

# MESSAGE—FEDERATION AND THE STATE, JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that Thursday, the 13th October, at 2.30 p.m., had been named as the time, and the Committee room of the Council as the place, for the first meeting of the joint select committee.

*House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 12th October, 1921.*

	Page
Questions: Java Trade, "Kangaroo" Expedition	1148
Wheat Certificates, payment ... ..	1148
Old Women's Home ... ..	1148
Bills: Building Societies Act Amendment, Com.	1148
Inspection of Machinery, 2a., Com. ....	1148
Land Tax and Income Tax, 2a., Com. ....	1182
Wheat Marketing, 2a. ... ..	1183

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

### QUESTION—JAVA TRADE, "KANGAROO" EXPEDITION.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Education: In connection with the "Kangaroo" expedition to Java and Singapore, has any official invitation been received here from any Government in the near East, and if so, will the correspondence be laid on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: I will endeavour to get the correspondence and lay it on the Table of the House. There has been an invitation issued, but I am not prepared offhand to give the hon. member the details.

### QUESTION—WHEAT CERTIFICATES, PAYMENTS.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Minister for Education: When will final payments be made of amounts due on wheat certificates covering the years 1915-16 to 1919-20?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: According to advices received from the Australian Wheat Board, it is antici-

pated that the 1915-16 wheat pool will be finalised almost immediately, payment following shortly after. No information is available as to when the other pools are likely to be wound up.

### QUESTION—OLD WOMEN'S HOME.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Minister for Education: Will he lay on the Table of the House the files relating to the appointment of the official visitors to the Old Women's Home?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Yes. I will now lay the papers on the Table.

### BILL—BUILDING SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day; Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair, the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported yesterday on an amendment to Clause 2, Subclause 3, moved by the Minister for Education as follows: That the words previously inserted, "the same fees as for the time being are payable on a transmission under the Transfer of Land Act," be struck out, and the words "and on payment of such fees (if any) as may be prescribed by the Governor, but not to exceed such fees as for the time being are payable on transmissions under the Transfer of Land Act" inserted in lieu.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I thank the Leader of the House for postponing this matter yesterday, but seeing that Mr. Nicholson is not here I have no further opposition to offer..

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I assure the hon. member it is all right.

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

Bill reported with an amendment.

### BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North) [4.40]: I wish to say a few words regarding this Bill. I have heard enough of the debate to justify me in coming to the conclusion that this measure requires very close scrutiny. It very vitally affects the North Province, seeing that the conditions that are going to apply to engines used on farms will apparently also apply to engines used in boats. The pearling industry has been a very important one, and will be an important one in the near future if the price of shell rises. The divers who get the shell from the bed of the

ocean are enabled to stay down by means of air pumped to them by the crew. Originally, hand pumps were used for this purpose, but now a small engine is used. Statistics go to show that the air sent down from an engine pump has reduced to a mere cipher the danger of paralysis to the diver. If each of these pearling boats has to carry a qualified engineer in order to send down the air to the diver it will be necessary either to provide more accommodation for an engineer, or it will be necessary to revert to the hand pump. If the Minister says this will not apply to engines on boats, the commonsense question arises that if an engine is not a dangerous implement on a boat, why is the same engine dangerous on a farm? I am also told that on farms very often the engine is taken out of a motor car and used for general purposes. If the engine is left in the motor car there is no necessity for inspection by an inspector of machinery, but if the engine is taken out and put on the farm the farmer becomes subject to the Machinery Act. If that is so we are reaching a farcical stage. Judging from the remarks of hon. members, the Bill is loaded. Under the existing legislation there are men travelling all round the country from one end to the other inspecting every little farm and homestead, and inquiring as to the machinery upon those places. I have here a document which shows that the State is getting 5s. a time out of this. I own a farm some 20 miles from a station. An inspector of machinery visited it on one occasion and found that we had a chaff cutter, a pump and an engine there. In due course we received this document, a notice that we had to fill in a form saying that we were the owners of these three items. Accompanying the notice was a document as set out here, giving us 21 days in which to pay. It is underlined with blue and red ink where it says that money orders and cheques have to be crossed and the necessary exchange added on every 5s. paid. Later on we got a final notice as follows:—

Further to my letter No. 5221, dated the 5th August, I have to inform you that the fee of 5s. due for inspection made on your above registered machinery on 26th August, 1920, remains unpaid. (2) Please note that unless the amount is remitted on or before 14th December, 1921, the matter for collection will be referred to the Crown Solicitor to issue a summons without further notice.

