

The Premier: We want the fullest possible inquiry.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I accept that assurance.

Question put and passed.

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

Council's Concurrence requested.

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

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

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

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.36 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 12th October, 1932.

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

MOTION—WHEAT PRODUCTION, FEDERAL BONUS.

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

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

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

farmers, and so I propose to be brief in my remarks. I hope members will deal with the motion, and not adjourn the debate. I wish to refer to the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the disabilities affecting the agricultural industry of Western Australia. The evidence submitted by Mr. Thomson, the manager of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., so impressed the commissioners that they embodied part of his evidence in their report to the Government. On page 7 there is the following paragraph extracted from Mr. Thomson's statement:—

One significance of the above figures is that whereas in 1921 only £572,000 was paid directly to the community, in 1931, £2,174,000 was distributed directly in wages for railwaymen, clerks, lumpers at sidings and at ports, workers in superphosphate factories, and through them indirectly to coal miners in Collic, and tradespeople generally throughout the southern section of the State. In addition to this, the community received indirectly £3,469,500 paid out by the growers of wheat for commodities and services of all kinds. In other words, the value of the wheat produced in 1931 was sufficient to provide at least one-quarter of the population of Western Australia with a living better than that allowed for in the basic wage.

Then the commissioners went on to say that all witnesses examined were unanimous in stating the following propositions:—

- (a) The prosperity of the State depends on the wheat industry;
- (b) The present financial crisis in industry, to a great extent, has been occasioned by the price failure in the 1930-31 harvest, and
- (c) The rendering of financial assistance to the farmers, at the present time, is a community obligation.

It is time the Federal Government arrived at a definite decision and informed the farmers of Australia just what their position is to be. Unfortunately for the State and the Commonwealth as well, instead of the price of wheat rising, it is falling materially. Not only does this matter involve the financial solvency of the farmers, but it is of great importance to all sections of the community. Without labouring the matter further, I submit the motion to the House. I hope that the Government will be in a position to telegraph the terms of the motion to the Federal Government as having been endorsed by both Houses of Parliament. I believe that it will impress the Federal Government regarding the urgency of the position.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.39]: I second the motion. At the recent R.S.L. congress a motion was agreed that was almost identical with that moved by Mr. Thomson. I had the honour of drafting it, and it was much more brief than that now before the House. It is generally conceded that the payment of the bonus on wheat is just as essential this year as it was last year. It is useless to debate the matter because 99 out of every 100 men will agree as to the necessity for the bonus this year.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [4.40]: I am not opposed to the motion, but I want it to go further. I am sick of coming to Parliament and listening to Country Party members making election speeches to their constituents by moving pious resolutions. I want to go further, and, if in order, I move the following amendment—

That the following words be added to the motion:—"and failing the Federal Government coming to the aid of the farmers, the State Government of Western Australia should make provision to pay 4½d. per bushel on all wheat produced in Western Australia."

We are repeatedly hearing representatives of the farmers asking the Federal Government to do this and to do that. One has merely to read their views as published in the "West Australian" to arrive at the conclusion that there is so much hypocrisy about these alleged representatives of the people of this State. The representatives of the people should represent all the people, and they should be able to get what the people require from the Federal Government without all this hypocrisy. The representatives of this State in the Federal Senate could hang up the work of the Federal Government if they cared to do so. They should see to it that the Federal Government provide what is necessary, and if not, the State should do it.

Hon. J. Cornell: But the State cannot raise the money without the sanction of the Commonwealth.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not care who raises the money. The Federal Government will have to grant permission to this State to raise the money to help our own people. If they do not do so, then secession will gain many advocates, and, in fact, the people will become unanimous regarding the necessity to break away from

Federation. The issue is relief to the farmers, and pious resolutions to the Federal Government will not solve the difficulty. The Federal Government should long-since have announced their intention to pay the bonus to the farmers, and yet at this late stage we are asked to agree to a motion requesting the Federal authorities to come to the farmers' assistance, as they did last year. If the Federal Government do not provide a bonus of 4½d. a bushel on wheat produced in this State, where will the farmers be? They will be just where they are to-day. I tell the farmers' representatives what I have told them before: That they are represented by a majority of the Ministers in the Government of the State, and yet at this late stage we are asked to pass a pious resolution asking the Federal Government to do something for our farmers. For that reason I move the amendment.

The PRESIDENT: Is there a seconder for the amendment? There being no seconder, it cannot be put.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central) [4.45]: I have pleasure in supporting the motion. I doubt whether it will have very much influence on the Commonwealth Government, but it will demonstrate the feeling of this House, which represents a considerable portion of the State. The Federal Government ought to take action in the interests of the country. The depression would have been considerably more severe but for the bounty paid last year and the great increase in agricultural development. We are relying almost entirely on the pastoral and agricultural industries to keep the Commonwealth afloat, and unless the Commonwealth are very careful and recognise the position and give help to the farmers, there will be a sorry time in store in the course of the next two years. We are relying on pastoral and agricultural production to give a satisfactory trade balance. There is evidence that imports are exceeding exports, and unless a bounty be granted to the farmers there will be a great decrease in production next year, and it will be difficult indeed to get a satisfactory trade balance, which is necessary to meet our interest bill in London.

Question put and passed.

BILL—MARRIAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Hon. J. Nicholson and read a first time.

RESOLUTION—BULK HANDLING BILL.

To inquire by Joint Select Committee.

Message from the Legislative Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to refer the Bulk Handling Bill to a select committee of five members and requesting the Council to appoint a select committee with the same number of members with power to confer with the committee of the Assembly.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.49]: The Government regard this matter as one of extreme urgency and I ask the indulgence of the House to move for the consideration of the message forthwith.

Leave granted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—That a message be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly notifying that this House agrees to the resolution.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.51]: This procedure is extraordinary. In my 20 years' association with the House, a similar request has never been made, and I understand this is the first time that such a request has ever been made. The Minister, in asking for leave to move for the consideration of the message forthwith, stated that the Government considered the matter urgent, and he moved his motion, which is unprecedented, without submitting one reason why we should fall into line with another place.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I suppose he presumed it was obvious.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The obvious can be seen. I intend to omit from my remarks reference to bulk handling and consider the proposition that we appoint five members to confer and act with members of another place, and I presume, be bound by the decision, on a Bill that has already been considered by another place. We are not asked to join in an inquiry, as was done on a previous occasion—Mr. Clydesdale knows that it was done with regard to racing restric-

tion proposals and preceded the introduction of the Bill—but we are asked to join in a select committee to inquire into a Bill that has been debated in another place from Dan to Beersheba, and the principle of the Bill, I take it, has been affirmed in another place. The Bill has been referred to a select committee by that House and the members of the select committee have in mind every point of advantage and disadvantage which the Bill was considered to contain. In any deliberations of the select committee, it follows that the principles and machinery of the Bill endorsed by another place will form the basis on which the select committee will work. Another place is acting strictly in conformity with its Standing Orders. The second reading having been agreed to in another place, the Bill has been referred to a select committee. Now we are asked to join in the inquiry. I am entirely opposed to this House doing so because it would be signing a blank cheque. When the House passes the second reading of a Bill, it affirms the principles of the Bill. The Council may refer a Bill to a select committee before taking it into Committee of the whole House, but on this occasion no member has seen the Bill to which another place has agreed, unless he has read it elsewhere. He has not seen it here. If we join in the inquiry, the five members would go from this House without any idea of the views of this House on the general question of bulk handling. We have not had an opportunity to express an opinion. If the Bill had been debated here, members would know the wishes and desires of the House and would, of necessity, bear them in mind when promulgating their ideas in the joint select committee. Instead of that we are asked to sign a blank cheque. I understand that the select committee in another place are to receive the powers of a Royal Commission. If those powers are conferred, it will cease to be a select committee. Whatever the joint select committee agreed to would be reported to another place and the recommendations would be considered in conjunction with the Bill. In all probability a totally different Bill would emanate from another place as a result of the inquiry, and in that altered form the Bill would come to this House. Consequently, we shall have five members acting like dogs chasing their

