be the policy of the Government to develop every portion of the State, and not one particular centre. By establishing this industry, we should provide employment and enable young people to obtain employment in the town where they were born and bred. When a youth reaches the age of 14 or 15 years, he has to clear out of Geraldton and go back to the Murchison mining, or take up shearing or some of the other industries connected with wool; or else he has to be content to stand behind a counter. These are about the only outlets for his industry. Consequently, when a family of boys reach a work-going age, the parents have to clear out of the place and thus this policy of centralisation progresses. These boys are willing and able to work in decent and profitable employment in the town, and yet they have to leave the place in search of employment. This is an opportunity for the Government to show their earnestness in carrying out a decentralisation policy—

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss the question of decentralisation.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I was working round to the point that the Government would have an opportunity to bring about decentralisation by establishing this industry and thus provide employment for men in the district. There has been no opposition to the proposal so far. I delayed speaking earlier in order to be in a position to answer any opposition which might have been advanced. I could have given many reasons which I advanced last session to show that Geraldton is the only place where refining works for the base metal industry should be established.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [5.55]: I would not have spoken on this motion but for the unwarranted and unchivalrous attack made by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) on the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) during his absence. The member for Coolgardie referred to the member for North-East Fremantle as being parochial.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for North-East Fremantle is not under discussion.

Mr. JONES: The motion deals with the establishment of smelting works in the northern districts and, in dealing with the motion, the member for Coolgardie affirmed that anyone who dared to dispute that smelting works should be established in that particular district was purely parochial. Owing to his attack upon the member for North-East Fremantle, I feel called upon to reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: I heard the speech of the member for Coolgardie and he did not make any attack at all.

Mr. Lambert: On a point of order, I request that the hon. member for Fremantle withdraw those remarks. I made no attack at all upon the member for North-East Fremantle.

Mr. JONES: If the member for Coolgardie is prepared to shelter himself behind your ruling, I shall not attack his defenceless body. It appears to me that practically every point which has been advanced in favour of the motion has been purely against private enterprise in the smelting industry. With the exception of the illuminating remarks of the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), the whole debate has been purely and simply an attack upon the Fremantle smelting works, which are conducted by private enterprise.

Mr. Maley: They were never mentioned.

Mr. JONES: I do not say that they have been mentioned, but there is no doubt in the minds of members to what particular matter the mover of the motion and other speakers have referred.

Mr. Hudson: The member for Geraldton said the Fremantle smelters were not competent to deal with the ore.

Mr. JONES: Quite so. The member for Coolgardie knows full well there is no more parochial member than himself in the House. No man would be more parochial in the interests of his own district if he knew where his own district was.

Mr. Lambert interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not continue to discuss other hon. members' constituencies and parochialism.

Mr. JONES: Then I must ask for your protection from the inane interjections of the member for Coolgardie.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw the remark regarding inane interjections.

Mr. JONES: I withdraw. The whole argument has been against the privately-owned smelting works, and the way in which ore is treated at the present time.

Mr. Maley: No, you are wrong.

Mr. Lambert: You are thinking of freezing works.

Mr. JONES: The argument has been in favour of establishing a State refinery at Geraldton because the plant at Fremantle is incapable of dealing with the ore produced. It appears that since this ore has to be transported over a privately-owned railway and treated at privately-owned works, hon. members would introduce the argument that all would be well if only State works were

established at Geraldton. Whilst the policy of decentralisation is highly commendable, the port of Geraldton can never hope to rival the port of Fremantle. Geraldton lacks the natural facilities.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The ports of Fremantle and Geraldton are not under discussion. I want the hon. member to understand that if I allow him to continue on his present lines, then if other hon. members attack the port of Fremantle I shall not be in a position to object to it. I have listened to the debate closely, and the question hinges upon the need for erecting a modern smelting plant at Geraldton and upon the advantages offered in that connection by the close proximity of Geraldton to the ore-bearing districts.

Mr. JONES: No member has yet put forward a valid argument why the port of Geraldton should be the site of the proposed works. Until such an argument is advanced, I shall be unable to support the motion.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [6.3]: I am pleased to support the motion of the member for Greenough. Geraldton is well situated geographically for the erection of an up-to-date smelting plant to treat base metal ores from the central Murchison and east Murchison fields and from the North-West. We know there are some good copper propositions in the Yalgoo, Cue, Peak Hill, and Meekatharra districts, many of which are at present closed down on account of excessive handling charges. Ore must be classified as yielding 25 per cent. before it can be bagged and sent to Port Kembla. The establishment of smelters at Geraldton would enable all the propositions in question to be worked. We are out to assist the mining industry, and here is an opportunity to do something tangible. Again, there are the lead mines of the Northampton district to be considered. We know that that district has sent a large quantity of lead ore to Fremantle for treatment. Various speakers have mentioned that after treatment at Fremantle this ore must be sent to the Eastern States to be refined. Now, anyone wishing to join the Metal Exchange must pay £500 entrance fee, and one per cent. is charged by the exchange on all ore leaving Australia. These are heavy imposts on the base metal industry of our State. I am glad of the opportunity afforded us by this motion to do something towards the establishment of the smelting industry in a district well situated for it geographically. It is at all times a pleasure to me to help towards the opening of another port. Though centralisation may have nothing to do with the subject of this motion, we know that every opportunity is seized to centre all things in Perth and Fremantle. The establishment of up-to-date smelting works at Geraldton will lend a strong impetus to base metal mining, and therefore I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by the Attorney General, debate adjourned.

MOTION—WHEAT PRODUCTION, PRICE GUARANTEE.

Debate resumed from the 15th October on the motion by the member for Moore (Sir H. B. Lefroy), as amended—

“That in the opinion of this House it is in the best interests of Australia that a sum of 5s. per bushel at the various sidings should be guaranteed to growers of wheat by the Commonwealth Government for a term of five years.”

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [6.8]: It appears to me that the motion moved by the member for Moore (Sir H. B. Lefroy) is preferable to the amendment proposed by the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley). The motion, if carried, would be a mandate to the Government of this State to act in the direction of giving the wheat growers of Western Australia the desired minimum guarantee. On the other hand, the amendment represents merely a pious wish that the Federal authorities should act.

Mr. SPEAKER: The amendment has already been carried. The hon. member must discuss the motion as amended, as it now appears on the Notice Paper.