In the third paragraph there is a red pencil mark down the side, and the wording is as follows:—

(3) If payment is made by cheque, please add bank exchange.

That is on a fee of 5s.

All cheques and post office orders to be crossed and made payable to the Chief Inspector of Machinery and not to any individual.

The words "without further notice" in the second paragraph and "not to any individual" in the third paragraph, are underlined. The document is signed "C. Matthews, Chief Inspector." That is what we are doing at the present time.

The Minister for Education: Why not pay up and avoid all this trouble?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I will pay some day. I will pay the 5s. and it will probably cost the State about £5 before it is paid.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They will not take cash down.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I asked my man on the farm if the gentleman who came to the farm produced his authority. My man replied in the negative. I told him that in future, if any man posing as a public officer came on the premises and did not produce his authority, he was to be ordered off, and if the individual did not leave pretty quickly, I instructed my man to send for a policeman. We will not be annoyed with this sort of thing. The 5s., of course, will be paid, but whether we are entitled to pay it or not, I do not know. This is the sort of thing we are subjected to under the existing legislation but what we will have to be subjected to under this Bill, goodness knows. The outlook appears to be disastrous.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is what you get if you do not pay.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: All this sort of thing points to one result, namely, increased cost of production. The markets of the world are, according to His Excellency's Speech, in a state of collapse, and how we can face those markets with all the disabilities I have referred to, is beyond my comprehension. Regarding one of the points I have raised, as to whether the engine driving an air pump on a pearling lugger comes within the scope of the Bill, if the Minister says it does not, I want to know why such an engine is less dangerous than a similar engine on a farm. If I could get sufficient support, I would try to defeat the Bill on the second reading. I throw that suggestion out to some hon. member who may feel disposed to adopt that attitude.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.49]: The Bill is said to be drawn upon lines of uniformity with measures existing in the other States. Just what advantage that is to Western Australia, I have yet to learn. I have listened carefully to the speeches of hon. members and probably the Leader of the House will be able to give some information on that point. There are a great many clauses in the measure to which I take exception, but which, I think, can be remedied in Committee. It will indeed be a huge task. One particular clause of the measure to which I desire to refer is, I admit, in the existing Act. It is the part referring to the registration and inspection of oil engines driven with gas or petrol. An engine under one horse power is not required to be inspected, but all en-

gines above one horse power must be registered and inspected. On the other hand, a motor car engine up to say 60 horse power is not required to be registered or inspected unless the engine is taken out of the car and put to some other use, as is often done on the farms, for chaffcutting and so on. The position is ridiculous. I would like to be informed as to the necessity for inspecting engines driven by oil or petrol. Unless one gets the proper mixture, the engine will not work, let alone become a menace or danger to those working around it. In these circumstances, why is there any necessity for registration and examination? Why is there any necessity for the Government to waste money on this sort of thing? Mr. Holmes mentioned one case, and what applied in his case, can apply throughout the farming and pastoral areas. Although a registration fee for engines amounting to 5s. has to be paid, it will probably cost anything from 20s. to 25s. to carry out the work in connection with inspection and so on. What is to be gained from such a provision? Let members take the Bill and compare it with the existing Act. They will see that the Bill goes further than the existing legislation, and it will tend to build up another Government department. Under the Bill, the Government will require to more than double their staff of inspectors. This is not the time to extend the operations of government in such a direction. We hear a good deal of talk about economy. Is it being practised? In any case, it is not being practised under the Bill before the House. The measure certainly means increased inspection.