tails. They will be wondering how to act because of lack of any indication of the wishes and desires of members here. When the Bill finally reached us, we would have to treat it as if it had never received attention by a select committee. During the committee's deliberations the views of some of the members of this House might conceivably be adopted, and it would follow that those five members, if worth their salt, must stand by their recommendations when the Bill came to this House. Otherwise they would be more or less dummies. I think it will bring about a highly undesirable state of affairs. This House is essentially a House of review, and should concern itself with essentials and not with details. Let another place finish its job. If a select committee from another place desires to call any member of this House, the machinery is there to permit that to be done. Let the Bill come to this House in the ordinary way and let members of this House analyse it, as they do other Bills. Members here then will be free agents. But if we have anything to do with the select committee we shall not be free agents. A joint select committee, if necessary, can be appointed after the second reading has been passed by this House. Both Houses will then have had an opportunity to deal with the principles of the Bill. So far, however, we in this House have not reached that stage. I suggest that we have nothing to do with the joint select committee. I have been asked by a number of my constituents various questions on the subject of bulk handling, and I have told them that when the Bill comes before this House I shall then express my opinion of it. This House would act wisely by rejecting the proposal, and I appeal to the new and the level-headed members to be careful not to create a precedent. This has never occurred before, and we must not let it occur now. By rejecting the proposal we shall not be slighting the other place; we shall be jealously safeguarding the rights and privileges of this Chamber and sticking fast to that good old rule that has prevailed here of not committing ourselves before we act. Assume that another place had asked for the appointment of a joint select committee on the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act. Would we then have got such a good measure? Undoubtedly we would not. There were two select committees appointed by another

place, and when the Bill came to this House some members who were only concerned with essentials and did not worry about details, saw in that Bill the danger of some details, and in consequence agreed to refer it to a select committee of this House. Though it was late in the session the select committee was appointed and it sat until midnight to complete its job. The committee essentially improved that Bill, and made of it a Bill of conciliation. I suggest that is the course we should adopt now. We shall be playing a lone hand until the Bill is before us. If it is considered that the Bill as it will come from another place requires overhaul, then we ourselves can refer it to a select committee, and if, for argument's sake, we agree to the motion now before us, and send five members of this House to confer with five members of another place, then when the Bill comes before us, the suggestion that it should again be referred to an independent select committee will savour of the ridiculous. Let us hold what we have, and let us adhere to what we have found in the past to be good.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.8]:

I do not wish to give a silent vote on an important question such as this. I have an entirely open mind on the subject of bulk handling, and I do not propose to discuss the subject itself, except to say that if bulk handling will save the farmers anything, be the amount ever so small, it will have my support. It is the procedure that is now suggested to which I object. As Mr. Cornell pointed out, we have never been asked to face such a position before. We cannot discuss the Bill, because the Bill is not before us. We do not know what is in it. We cannot discuss the principles of the Bill. The principles should first be adopted, rejected or amended by this House before we send the Bill to a select committee. It may be a compliment to this House that another place has asked us to assist in handling it before we have had the opportunity of discussing the Bill at all. But we have heard of the invitation from the spider to the fly, and I am not inclined to walk into any parlour without first getting some information. The Bill should have been allowed to pass through all its stages in another place. Then it could have been sent to us, and we could have dealt

with the principles, and if we thought fit, amended them. The select committee proposal could then have been advanced, both Houses having had the opportunity of agreeing to the principles of the Bill. How are we to know whether members of this House will agree to the principles set out in the Bill? It is either a compliment to this House that we should be asked to appoint a select committee without having seen the Bill, or another place is sidetracking their responsibility and is trying to induce us to follow a course I am not prepared to adopt. The usual procedure should be followed. I do not wish to be misunderstood; I am not dealing with the Bill itself. If bulk handling will help the country, it is the duty of both Houses to do all they can to further the project, but we should not send five members from this House to meet five members from another place, perhaps to be outvoted on a question of principles—I assume that principles as well as details will be discussed—and then have our members come back here to face a reversed decision of this House. I oppose the motion.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan)

[5.12]: An important principle is involved in the message now being debated. It demands our closest consideration, as Mr. Cornell has pointed out, because it involves obviously a departure from a very long line of procedure in this House. In our deliberations and actions we are guided very largely by precedent, and there is no doubt that in a matter such as this, as has been stated by Mr. Holmes and Mr. Cornell, the five members who might be selected from this House would be at a great disadvantage for the reasons which have been mentioned. Not one of them has had an opportunity to hear the debate in another place, and would therefore not be in a position to know the wisest lines to be taken. It is really necessary that there should be a close examination of the Bill on the part of both Houses before the appointment of a joint select committee. That is contemplated by our procedure, and even by our Standing Orders. I mean no disrespect to the other place. They have sent the message in perfectly good faith, and I do not think we can cavil at their action. It has been taken probably with a view to expediting the passage of a very important mea-

sure. Like Mr. Holmes, I have a perfectly open mind on the subject of bulk handling; I have not committed myself in any way at all, although like other members I may be interested in the country. Still I am prepared to hear the arguments that may be advanced either for or against bulk handling and determine as I think proper. Our Standing Orders contemplate that before we join in a select committee there should first be the opportunity given to us to discuss the measure that is to be the subject of investigation. For example, conferences between the two Houses can never take place until the measure has been in another place and is or has been here. So when a conference does take place between members from this House and members from another House, both parties are fully seized of the full effects of the measure. In Standing Order 311 it is contemplated that the business, or the Bill, should have been before this House. That Standing Order provides that in every message proposing to the Assembly the appointment of a joint committee the Council shall state the number of members to serve on such Committee. That clearly implies that the proposal emanates from here, and that we have the actual Bill before us, and therefore we would be the suggesting House in regard to the appointment of a select committee. But for a select committee to be appointed before we have had the opportunity to consider the Bill, would place us in a very awkward position and probably would be a very dangerous precedent. So whilst I do not doubt the bona fides or intentions of another place in making such a suggestion, we must have regard to precedent and therefore, however reluctantly, we must come to the conclusion that the wisest course is not to allow this motion to be carried.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.18]: This is a very important question and I sincerely hope we shall accede to the request of the Assembly. I distinctly remember one conference between the two Houses. That also was in regard to wheat, and the control of wheat during the war period. That conference took place before we had the Bill in this House. Another place had the Bill, we had not seen it, yet the question was of such vital moment to the country that it

was deemed wise that both Houses should consult together on the question.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Was that a select committee?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: No, it was a conference between all the members of both Houses. To-day we are asked to appoint a committee to consult with a committee of the Assembly. Mr. Nicholson has drawn attention to Standing Order 311, but I call attention to Standing Order 314. Mr. Nicholson claimed that the request could emanate only from the Council, but members will see that Standing Order 314 makes provision for this very request as it comes to us, provides that the committee may be requested by another place.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is when the Assembly agrees to our proposal.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is here provided that the first meeting of such committee shall be held at such time and place as shall be named by the Assembly, and that in every message agreeing to a proposal by the Assembly for the appointment of a joint committee, the Council shall name the time and place for the first meeting, etc. That is really a provision for either House to make a proposal for a select committee.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That Standing Order has no bearing on the present position.

Hon. J. Cornell: None at all.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Yes, it has a bearing, for it provides that when another place asks for a joint committee this House shall name the time and place of the first meeting. That is my reading of the Standing Order, and I cannot see it in any other light. This is a matter of vital moment and urgency to the farming community, who would not thank us for postponing a question which directly concerns all of them. Their immediate future is wrapped up in it.

Hon. J. Cornell: Does the hon. member think it would be of concern to them that it should pass this session?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: They are all very much concerned in it. I appeal to members to agree with the request, so that the joint select committee may get to work as speedily as possible. I will support the motion.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [5.23]: Standing Orders 301 and 302 provide for communications asking that select committees may be appointed.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is not in doubt. It is the wisdom of doing it.

Hon. A. THOMSON: It is the wisdom of not doing it that appeals to me in view of the urgency of the case, and I do not see in the Standing Orders that it is essential that this House must have had the Bill before it can consider such a request from another place.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is not in doubt either.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Then if the procedure adopted in the past by this House means that until we receive the Bill from another place we cannot consider any message from another place, it seems to me it is the bounden duty of the House to confer.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: To sign a blank cheque?

Hon. A. THOMSON: We are not asked to sign a blank cheque. This House is asked to consider a request from another place to appoint five members to confer with five members from another place and take evidence on the Bill and submit a report for the consideration of both Houses. Later the Bill will be submitted.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is not the case.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I disagree.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Bill is before another place.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And may be amended before it gets here.