Mr. JOHNSTON: In that case I am very much afraid that we shall look to the Federal authorities in vain. It is easy for us to ask the Federal authorities to do something that this Parliament itself has power to do. It is an easy matter to pass our responsibilities on to the Federal Government, and then shelve the matter by reason of their inaction. I am not sanguine that the Commonwealth Government will take the action which this motion asks them to take. In the past we have too often looked to the Federal authorities in vain as regards the best interests of Western Australia. Undoubtedly it is quite practicable for either the Federal or the State Government to grant the wheat growers the relief asked for in this motion. During the war period wheat growing has been kept alive partially by the fact that guarantees of this nature have been afforded to those engaged in the industry. When I saw this motion had been moved by an ex-Premier of the State, my feeling was one of support combined with regret that the hon. gentleman did not a few months ago, when he was Premier of this State and had the opportunity to do what his knowledge told him was necessary, give that guarantee asked for in the motion which he so ably submitted to the House. Had the member for Moore taken such action at that time, I am certain that wheat growing throughout the State would have received a strong stimulus. Practical farmers in this House know that a guarantee, in order to be really effective in regard to increasing the area of cropping, must be given at least two years ahead. No doubt that is the reason why the mover has asked for a guarantee covering five years. Western

Australia has a good crop this season. The assurance of the price of 5s. per bushel at the siding came at the last moment, came too late to influence one acre of cropping this year. The only influence it can have exercised would be as regards cutting for wheat instead of hay. I venture to say that the result of a five years guarantee would surprise even the optimistic Premier of the day, who will delight in the millions of bushels that will be added to our annual return of wheat. In this Chamber, which has always given sympathetic consideration to the requirements of the wheat grower in particular, it is unnecessary for me to emphasise the value of the wheat growing industry to the people of this State. More than any other industry we have in Western Australia does the work of the wheat grower bring business and profit and prosperity to every section of the community. In the past, unfortunately, the profit and prosperity have been brought to all sections except the wheat grower himself. Perhaps the wheat grower and his wife and family have profited least of all from his labour. In good seasons we found the railways busy transporting wheat, and the townships in the wheat areas humming with industry. Every one, from the village blacksmith to the storekeeper, was provided with work and business as the result of the wheat grower's industry. But the wheat grower and his family, I repeat, profited least of all. I trust the Federal Government will give the guarantee suggested by the motion as amended, but if they fail to do so, I hope the State Government will view the carrying of the motion as an indication that it is the wish of this House that the guarantee shall be given by them to the Western Australian wheat grower. I have already said that the guarantee, in order to be effective, should be for a period of at least two years. This is necessary in order that the land may be fallowed and cropped fully. If the price is guaranteed for a number of seasons, then, adopting for the moment the role of the present Premier, I venture to prophesy in that gentleman's optimistic vein that before five years are up the annual wheat return of Western Australia will amount to at least 50 millions of bushels.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Before tea I predicted that, given good seasons and the proposed guarantee of the price of wheat in the terms of the motion, our wheat crop would be increased from the standing record of 1916, when it reached 18,236,355 bushels, to figures of about 50 million bushels by the end of the five years' guarantee. I need not labour the effect this would have on the prosperity of the State, but in view of our present financial position I venture to point out that this guarantee would bring about a marked improvement in the finances of Western Australia. We know

that when confronted by a deficit or other difficulties, it has been the policy of successive Governments of Western Australia to appeal to the farming community to produce, produce, produce, to assist the country out of its troubles, and hon. members will remember how successfully Sir Henry Lefroy carried that slogan of produce, produce, produce, throughout Western Australia two years ago. Notwithstanding that, we find that the deficit has increased in an appalling fashion. No policy of retrenchment has been undertaken, and those of us who from time to time have asked for economy in administration in both the State and Federal arenas find that our voices are as lone voices crying in the wilderness. The present Government evidently pin their faith to a policy of increased production rather than to one of retrenchment and severe economy, such as, in view of the financial position, many of us think will be necessary. I am at one with the Government in their desire for a policy of production. I ask them to make that policy effective by such a guarantee as that proposed in the terms of the motion. I believe that this guarantee, if given effect to, will lift the State out of her present unfortunate financial position better than can any other action of the Government. I should like to point out, from the recent figures showing the decline both in the wheat yield and in area under crop in this State, that there is absolute need for some encouragement to the wheatgrower, unless we are prepared to view with equanimity the severe decline in the area cropped year by year. In 1916 Western Australia reached the record of 1,734,117 acres under wheat; in 1917 this had decreased to 1,566,608 acres; in 1918 it had decreased to 1,249,762 acres, whilst the forecast for this season was only 1,165,020 acres. This is a decrease in four years from 1,734,117 acres to 1,165,020 acres. We cannot calmly sit here and see the area under crop in wheat decline in four years by nearly 600,000 acres, or almost one-third of the area which was cultivated four years ago. In regard to production, I am sorry to say the figures are even worse. In 1916 we produced 18,236,355 bushels of wheat; in 1917 we produced 16,103,216 bushels; in 1918 the figures were 9,303,787 bushels; a decline in production of just 50 per cent. in three years, whilst the forecast for this year is 10,834,686 bushels, a forecast which, I think, will be more than realised. However, in four years our wheat production will have declined from 18,236,355 bushels to 10,834,686 bushels. Not only do these figures show the necessity for the encouragement of the wheatgrower, but when we look at the figures relating to the deficit we find that it has gone on increasing in a ratio corresponding in some degree to the decrease in the wheat yield. This shows the importance of this industry to Western Australia. Hon. members must be alarmed

on knowing that both the area under wheat, and the production of wheat have decreased so much. It is our duty to do something in the matter. Nothing more tangible, more effective, or more substantial has been brought forward to cope with the problem than the proposed guarantee. If the guarantee is not given, the people of Western Australia will continue to see some of the richest wheat lands in the State, which ought to be cultivated and cropped each year, turned to the more lucrative purpose of raising sheep. That is the tendency at the present time. The price for wool is assured. The area under crop in wheat is rapidly declining, and the Government can stem that decline and bring the State back to prosperity by such a guarantee as that proposed in the motion. There is little risk in guaranteeing the price. High prices for produce seem assured, and no one would wish this State, or the Commonwealth, to give a guarantee that was not a reasonable one. During the war period the United States have actually given a guarantee of 9s. 2d. per bushel for the production of wheat, which is a very large amount compared to the sum the wheatgrowers of Western Australia require to keep their industry going. In asking for this guarantee we are only asking for a living wage for the wheatgrower. To all other classes of the community a living wage is readily conceded by the community. We on these benches are always prepared to assist any section of the community to obtain a living wage, and surely, in view of the importance of the wheat industry to this State, as evidenced by the figures I have quoted, the community is under an obligation to give the farmer the same living wage by means of a guarantee. We are already familiar with the guarantee system, which has been in operation during the war period. The risk is infinitesimal. The wheatgrower cannot afford to take a smaller guarantee, and we ask the community to come to his rescue in this respect. In view of the fact that the community reaps the main benefit through the production, we feel that this is a reasonable request to put forward, not in the interests of the wheatgrower, but in the interests of the community and the State as a whole. Without this guarantee I warn the Government that we shall see the richest wheat lands in Western Australia being devoted more and more as the years pass to the production of wool and sheep rather than to cultivation. The amount of the guarantee asked for will probably be largely exceeded in the world's market, and in view of that I hope the Government will not only accept the motion but will at the earliest possible date send it to the Prime Minister for consideration and attention, with the whole force and weight of the Parliament of Western Australia behind it.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [7.43]: We can best reach our objective by my moving an amendment to insert before "Commonwealth" in line 6 the words "State and."

Mr. SPEAKER: That amendment has already been dealt with. The hon. member can add the words to the motion, but he cannot insert them at the point he indicates. "State" has already been struck out, and "Commonwealth" substituted. The hon. member cannot insert "State" again.

Mr. HARRISON: Can I add to the motion the words "with the assistance of the State"?

Mr. SPEAKER: The House has already decided that the Commonwealth Government should be responsible. "State" was struck out.

Point of Order.

Mr. Johnston: On a point of order! The word "State" was not in the original motion, which read—"That in the opinion of this House it is in the best interests of Western Australia that a sum of 5s. per bushel should be guaranteed to growers of wheat for a term of five years." It is left open as to who should give the guarantee.

Mr. Speaker: What does "Western Australia" mean?