The Minister for Education: Why do you say that?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Simply because the Government will have to double their staff of machinery inspectors. This is not the time for the Government to extend their operations in such a direction. If the State were in a position where the revenue exceeds the expenditure, well and good, but we are not in that position and so far as I am able to judge, we are never likely to reach that position, seeing how we are drifting at the present time. There is an opportunity to alter the original Act, and make it reasonable. It has been suggested that it would be better to throw the Bill out on the second reading, instead of allowing it to go into Committee, but I favour it going into Committee, and will try to make a good working measure of it. I support the second reading of the Bill with that object in view.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [4.52]: The nature of the Bill warrants it reaching the Committee stage. Hon. members who have spoken seem to have lost sight of the chief purpose for amending the existing Act, and some of them are obsessed with the idea that the whole Bill is new. On the contrary, 90 per cent. of it has been in operation for the past 10 or 12 years.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Quite so; some of it has been in operation for a long time.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The only explanation of the attitude adopted by those members is that they want alterations of the existing measure.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Oh no.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If members take exception to legislation which has been in operation for 12 or 14 years, it is sheer insanity.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Nonsense!

Hon. J. CORNELL: I did think that the House was progressing, but it appears that some members of the House will have it more antiquated than ever if they adopt such ideas as those I have mentioned. The chief purpose of legislation of this type is for the better protection of the human element connected with the operation of machinery. There is no other valid reason for the passing of such legislation. The Bill is essentially one for consideration in Committee, but I have taken the trouble to compare the existing Act and the amendments proposed under the Bill with similar legislation in other parts of the Commonwealth. The Bill does not go beyond the standpoint of safety and protection of human life. It does not go further than legislation in other States. What is more, in black labour countries the conditions laid down in similar legislation are much more stringent than those contemplated under the Bill. I will give members further information under that heading when the Bill is in Committee. I support the second reading of the measure, and will support any amendment having for its object the more adequate protection of life and limb of those engaged in or around machinery. As for the instances quoted by Mr. Holmes, such illustrations have little or nothing whatever to do with the objective of such legislation. His references merely gave evidence of red tape and, in this way, his complaint is in regard to the administration of the Act rather than to any weakness in the legislation itself. There is one aspect of such legislation in which an improvement can be made. I contend that the Machinery Department should be done away with and legislation of this type should be administered by the Mines Department. By that means we could cut down a good deal of the administrative costs. I can see no necessity for a separate Machinery Department and a separate head of that department as Chief Inspector of Machinery. I think that 90 per cent. of the work carried out by that department could be better carried out under the Mines Department with a sub-head controlling this section, rather than the establishment of the separate department as we have to-day.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [4.57]: One hon. member has suggested that, if he thought he could obtain sufficient support, he would throw the Bill out at the second-reading stage. Throughout his speech

he made the general admission that he does not know anything about the Bill.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I have heard about it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member has gathered from the speeches delivered by other members that the Bill is loaded. He has not troubled to look into it and compare it with existing legislation. He has seen fit to say there is no necessity for it and he has admitted that, if he thought there were sufficient members behind him, he would throw it out without consideration. I have been struck throughout the debate with what seemed the inability of a certain section of this House to look at this matter from the other fellow's point of view. It is extraordinary to think that, on the one hand, the farmers' representatives have complained of the Bill and stressed the fact that the measure brings within its scope all sorts of machinery that should be exempt. On the other hand, representatives of the workers have complained that the Bill exempts from its operation certain farming machinery that should be included. I think that if both sides were to come together and discuss the measure, they would quickly arrive at the conclusion that there is very little to complain about. I am grateful to Mr. Lynn for having spent so much time and taken so much trouble in connection with this Bill. I know that, with other gentlemen, he had an interview with the Chief Inspector, and most of the amendments he has placed on the Notice Paper are amendments to which I can agree. They will not destroy the Bill by any means. Another thing that amazes me is that one member could jump to the conclusion that are reaching out for something new, doubling our staff and building up a big department. I can find no warrant for statements of that kind. There is no suggestion that the Machinery Department is to be increased at all.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where do all these inspectors who are travelling through the country come from? They were not there before.

Hon. E. H. Harris: There are only seven of them altogether.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Members should remember that the Machinery Act has been in force since 1904, and it is quite wrong to say that the present Bill is aimed to vastly extend the scope of the Act of 1904. If hon. members look at the parent Act and examine Section 14, they will see that provision is made for every kind and description of machinery in the second schedule, which shall be deemed to be machinery for the purposes of the Act. It is quite true that the machinery specified in the amending Bill now before the House includes a great number of things not included in the second schedule of the existing Act, but the second paragraph of Section 14 of the 1904 Acts reads—

The Governor may, by Order in Council, published in the "Government Gazette," from time to time declare that any other

kinds of machinery save as last aforesaid shall be subject to the provisions of this Act; and in any such case, and from and after a date to be fixed by such Order in Council, the machinery therein mentioned shall be so subject.