Hon. A. THOMSON: In view of the very serious financial position of Western Australia and of Australia, we should not stand too firmly upon precedent. The present needs of Australia mean that we should get closer together and confer together. If I might diverge for a moment I would say this House and another place should confer much more than they do on matters of grave importance and upon many measures which have been dealt with by another place and subsequently sent to us here.

Hon. J. Cornell: They do confer.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Here is opportunity for this House to appoint a committee to collect evidence on the Bill. There is a divergence of views on the subject, and there are members in this House and in another place who say they have an open mind, but seem inclined to vote against the Bill. Surely any proposal which will mean a reduction of handling charges of any commodity in Western Australia should have

the earnest and serious consideration of both Houses. I do not see in Standing Orders 301 to 314 anything to show that we shall be giving away the rights and privileges of this House by appointing five members to confer with members of another place.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Consider the invidious position in which those five members may be placed.

Hon. A. THOMSON: No, they will go there as free men to call for any evidence they may be disposed to demand. In my opinion, the Assembly has extended a practical commonsense proposal.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is not the Assembly capable of doing its own work?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes, but members of another place say this is of such vital importance to the farming community that they consider it advisable to afford the Council an opportunity to have five members sitting with five members from the Assembly to collect and consider the evidence.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But the Bill is not even before us.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Those five members, if appointed from this Chamber, will not be bound to support the report of the select committee, but may submit a minority report if they think fit.

Hon. J. Cornell: They cannot submit a minority report, they can only dissent from the majority report.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Very well. After sitting on the committee they will be able to stand up here and give reasons for dissenting from the majority report.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Assuming that all ten of the members are in agreement, would it not put this House in an awkward position when the Bill arrived here?

Hon. A. THOMSON: No. After our five members have heard the whole of the evidence submitted to the committee, they may consider they are justified in coming back to the House and supporting the recommendations of the committee.

Hon. J. Cornell: Assuming that the recommendation is not acceptable to another place, what will happen then?

Hon. A. THOMSON: They would be in the same position as we would occupy if the recommendations were not acceptable to us. The appointment of the joint select committee will be of great benefit to the farming

community. We should not stand hard and fast upon long-established precedent in a matter of this sort, but should get on with the job. This is an occasion when we can work in with another place to further the interests of the farming community, and do what we can to improve the position of every individual in the State. I hope the motion will be carried.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.31]: Usually when we appoint members to a select committee we endeavour to see that the various points of view that have been expressed in the Chamber are represented upon such committee. In this case we do not know what the opinions of members are.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is a very important point.

Hon. J. Cornell: That has always been the case.

Hon. G. FRASER: By this means we get the best possible representation on the committee and secure the best possible evidence.

Hon. A. Thomson: And of course we get more keen cross-examination.

Hon. G. FRASER: We are now asked to select five members to serve on the joint select committee when we do not know the opinions of any of them.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And without having agreed to the principle. The whole thing is absurd.

Hon. G. FRASER: The position is absurd. It is possible that this Chamber, when it comes to discuss the measure, will be unanimous in rejecting it. On the other hand, we may be of opinion there is no necessity to send it to a select committee, that the Bill meets the situation, and that we agree to pass it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It may mean wrecking the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you suggest that is the reason why we are being asked to join in?

Hon. G. FRASER: No. We may consider it unnecessary, after we have discussed the Bill, to refer it to a select committee. I for one am not going to agree to the appointment of five members to the proposed joint select committee, until this Chamber has an opportunity to discuss the Bill, and until I have had an opportunity of hearing members express opinions upon it. I oppose the motion.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.34]: I oppose the motion. It is not right that we should appoint a select committee to consider a question that has never been before the House. Members have not been able to affirm the principle contained in the Bill, as has been done in the Assembly. The whole thing is wrong. I for one would not agree, if I were selected, to serve on such a committee without knowing whether the House agreed or not to the principle. Let the Assembly have their select committee, deal with the measure, and send it on to us. If we are satisfied with the Bill, we can put it through, but if we are dissatisfied, it is competent for us to refer it to our own select committee.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Or to amend it.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes. I view the situation as seriously as members of the Country Party do. I, too, want to see the interests of the wheatgrowers and the community properly protected. It is not fair to ask us to serve on a select committee on a question of this sort with members of another place without knowing whether the House agrees to the principle or not. I oppose the motion.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [5.36]: I support the motion. This is a matter of urgency. The House previously carried a resolution calling upon the Federal Government to come to the aid of the farmers to the extent of 4½d. per bushel of wheat, and the sponsors of the bulk handling system estimate that this will mean a saving to the farmers of 2½d. per bushel.

Hon. G. Fraser: When do you think this would come into operation?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Are you worrying about the lumpers? I am worrying more about the poor farmers. No one on the goldfields says we should not instal improved machinery on the mines, although this means putting off scores and scores of men.

Hon. E. H. Harris: No one complains about that.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No. Some 60 men were put off from Kurrawang last week, because less firewood is going to Kalgoorlie by reason of the use there of improved machinery. We have to progress with the times. On those grounds I do not want interjections from anyone who is vitally interested in the putting on or taking off of men. This is not a question of whether

people are to be put out of a job. Suppose this House rejects the motion, and another place appoints its own select committee. It appears to me it would be sheer wickedness for this House not to join in with another place in this matter, and later on to turn round and appoint a select committee of our own to do all that another place would by that time have done. I am not worrying about anything that has been done before. We are here to continue legislation of 12 months ago in the interests of economy. Why not have some commonsense economy in this case? We must not feel hurt that the Bill has not yet reached us. It has been before the public for a long while, and we know the principles it contains.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You should have been here in 1922.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I was not here then but I am here now. We know the principles of the Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: What do you mean by "we"?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not want to be personal. We do know the principles underlying bulk handling, and, if not, we ought to know them.

Hon. J. Cornell: You may, but I do not.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am sorry for the hon. member.

Hon. G. Fraser: We do not know what is actually in the Bill.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I do not want any interjections from the hon. member. The matter is one of urgency. We are asked to appoint five members to confer with an equal number from another place, and to expedite the handling of the whole business. I always reserve to myself the right to vote as I think fit on any Bill notwithstanding the recommendations of any select committee. The question is whether or not we agree to co-operate with another place in handling a measure that has not yet been before the House. In the interests of economy, why should we not co-operate with another place in the framing of a measure which, when it comes to us, may be passed practically unanimously? It will be the result of the work of the two bodies. We do not want a select committee appointed in another place, and two months later have the whole thing inquired into by another select committee appointed by this Chamber. It may be said, if we do not pass this motion, that another place was not competent to conduct the in-

vestigation, that we have all the brains here, and that we will make our own inquiry.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is bunkum.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If this House appointed another select committee, it would be tantamount to saying that we were not satisfied with the work that was done by the select committee of another place.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is not necessary that we should appoint another select committee.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: One can sniff it, like one can sniff a ham and beef shop. I will take a sporting risk and say that when the Bill does reach us, it will be referred to a select committee, if this motion is not passed. In the interests of economy, why not have the work done in the way proposed? I have been looking up the fees paid to witnesses who appear before a select committee, and studying the cost to the State. Why not make one job of the business, and indicate to the public that we as legislators are solicitous about effecting economies? We are constantly preaching economy. Precedent is nothing in a matter of this sort. Let us get away from it. Let us agree that this is a matter of vital importance to a large section of the community, and that we will join in with another place in trying to do something of great value to the community, and do it as quickly as possible.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [5.41]: I support the motion. I cannot see that it will bind this House, or that it will do any harm. Information that may be of the greatest value to us will probably be gleaned as the result of the appointment of the joint select committee. It will not interfere in any way with a full discussion upon the Bill at a later stage. It is not as if it were a conference of managers from the two Houses, and I cannot help thinking that the information gleaned will be very useful to us. Last night I listened in another place to the debate there. After I had heard one or two speakers, I thought it would be a mistake to have a select committee made up of representatives of the two Houses, but many things may be brought up which members may not have considered. Remembering that we can discuss the matter ourselves later on, I cannot see that any harm will be done by agreeing to the request of another place. Much may be done to hasten on the discussion on the principle of bulk handling. We

require bulk handling to operate for the next harvest, and anything we can do to hasten matters towards that end we should do. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [5.43]: Although one of the younger members of the House referred to by Mr. Cornell, probably he will not include me amongst the level-headed ones when he learns that I intend to support the motion.