Mr. Johnston: The original motion did not say by whom the guarantee should be given.

Mr. Speaker: Then what is the sense of the motion?

Mr. Johnston: There was not complete sense in it at that stage.

Mr. Speaker: I think the sense of the motion was that the State should be responsible. This was struck out, and the "Commonwealth Government" inserted, which meant the Commonwealth Government instead of the State Government. The hon. member would not be in order in inserting the words "State Government."

The Premier: Would not the hon. member be in order in adding words, after the word "State," "and that the State Government be asked to join in the guarantee"?

Mr. Speaker: The House has decided that no obligation should rest upon the State by striking out "Western Australia" and putting in "the Commonwealth Government." "Western Australia" there stands for the State Government, I take it, and it is a direction to the State Government to guarantee the 5s. per bushel for a certain period; but "Western Australia" is struck out with the object of placing that obligation upon the Commonwealth Government.

Debate resumed.

Sir H. B. LEFROY (Moore—in reply) [7.47]: I am sorry to hear from my hon. friend that in his opinion there was no sense in the original motion.

Mr. Johnston: I said it was not complete.
Sir H. B. LEFROY: The original motion was "that in the opinion of this House

it was in the best interests of Western Australia that a sum of 5s. per bushel should be guaranteed to growers of wheat for a term of five years." That is a sensible motion. If this House affirms the principle, the Government of the day would then have to decide what should be done in the matter, whether the State should take it up or whether they should approach the Commonwealth Government. I prefer the motion as it was originally introduced. It was more flexible in that way than in the House offering the opinion that the Commonwealth should give this guarantee. I wish to affirm the principle that it is in the best interests of Western Australia that the guarantee of 5s. a bushel should be given for five years to the growers of wheat. The main object has been lost sight of. It was not intended to benefit the individual, though it would do so, but to benefit the State. I stated when moving the motion that, with the large amount of alienated land, and land in process of alienation in Western Australia, it was to be regretted that so much of it was unimproved. If the country were improved and made to grow wheat, it would be made to carry more grass. In no other way can the people of the country be induced to improve the land as it should be improved. It is said that people can be forced to improve their land by taxation, but I do not believe in that method. What we want to do is to stimulate the industry of wheat growing, so as to get our land cleared and improved. Reference has been made to the fact that the gold miners are not guaranteed. One hon. member said that if the gold miner were guaranteed £5 an ounce for his gold he would vote for the motion. What makes gold mining attractive is that the price is guaranteed. We have a standard value placed upon gold, which is the only thing on which there is a standard value. That is what creates that "cursed hunger for gold." The gold miner knows that no matter what happens he will get £4 2s. 6d. an ounce for fair average quality gold. No matter how much he may produce, he cannot flood the market. It is not like wheat growing, apple growing or potato growing. That is what gives a fascination to gold mining. It is not the colour of the metal that attracts people, but its value. What I want to do is to stimulate the wheat growing industry in order to attract people to it, and not only to grow it but to improve the country and the national asset by giving them some guarantee that no matter what happens they will get a fair value for their produce. If it were possible to give effect to the motion, I maintain that the advantages to Western Australia would be incalculable. We have an almost totally undeveloped country. One third of Australia is in Western Australia, although a large extent of this country could not be utilised for agricultural purposes. Inside the agricultural areas, however, there is an enormous extent of country which can and ought to be improved. It is only by offering some incentive such as this that people will be induced to clear their

land and grow wheat upon it, and so make it more profitable than it was in its natural state. Reference has been made to the United States. I know that a guarantee is given there, but it is only fair to say that the position in Australia is very different from that in the United States. I think a guarantee was given there to induce the people to grow wheat in order to feed the community. My object here is not to induce people to grow wheat, to feed the community, but to induce them to improve the land by growing wheat upon it. I have heard it stated by people who own land that at a price of 3s. a bushel they do not intend to continue growing wheat, but prefer to graze sheep on the land in its unimproved condition. I do not want to see that. I want to see the land improved. The carrying capacity of the country, after it is cultivated and wheat grown upon it, is quadrupled. That must be of advantage to Western Australia. I would prefer to see a principle such as this carried into effect rather than that the people should be assisted through the Industries Assistance Board or other institutions similar to that. I would do away with all that sort of thing. I would see that we offered 5s. a bushel to the farmer for his wheat. The man who cannot grow wheat profitably at 5s. a bushel should go off the land and make room for someone else. That would be of greater advantage to the State as well as to the individual. Whether this motion will have any effect or not it is not for me to say. I am pleased to have an expression of opinion from hon. members, and feel confident that if a principle such as this were adopted and carried into effect it would give a greater stimulus to agriculture and would benefit the country more than anything else could possibly do. I moved the motion in the interests of the State, because it is only by a guarantee of this sort that people will be induced to improve their land in the way it should be improved for the benefit of the State. Twelve months ago a large number of farmers were being discouraged by certain people from growing wheat. Some said they would get nothing for their wheat. I did everything I could, through the Press and by other means, to encourage people to grow wheat, and I am pleased to say that my advice has had some good effect upon the farmers. In view of the position I occupied at the time, the farmer had some confidence that in offering this advice I had sure grounds to go upon. I had not the control over the seasons that the present Premier appears to have. I was not able to turn on the tap as successfully as he has been able to do. When I attempted to do so I put on too much and rather spoil the crops than otherwise. I am pleased that my successor has been able to pour down on the agricultural areas rains at the proper time and in proper quantities, such as he has been able to do during this year. I did all I could to encourage the farmer to go on growing wheat, and I am confident that he is reaping the benefit of the good advice I gave him at the time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Armistice did more.

Sir H. B. LEFROY: I believe that wheat for some years to come will be of a fairly high value. The man on the land is not in as close touch with what is going on in the world as are hon. members and people living in the City. No one is more shy than the farmer about making experiments. He always wants to feel that there is some certainty of success to follow the work that he has in hand. A guarantee like this would have a good effect in helping Western Australia out of its present position. We must produce. If we cannot do that Western Australia cannot go ahead. My desire is to encourage the people of the State to produce. No matter in what way production takes place, it must be of benefit to the State. I hope the discussion will do good, and that something will be done in future to carry out the principle embodied in the original motion. The motion as amended does not carry out the views I have on the subject as well as the motion I first submitted to the House. I thank hon. members for the way they have dealt with the motion, and I trust that the people of Western Australia may in the future receive greater inducement to clear the country and subdue the wilderness and make the land profitable for themselves and for the State as well.

Question as amended put and a division called for.

The House divided.

Mr. SPEAKER: I declare the motion carried, as there is only one hon. member voting No.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Will I be in order in moving that the resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can move at this stage that it be forwarded to the Legislative Council for their concurrence.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [8.5]: I move—

That the resolution be transmitted by message to the Legislative Council and their concurrence desired therein.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.6]: I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—STATE SMELTING WORKS, TREATMENT OF ORES.

Order of the Day read for resumption of debate from 10th September on motion by the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith)—

“That Subclause (2) of Regulation 16, for the treatment of auriferous copper ores at the State Smelting Works, Phillips River, under “The Mining Development Act, 1902,” and laid upon the Table of the House on the 31st July, 1919, be disallowed.”

On motion by Mr. Davies, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Order discharged.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [8.8]: As I understand that I can attain the object I had in view when I introduced this Bill, by submitting an amendment to a similar Bill which has since been introduced by the Attorney General, I desire to move—

That the Order be discharged from the Notice Paper.