Under the existing Act the Governor in Council had power to extend it to any class of machinery except that specifically exempted in Section 4 of the Act. The Bill at present before the House, Clause 14, simply says:

The machinery mentioned in the second schedule shall, save as is mentioned in section four, be deemed to be machinery for the purposes of this Act.

But the paragraph which appears in the Act of 1904 giving the Governor in Council power to extend the operation of the Act to any machinery desired is not now included. In both cases, that is in Section 4 of the Act and in Clause 14 of the Bill, provision is made that the Governor may by Order in Council published in the "Gazette" from time to time declare that any kinds of machinery shall cease to be machinery subject to this Act. There is that power to exempt all classes of machinery which it is desired to exempt, but in practice what has been done is this: Instead of naming certain classes of machinery and saying these may be added to by regulation as the Government directs, the whole of the machinery that it is thought desirable to be included is put in the schedule and the power to make additions is taken away from the Governor. Over and over again we have heard strong protests against power being given to the Government to legislate by means of regulation and here where we have a case of the Government abandoning this power and the right to legislate by regulation and placing the whole of the matter in the Act, we are told we are trying to extend tremendously the scope of its operations. I have already alluded to Section 4 of the Act which deals with exemptions. It reads—

This Act shall not apply to any boilers or machinery (1) Used on or employed in the working of the Government Railways under the control of the Commissioner of Railways; or (2) Of any ocean-going steamship; or (3) Of any steamship engaged in making any coasting voyage within the meaning of the Colonial Passengers Ordinance, 1861, or (4) Of any steam or oil launch or motor car not used at any time for carrying goods or passengers for reward.

The Governor by Order in Council could extend the provisions to any class of machinery excepting those mentioned in the exemption. Not only does the new Bill take away the right to extend the application of the Act by regulation, but it sets up further exemptions. In Clause 4 of the Bill we have the exemption in regard to the Government railways or tramways, the reasons for which I will explain later on, the exemption of any ocean-going

ship or steamship, the exemption of any ship or steamship engaged in making any coasting voyage. Then we have the exemption of any steam or oil launch or motor car, or motor lorry, other than a motor car or motor lorry driven by steam and used for carrying goods or passengers for reward; or of any traction engine driven otherwise than by steam and used solely for traction purposes; or if such machinery is driven by a motor as defined of which the power is less than one-horse power. The Governor in Council may by regulation extend the operations of the existing Act to any class of machinery except the four classes referred to in Section 4. Under the new Bill these four clauses of exemption are increased to six. The power to extend the operation of the Bill to machinery not mentioned in the schedule is taken away altogether and the schedule itself is the beginning and end of it, with the power still reserved to the Governor in Council to exempt any machinery he thinks it desirable to exempt. When the Act of 1904 came into operation it was very soon found that it did not cover the whole of the machinery that ought to be regulated. As has been pointed out by two or three members during the course of the debate, the sole purpose of this Act is to protect the bodies and lives of the people engaged in connection with machinery. Mr. Baxter wanted to know what advantage would be derived from uniformity. It appeals to me that when we have representatives of each State, the people most concerned in these matters, the people with the widest experience as to how accidents with machinery happen, when we have such people assembling together and setting up a uniform code, there is a greater chance of it being satisfactory and of it protecting the lives and saving from injury the men engaged in connection with machinery, than if one person set up his own code without regard to anyone else. If we want a safe Bill we are more likely to get it from half a dozen people who have had experience all over Australia than from a single individual. For this reason there is a great deal to be said in favour of uniformity in a matter of this kind. I take it that human life is equally valuable whether in Queensland or in Western Australia, and the operation of the machinery, it is reasonable to assume, is very much the same in both States.