Hon. J. Cornell: I counted you on that side.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am not concerned about precedent so much as I am about having settled quickly the question whether or not we should adopt bulk handling. It would be of advantage if the House could have the benefit of the information that will be gleaned by the representatives of both sides of the Legislature. We shall have that information when the Bill comes before us. Possibly, too, it would be of advantage that we should approach the subject with an open mind before we declare ourselves on it. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [5.45]: I support the motion.

Hon. J. Cornell: I did not count you on that side.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: It is to be hoped that other members of the Chamber will also support it. The motion is one of extreme urgency and of great importance to our producers. I feel that the two Houses should meet together and that we should all do our utmost to place before both Chambers the best possible results from the deliberations in view. Accordingly, I support the motion.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [5.46]: Mr. Cornell mentioned that I had not dealt at length with the message before the House.

Hon. J. Cornell: I said you did not deal with it at all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The only way in which I could have dealt with it was to discuss the merits or demerits of bulk handling, and that is not the business before the Chair. The message before the Chair is simply a message asking this House

to concur with another place, and to appoint a select committee to act jointly with a select committee from another place. As the hon. member has suggested, to appoint a select committee would be to create a precedent so far as the Bill is concerned. However, this Chamber has had messages from another place dealing with various aspects of select committees. I believe there was such a case in 1901, relating to a joint select committee on the agreement between the Midland Railway Company and the Government of Western Australia.

Member: Has there been a select committee of ten members before?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The number is beside the question. The point is as to the principle between the two Chambers. Again, in 1915 there was a joint select committee on horse racing.

Hon. J. Cornell: And the Minister was on that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: An hon. member referred to May's "Parliamentary Practice." There we find that in the Mother of Parliaments the House of Commons has frequently dealt with a question in the same way as this House is asked to deal with the question of bulk handling. What better guide could we have? A great deal has been said about members of this Chamber going on a select committee and tying the hands of the House. Hitherto, when members have taken part in select committees on Bills, the House has been bound to a certain extent, because prior to the appointment of the select committee on a Bill the second reading had been carried. The position to-day is that this House is not committed. We have not had the Bulk Handling Bill before us. Another point is this. References have been made to what will happen after the joint select committee has met and taken all the evidence available. My reply is that the appointees from this Chamber will have it in their minds and hands to call evidence and to use their own judgment. Is it suggested that this Council will not have any confidence in those appointees? Is it suggested that the appointees will return having agreed to something that does not suit this House? Surely the Council is able to select five members competent to take evidence in any direction on the subject. And will not those members be in a far better position to form

a judgment on the question? Doubtless the evidence will be made available in printed form, but evidence read is not the same thing as evidence actually heard. Will not the appointees be in a better position to guide this House at the conclusion of the inquiry? Certainly they will. This is one of the most important questions that has come before Parliament in the history of Western Australia.

Hon. T. Moore: Then why rush it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am astonished to hear that interjection from Mr. Moore, who, like myself, is a farmer.

Hon. T. Moore: And vitally interested also.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If we are to get any system of bulk handling for the harvest after this one, action will have to be taken quickly. Here is the middle of October. The select committee will sit for a long period.

Hon. T. Moore: This committee has to report in three weeks' time.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This committee will not report in three weeks' time.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Three months', more likely.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is little time to spare, and that is why I move by way of urgency. Bulk handling means so much money to the farmers. Let hon. members consider that about £700,000 is going out of the State every year for cornsacks.

Hon. T. Moore: Cannot we sit after Christmas to deal with the matter if it is of such importance?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. We could deal with it only in January, because on the 31st January this Parliament expires.

Hon. J. Cornell: Not on the 31st January.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. If the hon. member looks the point up, he will find that I am right.

Hon. T. Moore: There is a good deal of time before then.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know of a Bulk Handling Bill being dropped on the 23rd December. The debate was adjourned to the next sitting of the House, and there was no further sitting.

Hon. J. Cornell: What would become of this Bill in case of a change of Government?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I take it that no Western Australian Government would fail to introduce a Bulk Handling Bill, so as to save the enormous amount of money that goes out of the country under the present system of bag handling, and to help towards the re-establishment of the farming industry.

Hon. A. Thomson: The evidence will not be ready when another Ministry assumes office.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope the proposal for a joint select committee will be accepted by this Chamber. I hope also that the joint select committee, if agreed to, will come to a conclusion which will mean a good sound system of bulk handling; not necessarily that proposed in the Bill. A bulk handling system, once installed in Western Australia, will be here for all time, practically. Once established, it cannot be altered afterwards; and that is all the more reason why we should be extremely careful.

Hon. J. Cornell: We are asked to adopt the principle of the Bill without having debated it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The joint select committee would take evidence from all conditions of people associated with the industry. Such evidence will be far more valuable in arriving at a conclusion than a debate in this Chamber can be.

Hon. J. Cornell: Would the joint select committee frame a Bill to be sent here?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. I take the view that this question is of the most serious importance, and therefore I hope that the Council will appoint a select committee to act jointly with the select committee appointed by another place.

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

Ayes	12
Noes	12
A tie				0

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. J. T. Franklin
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. H. V. Piessie

Hon. E. Rose
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. A. M. Clydesdale
(Teller.)

NOBS.

Hon. J. Cornell
 Hon. J. M. Drew
 Hon. J. Ewing
 Hon. G. Fraser
 Hon. E. H. Harris
 Hon. J. J. Holmes

Hon. W. H. Kitson
 Hon. W. J. Mann
 Hon. G. W. Miles
 Hon. T. Moore
 Hon. J. Nicholson
 Hon. E. H. Gray
 (Teller.)

The PRESIDENT: In this case it is necessary for me to give my casting vote; and I shall give my casting vote in accordance with what I think is right, in accordance with my personal views on the matter. I would like to say that it is common for one House to request the other House to appoint a joint select committee or joint Royal Commission on some subject of public concern. The present request is quite unusual as regards this Parliament, because it refers to a Bill that has never been before this Chamber. However, May's "Parliamentary Practice," on pages 488 and 732, gives a considerable number of instances, far too numerous for me to detail, of a House appointing members to serve on a joint select committee to consider a Bill that has never been before the House. Some hon. members seem to think it would be derogatory to the rights and privileges of this House to agree to the proposal to appoint a joint select committee to consider a Bill not before the Chamber. If I thought so, I would unhesitatingly vote against the motion; but I do not think the carrying of the motion would in any way lessen the rights or privileges of this House. To submit a Bill to a joint select committee of both Houses is a practice that is frequently followed in the Imperial Parliament. It is a practice that was in existence hundreds of years ago. It fell into disuse for some time, but it was considered so useful in the Mother of Parliaments that it was revived in 1864. That is 68 years ago, and the practice has been constantly followed by both Houses of the Imperial Parliament ever since; and there has never been any suggestion that the practice is derogatory to either House. I give my vote in accordance with the ayes. The motion is carried.

Question put and passed.

Personnel of Select Committee.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I shall now move that the following members be appointed to represent this House on the joint select committee—

Hon. T. MOORE: I object to the Minister mentioning any names. I ask for a ballot.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Minister should first read out his nominations.

The PRESIDENT: There can be no objection to a ballot.

Hon. T. MOORE: I think it unwise for the Minister to name any member before the ballot is taken. It has been pointed out that the Bill is a non-party measure, and it would be unwise therefore for the Minister to nominate anyone to sit on the select committee. It should be left to the good sense of the House to determine, as was done in another place.

The Chief Secretary: If it is the desire of the House, I am prepared to follow that course.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We will not reach finality in that way. If members are not nominated, how can we discover whether one or more of them will not be able to act if chosen?

The PRESIDENT: Hon. members should read Standing Order 323. I understand it is the desire of hon. members that there shall be a ballot.

Several Members: Certainly.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am prepared to meet the wishes of the House. I thought I would facilitate matters because I endeavoured to secure the services of a number of members, but they refused as they said they could not possibly spare the time necessary to undertake the duty.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The only Standing Order that should guide us is No. 323, which relates to the appointment of managers at conferences. The procedure has been for the Minister to nominate the members he desires, and it is competent for any member to demand a ballot.