Question put and passed, the Order discharged.

BILL — MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 49:

Mr. PILKINGTON: The subject-matter of this clause was discussed at considerable length a few evenings ago when the Road Districts Bill was before the House, and there is therefore no need to go over the same ground. The question is one on which the Minister for Works expressed himself strongly, and I have no doubt the Government will follow up the attitude of the Minister and take a stand in regard to the matter. I move an amendment—

That the words “and by omitting the words ‘and if the district is divided into wards, on the electoral roll for every ward in which any such land is situated’ ” be struck out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member must have misunderstood the statement made by the Minister for Works, who declared that while he was opposed to the one vote system, he would limit the number of votes. The Act provides that a person may exercise two votes for councillor in each ward of a municipality. In Perth there are eight wards, and a person who owned property of a certain value in each ward would be entitled to have 16 votes.

The Attorney General: Why were so many votes given originally?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot tell the Attorney General. I do not know where this provision was taken from, and I cannot understand why we in Australia, who boast of our democracy, should have any different system in regard to the election of mayor and councillors from that prevailing in other parts of the world.

Mr. Pilkington: The qualification in England is much higher.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It varies. It is possible to become a mayor of some borough

by owning property of a rateable value of £15. Many of the old boroughs in England, however, have been brought into existence by charter, but so far as the ratepayer is concerned he is only allowed one vote. This question has nothing to do with the qualification of a candidate. The Municipalities Act has for many years provided that so long as a person is a ratepayer he is qualified to become a candidate for any office in the municipality. This is entirely a question of the number of votes a ratepayer shall have. It is difficult to alter the qualification and it is more difficult to deprive a person of any power he has possessed in the past. These remarks remind me of the words of the Archbishop reported in to-day's Press that the greatest enemies we have to contend with are those who do not desire to change. The people of this State desire a change in this direction. The member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington), in dealing with this question on the Road Districts Bill, said there is no reason why we should follow the example of other countries. If other countries have found the system beneficial, we shall not go far wrong in following their example. I do not admit that, because a man owns property, he is better than a man who does not. Authorities tell us that the worst man in a municipal council is the man engaged in a large business because he cannot see outside his own shop door. He is prone to consider a matter from the point of view of what will be of greatest benefit to his business. I should like the municipal franchise broadened to give every person an opportunity. The rateable value is fixed, and I have not endeavoured to remove the property qualification, but I have endeavoured to put every one on an equality. The large business firm entitled to four votes for the mayor and two for the councillor do not pay the rates. They charge rates on to the prices of their goods, and the customers in reality pay their rates. While they claim to have a greater amount at stake from a financial point of view than an average ratepayer, they really have no more at stake than a man who owns his own cottage. The greatest safeguard against a local authority doing anything wrong in regard to rating is the man who owns his own cottage. He realises that, if anything is done which will increase the amount of rates to be paid, it will have to come out of his earnings, whereas most business people merely charge additional rates on to the prices of their goods, and the general public pay them. I hope the Committee will put this law on a par with the laws in the other States. One ratepayer, one vote, has been the law in South Australia for years, though I admit that a ratepayer there has one vote in each ward. In New Zealand, one vote only is the law and the ratepayer having qualifications in more than one ward has to choose the ward in which he desires to vote. In New South Wales, the latest Bill provides one ratepayer one vote in one ward only. In England it is one ratepayer and one vote. Why

should it be different here? In Sydney, I believe, they have not only one ratepayer one vote, but the lodger vote as well. The time is not far distant when the people of Western Australia will not be content with the one ratepayer one vote, but will want adult voting for local government. This provision was intended to provide one vote and one vote only for municipalities. The road boards did not agree to this principle, but they limited their votes to four. The Minister for Works has adopted that. This is the same principle but carried a little further. In the Road Districts Bill, provision has been made for one vote and one only in the case of new road boards. It is far better for a man elected to a municipal council to realise that he is supported by a majority of the ratepayers.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is a difference as regards voting for municipalities and voting for members of Parliament. Outside of the ordinary expense of maintenance and upkeep which is supposed to be defrayed out of the rates, the cost of improvements in municipalities like Perth amounts to a very large sum, and is generally effected out of loans. The property owned by people becomes the security for these loans and property owners may forbid a loan at a poll. That is the reason we have a property qualification for voting in municipalities instead of the ordinary qualification of adult suffrage. Let us see how this would work when dealing with wards. Perth is a very large municipality having several wards and it has been largely increased in recent years. In the circumstances, it becomes important for people who own property in any particular ward to have a representative in the council. It becomes of vital importance to the ratepayers to see that their particular portion of the municipality is properly provided for, and the Act gives a separate vote in each ward to a ratepayer having the qualification. The question now before us is not whether the ratepayer is to have one or two votes, but whether he is to have any vote as regards his particular ward. To deprive a ratepayer of his vote in respect of a particular ward, which vote he would cast for some councillor to look after the interests of the ward, would be an injustice. The question now is not whether a ratepayer should have one or two votes but whether he should have any vote at all so far as the ward is concerned. I hope members will oppose this innovation in municipal law in this State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I fail to follow the reasoning of the Attorney General or the distinction he has attempted to draw between a municipal vote and that for Parliamentary elections. The Attorney General says there is a distinction and he argues that, in the case of municipalities where the money for the improvements is borrowed on the security of the land, the owners of the land should have some special or extra voice in municipal government.

Precisely the same argument applies to voting for Parliament. This State borrows millions of money upon the security of the land and the wealth of the State and, if the argument is sound, he should, to follow it to its logical conclusion and argue that the people who own the land should have extra voting power for this House simply because they own land pledged as security for the money borrowed. The argument may be carried into the Federal arena. The Federal Government have borrowed three hundred millions of money during the war period upon the security of the property of Australia. Therefore, the men who own the property ought to have extra voting strength for the Parliament of the Commonwealth. There is no distinction whatever. If a man owns a block of land in the city and is entitled to extra voting power, he should have extra voting power for this Assembly and for the Federal Parliament according to the Attorney General's argument.

Mr. Smith: He has it for the Legislative Council.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but not for the Commonwealth Parliament where there are greater issues at stake. In any event, are we going to oppose this merely because it is an innovation? I am surprised at this Parliament, having in view the statement so frequently made that after the war all things would change. I do not know whether Nationalism is synonymous with Toryism, but it is a fact that this Chamber, composed of Nationalists in a majority of two to one, is the most reactionary Assembly in which I have ever held a seat. No Parliament has sat down so tightly on its privileges as the Parliament of Western Australia has done. This Parliament sticks like a troglodyte to the privileges of property. I ask the Committee to carry the clause as printed, unless we are to brand ourselves as the most reactionary and most hopelessly Tory Chamber in Australia today.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In reply to the Attorney General, I have to point out that under the Municipalities Act the owner alone has the right to say whether or not a loan shall be raised. Therefore the owner is protected in that respect. The person who claims votes in more than one ward is generally the owner of vacant blocks, for it is the occupier of any house that has the vote, and not the owner. Some of the vacant blocks I refer to are so small that, in comparison with the general property qualification, they ought not to carry a vote at all. If pushed to its logical conclusion, the argument would involve giving some persons scores of votes; and some of the pluralists might not be paying more than 7s. 6d. per annum in rates. On the other hand, a man who has built a place of his own, valued at, say, £50 per annum, would be able to record only one vote. The only way to achieve fairness is to put all persons on a footing of equality in this respect. I

hope the Committee will reject the amendment.