Hon. J. Duffell: The operations of this Act will be very different here from the Eastern States, owing to our vast distances.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There may be certain difficulties, but they are only difficulties of degree and not differences of principle. When the Act came into operation in 1904, it was soon found that the classes of machinery mentioned in the second schedule did not by any means cover those classes of machinery in regard to which accidents were likely to occur. Consequently, the schedule was amended by regulation in 1905, again in 1907, again in 1909, and finally in 1917. Under the schedule in the first

case printing machinery was included, while flockmilling, electric power stations, aerated water works, confectionery works and laundry machinery was omitted. The latter, however, was included by regulation from time to time between 1904 and 1917. The present Bill includes in the schedule all machinery worked by steam, water, electricity, gas, oil, compressed air or by any other power, other than machinery driven by hand, treadle, wind, or animal power, and used in any manufacturing or industrial process, and it does not include anything that is not at present included in the regulations as finally compiled in 1917 with three exceptions. Apart from the three exceptions everything now in the schedule of the Bill is in the regulations and the regulations, of course, have the full force and effect of the Act itself.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The second schedule of the Bill says "all" machinery.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Quite so; all machinery means machinery as defined in the interpretation clause, and nothing else. Every word of the Act is governed by the interpretation clause.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: We want to make it as easy as possible for the farmer.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We want to make it as easy as possible for everybody in the State who is operating machinery. We do not want to cause anyone unnecessary trouble and expense. We want to protect life and avoid accident.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The interpretation clause, read with the schedule, means more than you have stated.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The schedule has no meaning whatever apart from the interpretation clause.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That covers "all" machinery.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: All machinery included in the present Bill is included in the present Act and the regulations framed under the Act with the exception of boilers under 10lbs. pressure, steam jacketed vessels and air receivers of specified capacity. These have not been included in the regulations and could not be included because they were not machinery within the interpretation clause of the Act of 1904. It is regarded as necessary that all boilers should be subject to inspection. I do not know that any member is prepared to dispute that view. That is the reason for including boilers of under 10lbs. pressure which are excluded under the present Act. Steam-jacketed vessels have caused several accidents and air receivers which often work at high pressure are also to be inspected. The inspection is not only necessary from the point of view of immediate safety, but from the hygienic point of view. Miners working underground have to breathe the air passed through these receivers and, if the receiv-

ers are faulty, the health of the miners may be affected. I have already explained that Clause 14 gives the same power to the Governor to exempt as does the present Act. Section 42 of the Act of 1904 provides that the certificate for machinery used solely for threshing, chaff-cutting, or crushing grain and not worked for more than six months in any one year should remain in force for two years. Clause 42 of the Bill includes also machinery used for sheep shearing, irrigation, or for purely agricultural purposes, other than traction engines driven by steam, and not worked for more than six months in any one year, so that this clause gives greater facilities to the agriculturist than does the Act of 1904. It goes even further than that because it provides that the two years certificate may be extended under certain conditions. These are exemptions and extensions which are necessary because of the vast distances to which Mr. Duffell has referred.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I understand that you brought all machinery in under regulations.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Now you want to incorporate all that in this measure.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: All that has been brought in is included in the schedule and the interpretation clause. This measure will not bring in any not included in the old Act and the regulations, excepting the three things to which I have referred. During the debate it has been contended that the Bill is illogical, because it provides for the exemption of agricultural engines, and I think one member pointed out that a boiler was a boiler wherever it was used. The Bill does not provide for the exemption of agricultural engines. It is intended that all agricultural boilers and engines shall be inspected. The only exemption applying to agricultural engines is that engine drivers' or boiler attendants' certificates shall not be necessary except under clearly specified conditions set out in Clause 53 of the Bill. Sub-clause 3 of Clause 53 reads—

This section shall not apply—(a) to any steam engine or any internal combustion engine, or any boiler owned or hired by any bona fide agriculturist, and used exclusively on any farm for agricultural or dairy purposes and not worked for more than six months in any year; (b) to any boiler of less than three-horse power; (c) to any pump erected on any mine or premises not capable of pumping more than 6,000 gallons per hour; (d) to any engine used exclusively for domestic purposes; (e) to any Holman hoist or any similar small winding engine used in a mine for temporary winding purposes underground, and only for hauling material; (f) to any internal combustion engine or engines

having an area of cylinder or combined area of cylinders not exceeding one hundred and fourteen square inches.

It will be seen that this is not an exemption from inspection, but merely an exemption from the necessity for having in charge of the machine the holder of a certificate.