The PRESIDENT: That has been the custom followed so far. The Minister has nominated several members; and it is for the Minister to do what he thinks fit. He can follow the ordinary procedure.

Hon. W. J. MANN: What will be the position of a member elected by a ballot who does not wish to serve on the select committee?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is why we should have the names submitted first.

The PRESIDENT: In that event, another member will have to be appointed in his place.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am afraid there will be many refusals. I am prepared to let the matter go to a ballot. I merely desired to facilitate the business of the House.

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps the usual practice could be followed. The Minister will nominate those he suggests should represent the Council on the select committee and then a ballot may be taken.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the usual practice will not be followed. Hon. members will recollect that I took exception to a similar course being adopted last year. There is this disadvantage about the usual practice, that once the Minister nominates members he desires to serve on a select committee, those members have an undue advantage.

Hon. J. T. Franklin: No one is running for a seat on the select committee.

The PRESIDENT: To put this discussion in order, I should like someone to move a motion, so that it may be discussed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I will move that the House proceed to a ballot to choose the members of the select committee.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I will move an amendment that we follow the usual practice.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I will second the amendment so that the Minister will be able to nominate some members to sit on the committee. It will then be open to any member to nominate someone else. By that means we will have the names before us of a certain number of members who agree to act on the committee. If we adopt the secret ballot process, two or three members may be elected who will refuse to act on the committee.

The PRESIDENT: I shall put the amendment first, but I would point out to the House—

Hon. J. CORNELL: I submit that neither the motion nor the amendment is required. Standing Order 270 sets out that members to serve on a select committee shall be nominated by the mover, and if one member so demands, they shall be selected by ballot.

The PRESIDENT: Does any hon. member demand that the select committee be chosen by ballot?

Hon. G. Fraser: Yes.

Hon. T. Moore: Yes, I do, too.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I hope Mr. Fraser and Mr. Moore will withdraw their demand. By so doing, they will save time and trouble.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: What about Standing Order 271?

Hon. Sir CHAS. NATHAN: If hon. members persist in their attempt to have a ballot first they will hold the House up to ridicule. I can imagine a ballot held, and five members selected, not one of whom is prepared to act. Then we would proceed to another ballot, and so ad infinitum. It would be better for the Minister to move his motion, and then amendments can be moved if desired.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Standing Order is clear.

The PRESIDENT: The Standing Order is perfectly clear. I would like to inform the House that this is the first time a ballot has been called for before any names have been submitted for the consideration of members. Two hon. members have asked for a ballot and it must be proceeded with.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not know whether I shall be honoured by being elected to the committee, but I wish to indicate at this stage that I would decline to act if so elected. I am not prepared to sit as a representative of this House to deal with a Bill that has not been before us.

Hon. C. B. Williams: On a point of order. Is Mr. Holmes in order?

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Holmes is in order in intimating that he is not prepared to act on the select committee, but I do not think he is in order in discussing a measure not yet before the House. I think the ballot papers had better be distributed amongst members, who may then write down the names of the five members they desire to be appointed to the committee. Perhaps it would facilitate matters if those members not prepared to act on the committee were to stand, as an indication to other hon. members.

[Many members arose to indicate their desire accordingly.]

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is holding the House up to ridicule, and I hope that members responsible will withdraw their demand for a ballot. Why depart from the usual procedure, and hold up the business of the House?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am prepared to withdraw my demand for a ballot, but I have no intention of holding the House up to ridicule. I think the better method is to proceed to ballot to select the committee.

Hon. T. MOORE: I withdraw my demand, too; but I take exception to the suggestion that I am holding up the House to ridicule, or delaying business. I realise that this is a distinctly non-party matter, and if the Minister were to nominate the members he requires to act on the select committee, it would give it a political tinge from that point of view, and would suggest that it is a party measure. I think the better way is to adopt the procedure that was followed in another place, which proved satisfactory. The members voted there and completed the ballot in about 10 minutes.

Hon. A. Thomson: Of course, because the names of the members to sit on the select committee are handed round, and members know for whom to vote.

Hon. T. MOORE: I withdraw my objection, although I would prefer a ballot. Seeing that so many members are not prepared to serve on the committee if elected, I appreciate the difficulty, but I think it is the duty of any member so elected to place his services at the disposal of the House.

The PRESIDENT: I am regarding these remarks as personal explanations because there is really nothing before the House. If the ordinary procedure is followed, and the Minister nominates certain members, that will not prevent a ballot being held subsequently.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the following members of the Legislative Council be appointed to act jointly with the select committee of the Legislative Assembly:—Hon. L. B. Bolton, Hon. H. V. Piessé, Hon. V. Hamersley, Hon. W. J. Mann, and Hon. W. H. Kitson; and that the committee have power to call for persons and papers and report on Tuesday, 1st November, 1932.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I thank the Minister for my nomination, but after hearing what has been stated, I feel I would be unable to accept the position, and do justice to it with credit to myself and the House. I ask that my name be eliminated.

Hon. C. B. Williams: One out!

The PRESIDENT: There are four members nominated.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Apparently we may reach a deadlock. I think the Minister must have got his names before placing them before the House. I join with Mr. Moore in the assumption that it looks like a committee made up beforehand.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I object to these innuendoes against the Government. I have given every section representation on the select committee. I do not favour any one party in that respect, and I hope that statements like that of Mr. Cornell will not be made.

Hon. J. Cornell: I did not mean that. The whole happening speaks for itself.

The PRESIDENT: Another member must be appointed to the committee.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I will nominate Mr. Moore.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am in the position of not being able to act on the select committee.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You said it was a member's duty to place his services at the disposal of the House.

Hon. T. MOORE: If it had been an open go, it would have been all right.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I will nominate Sir Charles Nathan.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: I am not usually backward in accepting responsibility, but in this instance it is quite impossible for me to act on the select committee.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I will nominate Mr. Thomson.

Hon. A. THOMSON: There are already two members from the Country Party, and I think it would be much better if the additional member to be appointed were drawn from the southern portions of the State or the metropolitan provinces. Mr. Moore has clearly indicated that he regards the measure from a non-party standpoint. If three Country Party members were appointed, it would rather savour unduly of Country Party influence. I would prefer a metropolitan member to act. If the House approves of my motion, another select committee will be appointed, and then my hands will be full.

Hon. G. FRASER: I will nominate Mr. Nicholson.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I asked to be excused, although I thank Mr. Fraser for the nomination.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I will nominate Mr. Yelland.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Like Sir Charles Nathan, I do not like to shirk responsibilities, but just at the present time, owing largely to reasons of health as well as those of business, it would be inadvisable for me to accept further duties.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: May I nominate Mr. Drew?

Hon. J. M. DREW: I have already declined.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I will nominate Mr. Clydesdale.

Hon. A. M. CLYDESDALE: I regret I cannot spare the time.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I will nominate Mr. Williams.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am sorry; I live in Kalgoorlie and do not like Perth.

Hon. A. THOMSON: This matter affects the Great Southern, and I would like Mr. Rose to take a seat on the select committee.

Hon. E. ROSE: I am sorry but I do not know anything about wheat growing or bulk handling, and would prefer not to sit on the committee.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I nominate Mr. Gray.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am sorry but I cannot accept the nomination.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I will nominate Mr. Wittenoom.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: I will act on the select committee if necessary, but I have the same objection to that Mr. Thomson has already raised. Two members of the Country Party have already been nominated, and I will be the third.

Hon. G. FRASER: Well, I will nominate Mr. Cornell.

Member: We don't want him.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not want to dodge work, but I will nominate the Minister.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know whether Mr. Cornell wants to be humorous; he knows it is impossible for me to act on the select committee.

Hon. J. Cornell: I was serious.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think the hon. member was serious, seeing that he knows the load of work I have to carry.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not think it is right to have three members of the Country Party on the select committee, and I will nominate Mr. Fraser.

Hon. G. FRASER: I must decline, because there is already one member from our party on the committee.

Hon. J. CORNELL: We may as well try every member here, so I will nominate Mr. Harris.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Were it not for the fact that I will be fully occupied in a fortnight's time, I would accept nomination.

The PRESIDENT: The position is that Mr. Wittenoom is the only member willing to act on the select committee, and I will put the Minister's motion with the inclusion of his name.