Mr. GREEN: I fail to see how the Government can continue to press their opposition to the clause. What is there special about property? In every State of the Commonwealth the question is being raised whether property shall have any special right as regards the Legislative Council. If that right is being disputed in respect of Parliament, why should plurality of votes for property continue in municipal affairs? As the member for North-East Fremantle pointed out, it is not the owner, but the occupier, of a house that has the municipal franchise. Will the abolition of plural voting in municipal elections bring about Bolshevism? In New South Wales, and in South Australia to some extent, and in New Zealand, the very thing we are here asking for has already been granted. Let us fall into line with those communities. I trust the clause will pass as printed.

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not know whether the Attorney General is the only defender here of the principle of plurality of votes. He has appealed to the Government majority to support him. I do not know whether the silence of those hon. members gives consent. I should like to hear some argument for preferring bricks to brains. However, we hear only the Attorney General, who lives not after the war but before the deluge. We must respect the argument advanced by the member for North-East Fremantle, that we are behind Australasia in this respect. In New South Wales the principle affirmed by this clause has been recommended by the Government to Parliament. After the war, when democracy's rights have been attested and verified and sanctified on the gory battlefields of Europe, we in Western Australia propose to revert to the old principle that the man who has a few shillings in the bank, or the man who has a few feet more of ground than another, shall have a bigger voice in ruling the destinies of a city. Through the ages the reverence of the golden calf has lasted, but I did think the war would have got rid of it and that now we should be standing up for the rights of citizenship and intelligence as against the rights of money bags and broad acres. The man with a worker's home is likely to have just as much love for the city, for its welfare, for its sanitation and its cleanliness as has the portly money bag who has hitherto been worshipped as the golden calf of the community?

Mr. Pickering: You would not give him a vote?

Hon. T. WALKER: Yes, just the vote of a man. I would trust the man who has not any other property than the house in which he lives sooner than I would trust the man who by hook or by crook has obtained possessions in more than one ward. Let us take votes away from bricks and give them to the brains of the community.

Mr. MONEY: It is disappointing that a change of this nature should be asked for without more definite reasons being given. What are the duties of the municipalities? Health, water supply, drainage, roads. I have heard of no great neglect in respect of those matters. Before such a change is asked for it should be shown that the people would be more comfortable and happier for that change. If any good reason could be given for such a change I should be the first to vote for it. The member for North-East Fremantle has not made out a case of present neglect of our roads, water supplies and other facilities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are so bad that I thought the least I said of them the better.

Mr. MONEY: I do not appreciate that. I believe that if the hon. member had found anything very bad he would have clearly demonstrated it to the Committee. Up to the present he has failed in his reasons for the change.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I support the clause. I think the hon. member made out a very good case when he said that the progressive man with highly improved property in each ward provides, not himself, but the occupiers of such properties with votes, whereas the unprogressive man holding vacant land in each ward has a vote in each ward. I agree that we should take those votes from him. The speculator should not be given special voting powers.

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

| | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 13 |
| | | | | — |
| Majority for | .. | .. | .. | 3 |
| | | | | — |

AYES.

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Mr. Broun | Mr. Money |
| Mr. Draper | Mr. Nairn |
| Mr. Griffiths | Mr. Pickering |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. Piesse |
| Mr. Hickmott | Mr. Pilkington |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. Willmott |
| Sir H. B. Lefroy | Mr. Hardwick |
| Mr. Maley | (Teller.) |
| Mr. Mitchell | |

NOES.

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Lütley |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. Rocks |
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Smith |
| Mr. Davies | Mr. Walker |
| Mr. Green | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Hudson | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Jones | (Teller.) |

Amendment thus passed.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Repeal of Section 84 and substitution of new section:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: By the vote we have just taken it has been decided that each ratepayer shall have a vote in each ward. This clause provides that while the ratepayers shall be allowed to vote in each ward he shall only be allowed one vote in each ward, and one vote for the election of mayor. To-day in regard to the election of mayor a person with £25 worth of property has one vote; with £25 and not exceeding £50 worth, two votes; with £50 and not exceeding £75 worth, three votes, and with over £75 worth, four votes. For councillor a person with £50 worth of property has one vote and over that sum two votes. The voting power is based on the rateable value which runs out at a little over one-third less than the annual value. Consequently a person to have more than one vote for mayor or councillor must pay at least £1 a week in rent. Who is the more important the man who resides in a district or he who only has a small vacant block in the district? The people of the city of Perth have never yet by a majority elected a mayor. Those who elect the mayor are to a large extent residing outside of Perth. They merely come to the City to conduct their ordinary business. They carry the voting power, but the people who are their customers have to pay their rates as a charge for the carrying on of their businesses. I want to place the man who is either the occupier or the owner on an equality with the non-resident of the district. I have, therefore, introduced a provision allowing for each ratepayer one vote. We shall have a better class of councillor and a better mayor if they are elected by the people. To-day they are elected by a minority of the people, because they happen for the time being to be in occupation of business property in the City. The city council cannot raise a loan if the a majority of the owners wish to prevent it. The Municipalities Act provides that only the owners have a right to vote on a question of loans. This clause provides merely that in the election of mayor every ratepayer shall have one vote. For the councillors every ratepayer shall have one vote in each ward in which he has property, and on which he is liable to be rated. I fail to see why the towns of Western Australia should take a retrograde step if a provision of this sort becomes law. It was noticeable in the last division that most of those who voted against the clause remaining as at present were those who did not represent municipalities. They represented road board districts. The minority representing municipalities were against the clause, showing conclusively that the feeling of the residents of the municipalities is in favour of equality so far as voting is concerned. I move an amendment—

That Subclause (3) be struck out.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I find I am unable to agree with the member for North-East Fremantle. I am going to put forward the same argument as I put forward in connection with the last clause. Muni-

pal loans are raised on owners' lands and it is the owners who vote as to whether a loan is to be raised or not. That point, however, has nothing to do with the matter. The main fact is that the funds required for the improvement of the municipality are raised on the owners' land and it is those owners who choose the municipality. It is by reason of that ownership to some extent that they have one, two, three or four votes, and the very men whom they select as their representatives for the wards or for the mayoralty are people who decide whether or no a question is to be placed before the electors, and having regard to the general finances of the city they decide that certain improvements can be effected for which loan moneys are required. No reason has been advanced as to why the present system should not continue. Does the member for Kanowna imagine that because there has been a war in Europe we should now no longer retain this principle? If he believes that he must believe that the Marriage Act must be abolished. The Bolsheviks believe that the Marriage Act should be abolished.

Hon. T. Walker: Talk sense.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not suggesting that the hon. member for Kanowna is one. I have too much respect for the hon. member to think that. But does he really and conscientiously advocate that because there has been a war in Europe all legislation should be thrown on one side?

Hon. T. WALKER: I have not heard anything so illogical or so much misrepresentation of what I previously uttered as was contained in the remarks of the Attorney General. If that is the kind of defence he is going to put up for the votes of bricks and mortar, they are welcome to his arguments. They will never carry conviction to anyone. What has Bolshevism to do with the arguments I have used? It is quite fair to say that we have had five years of war to free ourselves from the dominance of wealth and autocracy.