Hon. J. J. Holmes. Why is a steam engine used for domestic purposes less dangerous than any other steam engine?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I suppose that in the majority of cases such engines are small. One hon. member suggested that heaters were used in bathrooms, and that these might be included within the scope of the measure. No such thing, of course, was ever intended. In order to prevent the necessity of including in the Bill a long list of exemptions, the amendment suggested by Mr. Lynn is being brought forward, namely, to insert between the words "any" and "boiler" in paragraph (a) of Clause 2 the word "closed." This amendment would make it clear that, for instance, bath heaters are excluded from the operation of the measure.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Clause 42 is one of the most important in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: What part of the clause does the hon. member refer to?

The PRESIDENT: I may point out that these inquiries would be better made in Committee.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Clause 42 is a very long one. Unless the hon. member can tell me exactly what point he refers to, I might waste a good deal of time without giving him what he wants. The same remark as applies to bath heaters applies to primus stoves. There is no intention whatever of including primus stoves within the scope of the Bill. One hon. member suggested that certificates for boiler attendants were an innovation not to be found in any other Act. However, that is not so. They are provided for in the Victorian Factories and Shops Act of 1890, and have been issued ever since. The other States are following suit, in accordance with the recommendations of the conference to which reference has been made. There was some comment on inspectors of machinery having the power to act as inspectors of mines. That provision was inserted with the object of effecting economy. It is only intended to operate under certain conditions and restrictions. Reference to it is made in Subclause 5 of Clause 6. The Mines Regulation Act has a similar section referring to inspectors of mines acting as inspectors of machinery. I think it obvious that by this means economy can be effected. Mr. Stewart suggested that the Bill was going to be turned into a revenue Bill for the purpose of collecting, amongst other things, registration fees. There is no provision whatever in the measure for the collecting of registration fees. Fees are only charged for inspection, and for the granting of certifi-

cates. Mr. Stewart talked of registration fees and license fees, but there are no charges of that kind imposed by this Bill. Rock drills were also referred to by an hon. member. These never have been registered, nor is there any intention of doing so under the present Bill. Another point raised was that the measure gave power to exempt only certain kinds of machinery. That is not the case. Clause 14 gives full power to exempt any machinery whatever, exactly as under Section 14 of the Act of 1904. Mr. Pantou objected to the minimum age fixed for lift attendants, suggesting that it should be raised to 18 years. I do not know that there is necessarily any inconsistency in an Act fixing a certain age limit, and the Arbitration Court going beyond that limit. Undoubtedly an award of the Arbitration Court, so far as it applies to an industry, would prevail over an Act. People under the award would have to obey the award. Personally I see no objection to making the minimum age of lift attendants 18 years.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about automatic lifts? Would people under the age of 18 years be prevented from using them?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No. The reference is to persons engaged as lift attendants, and in connection with an automatic lift no one is engaged as attendant. Mr. Dodd made reference to the exemption of boilers and machinery under the control of the Commissioner of Railways. That has been the case all along. However, the exemption does not apply to any other Government activity; all the others are subject to the measure, and the Commissioner of Railways is exempted solely for the reason that he has his own inspecting staff and does the whole thing himself. He also grants certificates to the drivers of his locomotives. No advantage whatever would be derived from bringing the Railway Department within the purview of this particular measure. Those are the principal matters raised during the discussion, and I would appeal to those hon. members who confess that they do not know what the Bill means, at all events to adopt the second reading and to give the Bill in Committee the consideration which I am sure it deserves.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

Hon. J. LYNN: I move an amendment—That in the interpretation of "Boiler" there be inserted after the word "any" in paragraph (a), the word "closed."