Question put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.20 to 7.30 p.m.

Message to Assembly.

On motion by Chief Secretary, resolved: That a message be transmitted to the Assembly notifying that the Council had fixed the time and place for the first meeting of the committee on Monday, 17th October, at 2.30 p.m. at Parliament House.

BILL—GOVERNMENT FERRIES.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—SPECIAL LICENSE (WAROONA IRRIGATION DISTRICT).

Recommittal.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 2.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: "Licensee" is defined as "Nestle and Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company (Australasia), Limited, and Reduced, and includes its successors and permitted assigns." The words "and Reduced" should not appear. A letter from the solicitors to the company states that the use of the words "and Reduced" as part of the name of the company has now been discontinued. The company recently reduced its capital and, for this reason, the words had to be used

for a statutory period. That period ended in June last. I move an amendment—

That in the definition of "Licensee" the words "and Reduced" be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: The Bill was set down on the Notice Paper for the third reading and the Minister has secured the recommitment to move an amendment. Standing Order 204A reads—

No amendment shall be made in and no new clauses shall be added to any Bill recommitted on the third reading unless notice thereof has been previously given.

Notice has not been given of the amendment. When Mr. Thomson moved the recommitment of the Government Ferries Bill on the third reading, he put his amendment on the Notice Paper.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Very well; I will report progress in order to do that.

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Fruit Cases Act Amendment.

2, Reduction of Rents Act Continuance.
Passed.

BILLS (2)—REPORTS OF COMMITTEE.

1, Brands Act Amendment.

2, Dairy Cattle Improvement Act Amendment.

Adopted.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

To Revoke Dedication.

Debate resumed from the previous day. on the following motion by the Chief Secretary:—

That the following resolution from the Assembly be agreed to:—"That the proposals for the partial revocation of State Forests, Nos. 4, 7, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39, laid on the Table of the Legislative Council by the Command of His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator on the 29th September, 1932, be carried out."

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [7.44]: I have examined the proposals laid on the Table of the House and have no objection to offer. I take it that the proposals are really following out the Gov-

ernment policy of making available for agricultural purposes portions of State forests which in the past we have decided are not required for forest reserves.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [7.45]: I propose to support the second reading of the Bill. There are many amendments involved in it, and most of them are there with the object of assisting the department in its administration of the Act. The amendments have been found to be necessary as the result of experience gained over a good many years. As the Leader of the House has said, the Bill is very much the same as the one I introduced into this Chamber several years ago, but which did not go any further than this House. On casually reading the Bill, it is difficult to determine just what effect some of the proposed amendments will have, and for that reason the Bill lends itself to discussion in Committee rather than on the second reading stage. I hope the Leader of the House will have available all the information that will be sought when we are dealing with the more important amendments contained in the Bill. Members will then know on what grounds they are being called upon to decide why the principal Act is to be amended. I do not propose to say any more at this stage, but in Committee I hope to elicit more information than has been given to us, particularly in regard to those items which were not included in the measure I submitted in 1928.

On motion by Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [7.49]: I appreciate the fact that many new clauses in the Bill will be of distinct advantage, but I should like more light

thrown on some of the other clauses to which I intend to refer. Clause 43 adds to Section 225 of the parent Act, which sets out that a board "shall" reduce the unimproved value to conform to those made by the Taxation Department. The marginal note, however, says that the board "may." If that is so, does that not mean that in future under the amending Act that passed this House last session, and which based pastoral valuations on wool prices, will have to apply? On the 17th August last I asked the Chief Secretary a question as follows:—

As the Land Act Amendment Act, 1931, provides for an adjustment in rents of pastoral leases in certain districts, on the basis of the average price of greasy wool produced in the State and declared by the Government Statistician—(a) What percentage of decrease has been adopted for the financial year 1931-32; (b) Does the adjustment apply to road board valuations for rating purposes?

The Chief Secretary's reply was: (a) 25.98 per cent. for six months ended 30th June, 1932; 21.642 per cent. for the current financial year commencing 1st July, 1932. (b) No.

It would seem to me that if this new section is to apply, it will be in conflict with the words expressed in the Bill we have before us to-night. If the Income Tax Department adopts valuations based on wool prices, it appears to me there will be no alternative. Appeals have been allowed in some road districts within the North-East province on the ground that the valuations have not this year been amended in connection with the 1931 amendment. The appeals no doubt will go to the Local Court and from there it is presumed a ruling will be asked of the Supreme Court. I should like the Chief Secretary to indicate what effect this amendment is going to have if the valuations as he indicated to me are to be adopted by the road boards for the years mentioned. If the new section under discussion covers that point, the appeals that have been made to the boards already will have to be granted, and the whole thing apparently hinges on the values placed by the Taxation Department applying to pastoral leases. That is an important point in view of the decision the department gave as late as August last. By Clause 28 power is given to utilise the revenue of a board to drain private land to the extent of £150 subject, of course, to the approval of the Governor. I should like to have the reason

for this power being given to a board. No reason has been advanced by the Chief Secretary for the innovation. I should like to know why public money is to be spent on the draining of private land. Furthermore, large sums of money may be involved in draining land which, inadvertently or otherwise, may drain on to another board's territory, or even drain on to private land. I should like to hear a sound reason for giving power to a board to drain land that is deemed to be private property. Under that same clause, 28 (b), power is given to erect or acquire a lighting plant and cooling chamber. I should like the Chief Secretary to tell us whether the purchase is to be made from general revenue or from borrowed money. Regarding the innovation of employing Government auditors for whose services the boards are to be asked to pay half the cost, the amendment certainly assures to us that qualified auditors will act, and the board shall pay half the cost. I should like to know on what basis the 50 per cent. of the cost is to be apportioned. Is it to be based on whether a board is large or small, or on the revenue, or is it to be based on the area or distance? There must be some basis on which payment is to be made. Furthermore, will the Government auditors who are to be employed by the road boards be entitled to long service leave, and superannuation, and so forth, and if so, are the road boards to be asked to bear half the expense that will be involved there also? There is no reference in the Bill to cattle pits, known as "ramps" being legalised. I understand in the Eastern States they have been legalised. For the convenience of the travelling public they are a great time-saver, and incidentally a convenience. Will the Chief Secretary indicate whether an amendment will be acceptable to the Government to provide for the legalising of ramps. It would be appreciated by travellers who use the roads, and especially in the North-East Province they would be considered a great convenience. I hope the Chief Secretary will reply to the queries I have submitted. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [7.57]: In Clause 2 of the Bill it is proposed to insert the word "tenant" and give him power to vote in exactly the same way

as an owner. In my opinion, this will give a tenant power to vote against the interests of an owner when, say, a loan referendum is being taken. I hope the House will not agree to the proposal. Further to the definition of "road" it is proposed to add "and includes any land marked as a road upon the plan of any lands publicly exhibited or on any plan deposited in the Office of Titles prior to or after the passing of the Act." The latter part of the Act contains very drastic clauses which I will deal with later. They will compel anyone who has subdivided land to construct roads which will involve the expenditure of a considerable amount of money. I hope we shall be able to have that amended. Once a person submits his plan for subdivision to the Titles Office, if he is not in a position to carry on the construction of an expensive road, he may be desirous of cancelling it. I should like the Minister to tell us whether he would be permitted to cancel it, for the Act gives the local authorities power to rate either on a subdivision as a whole or on the individual blocks. It is very wise to have a penalty for the nomination of ineligible persons. There have been such cases, and they have put the boards to considerable expense. Clause 16 provides that the boards acting together may establish an indemnity fund for the purpose of indemnifying them against loss arising from defalcation. It is a sound proposal as against that of paying considerable sums of money to guarantee individual officers.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Suppose the fund is put under the control of an officer who himself defaults.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I take it that would be safeguarded. In any case it can be discussed in Committee. The next clause I would refer to prescribes that the local authorities may provide a gratuity for an employee who has served a certain period, but that the amount shall not exceed 12 months' salary. If it is right for the boards to provide a fund against loss by defalcation, it should be worth while for them to provide also a fund to which the employees would contribute and from which they would be recompensed—in effect, a superannuation fund. I take strong exception to Clause 26, dealing with the plans and specifications of roads. This is a very drastic amend-