Mr. Money: And Prussia.

Hon. T. WALKER: Prussian tyranny was just the tyranny of landlordism represented by the speech of the Attorney General. Britain had got free from that Prussianism, that worship of wealth, that dominancy of an exclusive class; Britain had made already advances on that.

Mr. Money: So had we.

Hon. T. WALKER: So had we, but now we are having it advocated that a certain class, because they are wealthier than others, should have the sole right of the direction of affairs and treat others as subservient. Their brains are to count for nothing, their desire to participate in the growth of the city and to take part in the Government is to be taboo. That is the argument of the hon. member now. The war was for what? Let the Attorney General tell us. It was to make autocracy secure.

Mr. Money: Self preservation, so far as we are concerned.

Hon. T. WALKER: And did not the hon. member himself say to make autocracy secure also? It was more than self preservation. There was not one who went to the war who did not believe that he was fighting for the whole of the world, for the whole of mankind. Is that the standpoint of the patriotism of the member for Bunbury, self preservation, self all the time? Germany was fighting for self and only for self. The Allies were fighting to free all mankind—the whole world: for that which was dearer than self, the future. The hon. member represents self all the time. The Attorney General also stands on "self"—his own little dug-out.

The Premier: You are hardly fair.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Attorney General tried to misrepresent me, but I am not trying to misrepresent him. He is living in the traditions of the past that the war was fought to change and to alter. He says that because we have won the war we are to throw all our laws of civilisation into the melting pot. What connection has that with this subject? I say throw into the melting pot the laws that limit freedom and truth and unfettered citizenship, throw into the melting pot that which creates relationship between tyrant and serf, throw into the melting pot that which prevents equality of opportunity to all. What does the Attorney General mean? Where is the cogency of his argument? These laws have been in the melting pot in the eastern part of Australia and New Zealand and have come out remodelled. We are not trying any new experiment. I am complaining because the hon. member wishes to go behind where the world has advanced to. He wants to take us backward instead of forward by turning to the dead and reverencing the effete and bowing down before the fossil. That is the position of the Attorney General, and I object to it. We have led the world in civilisation and progress, in our sports and thoughts, and have been an example, and I do not want to dishonour the reputation we have won in every sphere where our abilities have been tried, even on the battlefield itself. I do not want to go to the old conservative past and to compel citizens to bind themselves to the chariot of property. That is repulsive. I am championing pure equality of manhood; the right of every citizen to be a citizen without limitation. When it is all tested, what does the bathos of the hon. member imply when he talks of loans being secured by property?

Hon. P. Collier: They were secured by the men behind the guns.

Hon. T. WALKER: Who are the securities for the properties of this very city? The people, the citizens. What is the value of property if the citizens leave? If, for any reason, the whole of the citizens except property holders of Perth went away, and Western Australia was left to the property holders, what would the position be? Property is based on human life and energy;

it is industry and the toil of the toiler who gives value to every brick of property and every foot of ground. Citizens have made homes and created wealth by the sweat of their brows and by the giving of their lives. Those who have created the wealth are to be ignored and there is to be a dominant class, the property class. Who puts class against class? Those who are seeking to dominate over the creators of wealth because they have exploited the wealth they hold in their hands, because they have tyrannised over this class and swerved them to their will and made them yield to their discretion. Those are the class creators and they are the people who create class bitterness. Here is an evidence of it. Because a man holds property, that property is to be of greater value than human lives. The hon. member is welcome to his sneers, to his want of knowledge, to his resources of scorn that he tried to heap upon me, but time will test it. He can stand where he does to the admiration of those who are still the worshippers of the golden calf. I am satisfied I am one of the multitude who have given him the chance to sneer at those less wealthy than he. The people are on the march and will overtake those who seek these monopolies and privileges, enshrined in their dignity self-created, in the preservation of their wealth created by pride. I move with the people. We are fighting for manhood and the recognition of manhood is the only title that is honourable and honest to citizenship in this democratic State.

[Mr. Piesse took the Chair.]

Mr. MUNSIE: It has been contended that the principle contained in this subclause is the same as the question on which the Committee divided. To an extent it might be, but this is carrying the principle at least eight times further so far as the Perth municipality is concerned. What the Committee divided on was the question of limiting the property holder, even if he had property in eight wards, to one vote. This proposal suggests one vote in each of eight wards. If a person is entitled to four votes in each of eight wards at present, the Attorney General wishes him to continue the right to have 32 votes. Is there anything democratic in that? I am surprised at the Attorney General opposing the proposal. I cannot understand it. The member for North-East Fremantle is prepared to accept the principle of one vote in each ward in which a ratepayer has property, but the Attorney General says that is not giving property sufficient security or privilege.

The Premier: Why have a qualification at all?

Mr. MUNSIE: That is what I should like to know. If the opinion of all the men and women of 21 years and over could be taken, we would find that their opinion was opposed to the property qualification.

The Premier: What about the property owners?

Mr. MUNSIE: If we submitted the question to property holders, I believe they

would turn down any proposal to give one man 10 votes, because he held property of an equivalent value. We are supposed to have a Labour party, a National party and a Country party in State and Federal politics, but there is no such thing as a Country party. They are the old Conservative party the same as the Government.

Mr. Jones: Reactionaries.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. Their votes prove it on every occasion. Whenever property has some pull, every member of the Country party supports it.

The Premier: I think property should have a pull.

Mr. MUNSIE: It should have a pull but not over human life. What is it that counts? The Attorney General says it is property. What did property count for in the late war? The men who were sent from Australia counted for everything, but, when it comes to giving them the right to vote for a municipal election, property must have the say and not the manhood of the State.

The Premier: You are supporting the clause.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, because it is an advance on present conditions. The Attorney General wants to give votes according to the value of property in each ward. That is absurd and I did not expect the Premier would support it. I thought he was more democratic and would give the manhood and womanhood the right to rule and not property, but he is just as great a Tory as the Attorney General.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There seems to be a little confusion and it is not due to me. I contend that any elector in a ward has a right to vote for a councillor for that ward. The Committee have already approved of that. Now we are discussing whether, for the election in that ward, a ratepayer shall be entitled to one or two votes so far as the councillor is concerned. The member for Hannans argues that because a ratepayer has a vote in each ward, he has twice the number of votes for the total number of wards. Such a ratepayer has a vote in the ward only as regards the councillor to represent that ward. The member for North-East Fremantle does not dispute the property qualification, but he thinks it should be the same for everybody. No reason has been advanced for the change. When we come to the vote for the mayor, a ratepayer has one to four votes in accordance with property qualification.

Mr. Munsie: Why should he?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Because he has a greater stake in the property liable for taxation for the improvement of the municipality. We have had an address comparing the lives of men and women with municipal affairs. Have the members who advanced those arguments no sense of proportion? Do they compare the magnitude of the powers of this Parliament to deal, if necessary, with the life and death of the people of the State with the puny and paltry

powers in a municipal Act. What are the powers in the Municipal Corporations Act?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Health Act is administered by the municipalities, and in that way they deal with the lives of the people.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That may be, but the fact affords no argument in this connection.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I rise to repel the attack made by the member for Hannans on the Country party. The Country party have exercised a strongly democratic influence on legislation. If under this clause any individual is going to get 32 votes for a municipality, I am entirely opposed to it.