ment of the Act. It is provided that no allotment shall be sold, or in any other way alienated by the owner, until the road has been constructed and drained in accordance with the plans and specifications. That is going to impose a severe hardship upon any person subdividing his land and offering it for sale.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It would stop a lot of ramps.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not know about that, but certainly if the clause goes through as printed it will play into the hands of those who have done some things which are not quite as satisfactory as they might be. The provision is far too drastic. It is proposed in Clause 28 to give the road board power to acquire and carry on any ferry or transport service by land or water and make charges for such service. What would be the attitude of the Railway Department if any local authority decided to put this provision into effect? It seems to me that by this clause we are widening the scope of the local authorities in a way that might not be satisfactory to those opposed to State trading concerns. I agree that a board should have power to subsidise, say, an agricultural society within its district up to about 3 per cent., and I would permit local authorities to open up and develop quarries and gravel pits and acquire a lighting plant, but I would confine them to the requirements of their districts. As the clause stands, the local authority would be permitted to establish a trading concern. Thus it would be possible for the board to decide to open up a quarry in competition with a private quarry, and so cramp the style of a man carrying on a legitimate business. Also a local authority is to be permitted to establish cooling chambers.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That also would be a trading concern.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Undoubtedly, for you would not call it a public utility. Mr. Harris asked for information regarding the provision for the recovery of the cost of drainage work by a board. The clause dealing with drainage seems to me to be giving the boards unnecessarily wide powers. There is no provision for determining a fair charge. An estimate of the cost should be submitted to the owners before the work is proceeded with. Under this, a local authority could initiate a work without knowing what it is going to cost. And while that work might

be constructed by the most costly methods, yet under the clause when the cost is ascertained the board shall apportion the amount thereof between the owners of the land, and if any dispute arises it will be for the Minister to say what shall be paid, and his decision shall be final. Certainly that clause should be carefully scrutinised in Committee. Again, the local authorities are being given unnecessarily wide powers in respect of hoardings, even hoardings erected on private property. The board is to have full regulation and control of all hoardings and of the removal of any hoarding which, in the opinion of the board, is dangerous or objectionable, and of the recovery of all expenses connected therewith. It means that if I desire to put up a hoarding on my own property, this clause could be so interpreted that the local authority would not permit me to erect the hoarding. The Minister may say that is not the intention, but we cannot get away from the fact that the Bill gives the local authority power to go on a man's property, to declare that an advertisement is offensive, and cause it to be removed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Many of these hoardings spoil the beauty of the country.

Hon. A. THOMSON: And many are useful to the travelling public in different parts of the State. People can be carried away with the idea of getting back to Nature, and preventing the destruction of the countryside by means of advertising placards. We should not, however, go to the extreme suggested by the Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: Or the extreme to which the Cottesloe local authority went.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Or the Perth City Council, in the case of the business man who had to take down a hoarding he put up on his property along Mounts Bay-road, Clause 39 gives great power to the Minister, power that, if I have anything to do with it, will not be given. The clause says—

The Governor may at any time, and from time to time by proclamation, declare that in any district or any portion of a district it shall be lawful to use wood in the construction of the external and internal walls of any building intended for use as a dwelling-house, and, notwithstanding that the provisions of the said Second Schedule have been extended to and are in operation in such district, or portion of a district, and until such proclamation is revoked, any of the provisions of the said Second Schedule (save and except regu-

lations 29 to 33 both inclusive) and of any by-laws made thereunder which are, or by the Minister are deemed to be, inconsistent with or repugnant to the authority granted by such proclamation, shall be suspended and have no force or effect in relation to any such building aforesaid.

When the Bill was discussed in another place, the Minister said it was intended that when the local authority refused to allow the Government to erect wooden buildings they would override such authority. If that is done there is not much use in having local authorities. The Second Schedule permits local authorities, subject to the conditions contained therein, to frame building regulations. Certain areas have been subdivided, roads constructed, and the land sold conditionally on buildings of a certain value being constructed upon the blocks. If the clause is passed, it will be competent for the Minister, in the case of certain road board areas adjacent to the city, to override the decision that only brick houses shall be erected, and proceed to put up a number of wooden houses.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is a very extreme case. One of the first actions taken by the Salmon Gums local authority was to declare a brick area.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest to the hon. member that the details of the particular clauses had better be dealt with in Committee.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is a dangerous power to give to the Minister.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are you serious?

Hon. A. THOMSON: There are one or two other clauses that I hope will be amended in Committee.

The PRESIDENT: There can be no objection to an incidental reference to clauses, but it is the extended reference and the giving of details that I suggest had better be left to the Committee stage.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Sections 285, 286, 287 and 288 relate to resident owners demanding a poll when road boards are asking for power to borrow money to carry out certain works. I think the word "resident" should be struck out of these sections. The owners of the land or property, who are directly responsible for the repayment of the loan, should be in a position to vote. A man may have been living on one side of the street for many years, and may have removed to the other side into another district, but may still own the property in which he originally resided. Whilst he is liable under

the Act for the repayment of his proportion of the loan, he will be doing something illegal if he exercises a vote, because he will no longer be a resident owner.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is an extreme case.

Hon. A. THOMSON: No. I may be interested in a property at Cottesloe Beach. Although I am directly responsible for my proportion of a loan that may have been raised, and may have been opposed to the raising of that loan, I may not be able to record a vote. The person who has to repay the money should have a vote.

Hon. J. Cornell: You should alter the definition of "ratepayer."

Hon. E. H. Gray: The absentee gains at the expense of the resident.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That should be amended. I hope the Minister will agree to the insertion of an additional clause dealing with the appointment of joint auditors for road boards. The suggestion of having a combined auditor for a certain number of road boards is an excellent one. Some road boards have a duly qualified auditor, with whom they are perfectly satisfied. He makes a monthly audit, which enables the board at the regular monthly meetings to know its exact position. It is now proposed to have quarterly audits. I hope the Minister will accept an amendment providing that a board not requiring the services of a joint auditor should not be responsible for the proportion of his fees. I hope in Committee it will be possible to amend some clauses and delete others. Meanwhile I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [8.27] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of the Bill is to remove the State Implement and Engineering Works from the operations of the State Trading Concerns Act. This concern has practically been in liquidation for over twelve months. It is now proposed to relieve the department of the necessity of following out the elaborate accounting procedure, etc., prescribed in the State Trading Concerns Act, 1917. The State Imple-

ment and Engineering Works commenced operations in 1912. At that time the Public Works Department conducted a small engineering shop at North Mole, Fremantle, where they carried out work for the Fremantle Harbour Trust and other Government departments. Shortly after approval for the State Implement Works was obtained, it was decided to amalgamate the North Mole workshop with the proposed implement works, and conduct them as a joint concern at Rocky Bay. To equip the new workshops a quantity of material and machinery was purchased from the Triumph Plough Works in South Australia, and other second-hand machinery from an engineering firm in Victoria. A short time later certain assets of a business conducted by James Haydon at Victoria Park were also purchased. These purchases included a quantity of farm implements and spare parts, a very few of which were sold, the remainder being broken up and scrapped.

The equipment and machinery thus purchased were found to be practically useless, and loaded the undertaking with unproductive expenditure from its inception. Towards the end of 1914 there was a lot of adverse criticism and Press controversy about the works, with the result that in 1915 a Royal Commission, presided over by Mr. Justice Northmore, was appointed to inquire into them. In May, 1915, the manager resigned and Mr. F. E. Shaw was appointed in his stead. Mr. Shaw found that the works were seriously overstaffed and it became necessary to dispense with the services of 250 employees.

In addition to the manufacture of agricultural implements, some important engineering work was carried out for the Government; principally harbour equipment. Electric cranes were built and erected at Bunbury and a new hull for the dredge "Fremantle" and several smaller steel vessels for coastal purposes were constructed. During the war period necessary repairs to warships and transports visiting Fremantle were carried out. Some large cranes were also built for the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Although serving a useful purpose as far as the engineering side was concerned, the implement-manufacturing portion was a decided failure. Unfortunately the State implements did not become popular, and competition increased. Certain Eastern

States implements became popular; and as these were manufactured under more favourable conditions, in the way of up to date machinery and factories and payment of workmen by results, it became increasingly difficult for the State establishment, with its poorly equipped factory and day wage system, to compete successfully for the market. Machinery agents naturally deserted the unpopular State products for the more popular and lucrative agencies. The result was a very serious decline in the number of implements sold by the works, so that by the year 1927 the output had declined so seriously that the works were only employing 130 men. The decline continued, and when the present slump occurred it became necessary to consider further reduction, until at the present time there are only 84 men on the pay roll.