Mr. Munsie: The clause will give him that chance in Perth.

Mr. JOHNSTON: According to my reading of the clause, no person will get more than four votes in the city of Perth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This clause will enable a person to get 16 municipal votes. I do not like to accuse the Attorney General of misleading the Committee, but no member knows better than he what powers are vested in municipalities. He knows that municipalities have more to do with the lives of citizens than this Parliament has, since they administer the Health Act.

The Attorney General: But they are subject to the control of the Commissioner of Public Health.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Commissioner steps in only when he has ordered something to be done and a municipality has refused to do it. The municipalities see whether dirty drains are causing fevers, and whether dirty rights-of-way poison our children. Parliament has authorised municipalities to legislate on many subject by way of regulation. True, such regulations are subject to disapproval by both Houses of Parliament; but Parliament can rarely be induced to take an interest in the regulations when they are laid on the Table. The municipal authorities have power to deal with the individual, and therefore the individual should have the right to elect those authorities. If it is argued that property should have a number of votes according to its valuation, then the number of votes given to property should not be limited to four, but should indefinitely extend in accordance with the value of the property. By far the better course is to limit municipal voting as proposed by this clause. The Attorney General said a municipal council had the power to decide whether a loan should be raised or not.

The Attorney General: No; whether a loan should be submitted.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: However, that is not so. The council are compelled to advertise in some newspaper circulating in the district their intention to raise a loan, and they have to include in that advertisement the statement that the plans and specifications of the works to which the loan money is to be applied are available at the council's office for inspection. Then 21 owners of property can demand that a vote be taken

on the question of the loan. Thus the owners are protected in every respect. The provisions of the Roads Act in this connection are somewhat different. Under that Act one must be a resident owner in order to vote. This provision is preferable, because otherwise absentee owners can vote down the resident owners on the question of raising a loan; and that has actually occurred. In the matter of loans the council can only initiate, and the question is subject to the decision of the property owners. If it is known that elections cannot be flooded with plural votes, we shall have better men in our municipal councils. It is always an advantage to any representative to know that he represents an actual majority of his constituents. I hope the Committee will agree to place Western Australia in line with other parts of Australasia in this respect.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I shall vote against the principle of plural voting. I have a recollection of a man getting in as mayor who received the votes of 20 ratepayers having four votes each, while 70 ratepayers with one vote each voted against him. That mayor was elected by a small coterie. The principle of plural voting is absolutely undemocratic. In this respect the municipal franchise is far more undemocratic than even the Legislative Council franchise. If we were to adapt the municipal franchise to the Legislative Council an elector having a property worth £100 would have two votes or more. It is a most illogical position. I will support the clause.

The PREMIER: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause as amended put, and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
| A Tie | | | | 0 |

AYES.

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Lutey |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Munste |
| Mr. Davies | Mr. Roocke |
| Mr. Holman | Mr. Walker |
| Mr. Hudson | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Johnston | Mr. Green |
| Mr. Jones | |
| Mr. Lambert | |

(Teller.)

NOES.

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Mr. Brown | Mr. Money |
| Mr. Draper | Mr. Nairn |
| Mr. Duff | Mr. Pickering |
| Mr. Griffiths | Mr. Pilkington |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. Smith |
| Mr. Hickmott | Mr. Willmott |
| Sir H. B. Lefroy | Mr. Hardwick |
| Mr. Maley | |
| Mr. Mitchell | |

(Teller.)

The CHAIRMAN: I give my vote with the Noes.

Clause thus negatived.

Clauses 6 to 9 put and negatived.

Clauses 10 to 12—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

BILL—SALE OF CHAFF.

Second Reading.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [10.10] in moving the second reading said: Although the Bill is but a small one it is of considerable importance. Under our present method of marketing chaff the package and the chaff are sold at so much per ton, the package being included in the price. The object of the Bill is to separate these two values. The present values of chaff are from £5 to £10 per ton; the lower value is fixing that of from 12 to 24 times the value in cost per ton, that is, the package. At the end of last month 20 ounce jutes delivered at Fremantle free on rails were quoted at 17s. per dozen and 18oz. jutes were quoted at 16s., while second-hand jutes were quoted at 14s. per dozen. Their value in weight per ton worked out at respectively £126 per ton, £132 per ton, and £104 per ton. The average number of bags used per ton of chaff is 28. The price per dozen, according to this quantity, works out at 37s. 4d. and 39s. 8d., while the second-hand jute represents 32s. 8d. per ton. The present market for chaff is abnormal owing to the lack of supplies and the shortage in the Eastern States. But one does not know how long that abnormal condition will prevail. It may alter at any time. When the new season's wheat comes in and there is a surplus of only a few trucks, the price will come down. The value of jutes containing chaff throughout the year is governed by the sale of chaff. This fact causes an unduly heavy burden to fall upon the farmer. In his transactions as a grower of fodder for stock or food stuffs for human consumption he loses annually a considerable amount on his jute goods. This loss he should not be called upon to bear. Provision is made in the Bill for both new and second-hand jutes to be sold at so much per dozen, and the value of these jutes is proposed to be fixed on the price ruling, say, on 1st September in each year. The fluctuations in the price of jutes during the year may be somewhat marked, and in order to obtain a uniform value right through it is necessary to fix upon a certain date so that this value can be easily determined.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Will this not come under the price fixing measure?

Mr. HARRISON: I could not get it in there, though I should have liked to have

done so. That does not alter the position from the standpoint of the farmer. In order that the principle may be a workable one, the value must be fixed as at a certain date. Under the provisions of the Bill the farmer will lose interest on his capital outlay in the purchase of the jute goods; he will lose the freight upon them from Fremantle to his farm, and also the return freight from his farm to the market. It is impossible to frame a Bill that will allow for the fluctuations and variations in price from day to day, and for the different distances from Fremantle to each farm in the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why not fix a price for every commodity?

Mr. HARRISON: I want to fix the price of this commodity. My desire is to make the community realise the true position, and the difference there is in the values of these two commodities. They should be separated one from the other. If we are to have scientific production and scientific management of the affairs of the State, these things must be attended to. I am bringing the matter before the House in order that members may realise where we stand in regard to jute goods. When they do realise the position I am satisfied that some action will be taken, and I hope that members representing different interests in this Chamber will not hesitate to air their views upon the subject. The provisions in the Bill for the fixing of a price for the year relate to jute goods and not to the bags containing chaff. It is provided that these jute goods shall retain a uniform value throughout the year so far as concerns the producer who first makes up the bags. If chaff is sold put up in new bags the price fixed for new jute shall be paid by the next person dealing in it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is not chaff sold with the bags included?

Mr. HARRISON: Yes, but this Bill is designed to separate the two classes of bags—the new and the second-hand containing chaff.

Hon. P. Collier: How about fruit in cases?

Mr. HARRISON: If those who deal in chaff could be brought to realise the value of the bags in which it is contained, there would not be the criminal waste that goes on at the present moment. This waste commences immediately a new bale of jute is opened. When the bags are filled they are carelessly handled and hooks are indiscriminately used, with the result that much damage to the bags is done. When it is understood that the bags are worth from a half to a fifth of their original sale value when filled, it will be understood that more care will have to be taken with them. The men who load a wagon are offenders in this respect, and they are followed by the men who load from the wagon into the truck, and then there are those who load on to the lorries at the other end. All of these are careless in

the manner in which they use their hooks. It is estimated that fully ten per cent. of the jutes are rendered unfit for further use because of the treatment to which they are subjected. When the jutes are emptied more serious losses occur, both on the farm and right throughout by nearly every consumer of fodder. If this loss could be saved it would represent an amount of at least £30,000.