Implement manufacture virtually ceased in 1930, and only sufficient employees were retained to carry out State requirements and to give service to the users of our implements. In only one year did the works show a profit, and that was in the financial year 1919-20, the profit amounting to £2,344. For the period 1913 to 1931 the aggregate loss on trading amounted to £206,656. The loss for the year ended 30th June, 1931, was £27,527, and assets included stock valued at £54,066 and stores valued at £18,499. Practically every line of implement manufactured was being sold at a loss. Over the whole range of manufactures the selling prices only totalled 86.54 per cent. of the cost—equalling a loss of 13.46 per cent.

Owing to the serious financial position of the works, the Government, in 1930, at the instance of the Minister for State Trading Concerns, appointed a committee consisting of Mr. Howe (State Mining Engineer), Mr. Courtenay (accountant, Lands Department), and Mr. Brodribb (Treasury investigating accountant) to make a general investigation of the concern. Their report disclosed the fact that not only had the implement section failed to realise the results for which it was created, but also that there was no prospect of its being successful in the future. The committee, assisted by other officials, made a full revaluation of the buildings and plant. The value as shown in the balance sheet at the 30th June, 1930, was £60,347.

The revaluation in January, 1931, was—

As a going concern	£47,771
Breakup value	£14,337

The committee estimated the value of complete and incomplete agricultural machinery—shown on the stock sheets at 30th June, 1930, at £27,503—to be approximately £11,000; and spare parts shown at £22,935 should realise £15,000.

The report shows the losses on trading to 30th June, 1931, as:—

	£206,656
Capital written off plant and buildings in 1917	23,978
Interest on readjusted capital and losses to 30/6/1930	102,754
Total	£333,388

and the assets as revalued:—

	£
Plant and buildings	47,771
Agricultural machinery	11,000
Spare parts	15,000
Stores as at 30/6/1931	18,499
Bill receivable 30/6/31	9,494
Total	£101,764

Provided the assets realise the estimated amount this will leave a gross loss of £231,624 on the operations of the concern since its inception.

In 1931 the Minister for State Trading Concerns appointed a departmental committee comprising Mr. Frank Shaw (Manager, State Implement Works), Mr. E. M. Howe (State Mining Engineer), and Mr. H. Brodribb (Treasury Inspector), to inquire into the methods employed by the various Government departments in regard to engineering works. The committee submitted a comprehensive report and recommended the appointment of a mechanical engineer—under the control of the Director of Works—whose duty it would be to control all workshop practice and to co-ordinate engineering requirements of all departments and institutions. They also recommended that, so far as practicable, all work should be carried out at the North Fremantle workshops. These recommendations have been carried out, and considerable economy has been effected by co-ordination.

In June, 1931, the Government decided that the manufacture of implements for stock was to cease; but if, after stocks are exhausted, an order is received for a partic-

ular implement, it can be made, and supplied on a strictly cash basis. The State Implement and Engineering Workshops are now simply a Government engineering workshop, which does not compete for private work, and therefore it should be removed from the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act, as under present circumstances it cannot legally be carried on under that Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—JUSTICES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Bavter—East) [8.38] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Justices Act 1902-1926, particularly in relation to imprisonment for debt. In a great number of measures, most of which are set forth in the schedule to this Bill, sums of money, which are really civil debts, are made recoverable in the police court. Whenever this is done the order made by the court under the Justices Act must be in the following terms:—(1) An order for the amount to be paid. (2) That in default of payment, distress shall issue against the property of the defendant. (3) In default of sufficient distress to pay the amount, imprisonment at the rate of three days for every £1.

The justices have discretionary power to omit the second portion of the order, namely that distress shall issue. The result of such an order is that if the defendant is too poor to pay the debt he must go to gaol forthwith. This, in the instances set forth in the schedule, means imprisonment for debt.

The Bill is designed to alter this state of affairs, and provides that whenever an order for payment of a sum of money is made in a police court under any of the sections set forth in the schedule, then the order will operate as if it were an order in the local court and not an order in the police court. A perusal of the schedule will, I think, rather surprise hon. members, for it lists such a variety of cases in which orders may be made in the police court for

what are purely civil debts. I think it advisable to quote some typical examples.

Under the Master and Servant Act a worker may proceed against his employer in the police court, instead of in the local court. The order made will then result in the employer being imprisoned if he fails to pay, even if he is without means. Then, on the other hand, in the event of a worker leaving his employer without giving proper notice, the employer may proceed against him in the police court for damages for breach of contract, and failure to pay such damages will result in imprisonment. The gem of the collection appears to be in connection with the Pawnbrokers' Ordinance. In this case, if a person's property is stolen and pawned with a pawnbroker, the court may order that such person shall pay to the pawnbroker some compensation for the amount advanced on the pawning of the stolen article. In the event of the person whose property was stolen being unable to pay he can be imprisoned. Thus it appears to be possible to make an innocent person suffer for the criminal act of another person. Even water rates are recoverable in the police court instead of the local court and failure to pay will result in imprisonment. These are just typical examples of the great number of instances set forth in the schedule.

In times of financial stress, such as we are now experiencing, it is possible that people who under ordinary circumstances would not run into debt may find it impossible to pay such charges as excess water, medical fees, etc.; and under the present Act, they can be imprisoned. It is apparent that such debts should not be subject to recovery in a police court, and it is to be hoped that Parliament will in future carefully scrutinise all Acts and see to it that the remedy for what is really a civil debt is never made recoverable in the police court or before justices or in a court of summary jurisdiction or in a summary way. The proper court for the recovery of all civil debts is the local court or the Supreme Court. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.44]: I second the motion. I do not desire to speak to the Bill, but merely wish to draw the

Minister's attention to one clause of the measure—Clause 7, which says that the Act shall come into operation on the 1st January, 1933. That seems to me a peculiar provision. Usually the Short Title and commencement date go together in one clause. A like provision appears in the companion measure to this Bill; but in the companion measure it stands as Clause 2. For the sake of uniformity, the clauses should be in the same form and appear in the same position in the different Bills.

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

House adjourned at 8.46 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 12th October, 1932.

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

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Land Tax and Income Tax.
Introduced by the Premier.
- 2, Newspaper Libel and Registration Act Amendment.
Introduced by Mr. Parker.

MOTION—HERDSMAN LAKE SETTLERS.

MR. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn)
[4.35]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House a re-appraisal board should be appointed to revalue the holdings of the settlers on the Herdsman Lake.

My reason for doing this is that I have received a petition from 38 of the Herdsman Lake settlers urging the Government to appoint a re-appraisal board to revalue the holdings occupied by them. The Minister has kindly permitted me to peruse the file dealing with the Herdsman Lake settlement, that is, the recent settlement of 39 or 40 settlers on the east and south sides of the lake. The value placed on the land in those holdings is £70 per acre, and the houses which have been erected are valued at £260, the bare cost of the house. I have nothing to say against that, for it is a fair value. It is only in respect of the value of the land that I am moving for the appointment of a board to re-appraise it. In endeavouring to arrive at the actual value of this land it is necessary to go into the history of the purchase of the estate. As far back as 1916 the Government were approached to purchase the Herdsman Lake, at that time under water. After lengthy negotiations and an endeavour to assess the cost of dewatering the lake, it was eventually recommended that a fair value for the purchase of the lake would be £10,000. The advisory board originally recommending the purchase were undoubtedly influenced by the estimated cost of dewatering the lake. At that time it was generally recognised, although different estimates were given, that the lake could be dewatered for £25,000, and in their estimates the advisory board said that with the original cost of £10,000 plus the cost of drainage, including a tunnel to the ocean, about 2½ miles through the hills, would be from £30,000 to £35,000. It was estimated that the roads, surveys, etc., would cost £15,000, which would make the land worth for valuing from £40 to £45 per acre. After the recommendation had been made, and a start entered upon with the drainage, the trouble began. It was then discovered that the original estimate would be considerably exceeded, and the first estimate of £25,000 was very shortly altered to read £50,000.