Hon. P. Collier: How will this Bill save it?

Mr. HARRISON: More care will be exercised when the value of the jutes is realised.

Hon. P. Collier: Do you think that the men who handle the chaff are going to be made more careful by this Bill?

Mr. HARRISON: They should be more careful when they realise how great a loss there is each year.

Hon. P. Collier: Not if they do not have to pay.

Mr. HARRISON: If bags cost 17s. per dozen, that would come to £126 per ton. Eighteen ounce jute at 16s. per dozen works out at £132 per ton. Chaff is sold at anything from £5 to £10 per ton.

Mr. Munsie: How many bags are there in a ton of chaff?

Mr. HARRISON: The average is about 28. After selling their chaff at from £5 to £10 per ton the farmers repurchase their bags in second-hand form to refill, and the cost to them works out at £104 a ton. The farmer should not constitute the buffer between other traders, and should not be called upon to bear this loss. My object is to save at all events a percentage of this loss. Our hay products for the last three years have been as follows: 1916, 395,172 tons, 1917, 236,989 tons, and 1918, 267,163 tons. It is also known that 150,000 tons come into the market annually. This is a conservative estimate, but these are the figures on which I have based my estimate. At the present rate the cost works out at 39s. 8d. for the one line, which is very close to £2 per ton. Taking the figures, 150,000 tons of hay, this will mean an amount of £300,000. On the basis of a saving of ten per cent. the economy effected would amount to £30,000. This sum amounts to more than the cost to the State involved in this Chamber, with its fifty members at £300 per annum, and six Ministers of the Crown. If such an amount can be saved to the State is it not worth while?

Mr. Willecock: How will you do that?

Mr. HARRISON: I ask hon. members to work out the figures for themselves. The farmer's business ceases when he puts his hay into the stack. Nearly all chaff-cutting is now done on contract, as well as a large proportion of the carting afterwards. The railage has to be paid for, also the commission, and these transactions are accounted for in the gross proceeds of the sale. I have tried to keep these various items separate. Through the courtesy of Mr.

Stirling Taylor, late manager of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., I was given the use of one of their offices and was brought into touch with the auctioneers in the trade with a view to seeing what could be done. I was told that if we could regulate the supply of chaff on the market they would be able to obtain a profitable return for the farmer. This could not be done, however, because the farms were so scattered and not in direct touch with the markets. These varying conditions not only affect the product itself, but affect the price of the bag in which it has to be carried. The manufacture of jute has nothing to do with Australia. That is a matter for Calcutta. We should not continue this imbecile practice of fathering the loss to which I have referred.

Mr. Smith: What about bran bags?

Mr. HARRISON: The position is not the same with regard to them. I want to get this Bill through, as it particularly affects chaff bags.

Mr. Smith: What about sugar bags and lolly bags?

Mr. HARRISON: It is unfortunate that the producer is not able to sell his product at a price based on the cost of production, when the price of the jute could be taken into consideration. He has to take the risk of production owing to climatic conditions and other reasons, and when he has got his produce he has to take the chance of the market. He cannot get the full value for the cost of production, and it is because of this that I ask the House to pass this measure to eliminate the present unfair method of trading in this commodity.

Mr. Green: What about empty blacking tins?

Mr. HARRISON: The farmer who gets £10 a ton for his chaff does not feel the burden equally with the man who gets only £5 per ton, because his bags only cost one-fifth of the value he receives. What about the man who, owing to climatic conditions, is compelled to cut certain crops for hay because they will not mature and make wheat? He not only loses on his own business, but he must make the commodity marketable. Chaff bags constitute the easiest packing obtainable and therefore he is compelled to use them. If this Bill becomes law, the farmer will not lose further on the package as he does at present. He will only lose in respect of his particular business whereas now he has to lose considerably more by buying this package owing to the present method of selling. Why should a farmer who cannot help himself lose 90 per cent. on a commodity simply because he has no chance to secure its proper value? My attention was focussed on this question some years ago, and I shall give my experience, which may cause members to realise the position of farmers. In 1912, there was a dry spell, and a crop I had was blighted in the top of the ear and

did not fill in the lower part of the ear. It was only shrivelled grain. I realised it would not prove a payable crop of wheat and, therefore, my only chance was to cut it for hay. While knowing that I had to make a loss on that part of my business, I had to make a further capital loss of 75 per cent by putting the commodity into this class of packing and, in selling, I lost £30 out of the £40 worth of jute. Thus I was penalised and could not help myself.

Mr. Smith: This Bill will not prevent that.

Mr. HARRISON: Certainly it will. If this Bill had been law, then I should not have sustained that loss on the jute. We have heard the opinion expressed here and in the trade that the supply would regulate the price. That is what I am after. I desire that the supply of the local article shall not have an influence on the higher priced article as the value of the packing is the same. It is the man who uses the commodity who needs the package afterwards. The farmer uses the jute package for a shorter period than the man who purchases the commodity. We ent the chaff on the farm and, when we have filled the bags, the general run of farmers immediately start to cart it to the railways for sale. On the average, those bags are not filled on the farm for more than three days, and it generally takes three days for the chaff to reach the market. The merchant stores the chaff for a longer period than does the farmer, and the retailer also needs the package just as much as the other trader. Then the consumer needs the package, and he makes use of it for a longer period than anyone else. Therefore, why should not all those parties run the risk of the loss on the jute in their true proportion. Why should the loss in the aggregate fall on the farmer as it does to-day? If the Bill becomes law, it will have the effect of adjusting this particularly high value in its proper proportions among those who benefit from it. Greater care will be taken of the jute and we shall thus save the State many thousands of pounds annually. I hope members will discuss the measure thoroughly so that the public may realise the value of the jute goods as compared with their contents. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and a division called for.

Mr. SPEAKER: I declare that the ayes have it. I might at this stage draw the attention of members to the fact that those voting "no" and "aye" should sit on opposite sides of the House when a division is called for. This is the second time to-night that there has been a strong chorus of "noes" and a division has been

called for, and where are the "noes" now? There is not a single "no."

Motion thus passed; the debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.39 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 30th October, 1919.

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

COMMISSION TO SWEAR IN MEMBERS.

The PRESIDENT: I have to announce that I have received from His Excellency the Governor a commission which I shall ask the Clerk to read.

Commission as follows read:

The Hon. Walter Kingsmill, M.L.C., President of the Legislative Council. Whereas by the 52 Victoria, cap. 23, sec. 22, no member of the Legislative Council is permitted to sit or vote therein until he shall have taken and subscribed the oath or shall have made and subscribed the affirmation as therein set forth before me or before some person authorised by me: Now I hereby duly authorise, commission, and appoint you, the said Walter Kingsmill, to administer to members of the said Legislative Council the prescribed oath or affirmation as aforesaid. Given at Perth this 28th day of October, One thousand nine hundred and nineteen. William Ellison-Macartney, Governor.

QUESTION—SMOKING IN TRAINS AND TRAMS.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (for Hon. J. Cornell) asked the Minister for Education: 1, Is it permissible under the railway regulations for females, who do not exhibit outward or tangible evidence of their being