The insertion of the word "closed" will exempt many little boilers in connection with which the generating of steam is unaccompanied by any risk. Further, the amendment

would exclude many little things which the Bill was never intended to cover: primus stoves, for example.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think the word "closed" would be redundant.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: The amendment was agreed to at the conference.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I do not feel at all disposed to vote for the amendment, though I do not know much about the matter. An hon. member who moves an amendment should enlighten the Committee as to his reasons for doing so. I have still to learn that inspectors of machinery run around hotels inspecting primus stoves. The inspectors use some discretion and some judgment, and they would not make the operation of the measure irksome. The question of what boilers need inspection should be left to the inspectors. The word "closed" seems to be loaded.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Mr. Baglin need have no fear of the amendment being loaded, since it is an amendment accepted by the Chief Inspector of Machinery himself. During the discussion as to the proper wording of the interpretation clause, it was agreed that there was some little risk of inspectors not interpreting this particular definition exactly as it should be interpreted. The object of the amendment is to avoid the very possibility of misapprehension on the part of the inspectors.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I fail to see that the insertion of "closed" will improve the interpretation in any way; I think it will rather tend toward ambiguity. Any boiler must be "closed" in order to generate steam. As regards a primus stove, for instance, the vessel above the primus stove must be closed in order that steam may be obtained. The same thing might be said of a billy with the lid on, standing over a fire. The South African interpretation of "Boiler" is clear and logical—

"Boiler" shall mean any apparatus adapted to continuously convert any liquid into steam, vapour, or gas of a higher pressure than that due to the atmosphere, together with any fittings and appurtenances thereof. . . .

I fail to see what the insertion of "closed" will effect.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	8
Majority for				7

#### AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. R. J. Lynn	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller.)

## NOMS.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. R. G. Ardagh (Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The interpretation is not as good as that in the existing Act. I do not see why boilers of 10 lbs. pressure and under should not be exempted; for there is no danger in connection with such boilers. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (a) "above atmospheric pressure" be struck out and "not exceeding 10 lbs. pressure per square inch above atmospheric pressure" be inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The amendment cannot be accepted. Those who have technical knowledge and experience say that all boilers should be subject to inspection. That is one of the three things to which we have been unable to extend the Act by regulation, because of the restriction in the Act. The hon. member has not given any reason why boilers of low pressure should be exempt. It was the opinion of the conference of experts from all States that all boilers should be subject to inspection.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Of course experts will say so. That is the trouble with experts, whose first consideration is the building up of a big department. It cannot be shown that there is any danger whatever from boilers working at a pressure of 10 lbs.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (b), after "square inch," the words "and having a capacity exceeding five cubic feet" be inserted.

That will exempt from inspection any receiver under five cubic feet. Small air compressors carrying no risk whatever ought to be exempted.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is all right in regard to air compressors, but it is not too satisfactory in connection with gas.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: How will this affect vessels or containers used in hospitals for, say, oxygen or carbonic acid gas? Those cylinders contain 10 cubic feet.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: If they be in excess of five cubic feet, unless used for domestic purposes, they will not be exempt. Yet I do not know that such a container would be subject to inspection in any case.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is quite possible that when the Bill is passed it will be found that its application can be extended to something not intended. Such a difficulty would be immediately overcome by the exercise of the powers given in Clause 14.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: How will these provisions affect the engines on pearling boats?

The Minister for Education: They are exempted.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the definition of "winding engine" the words "or material" be struck out.

The definition will then show exactly what is intended by "winding engine," and will exclude small winches which may be used for winding underground. Unless the words are omitted, the issue will be confused, inasmuch as any man on a little winch will be regarded as a man driving a winding engine. A small winch winding a skip of coal, or mullock, or cement, or bricks, could be termed under this, a winding engine. My desire is just to make the reading of the clause quite understandable.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. I can see a good deal of danger if we strike out the words. We know that some people employ machinery for raising or lowering men and raising and lowering material also, and they would probably, if the opportunity were afforded them by the striking out of these words, make use of the change to their advantage. Even though the Machinery Act has been in existence for some time, the opportunity has been taken to lower and raise not only material but men, without the employment of a certificated engine-driver. Suppose an engine-driver is engaged on a mine to lower and to raise men, and he is called away to another engine, and material has to be raised in that particular shaft. An uncertificated man comes along and he takes the place of the certificated man, while, down below, somebody may take advantage of the opportunity to hop on the cage or bucket and come up to the surface, or go to another level. The person would thus be raised under the direction of the uncertificated man. I see nothing but danger if we excise the words in question.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Mr. Lynn has put up a very good case for the small winch, but we must not lose sight of the other phase, that of the winding engine which is used for raising or lowering men or material. There are many places here where there are powerful winders that do nothing else but hoist material, in a coal mine for instance. Suppose there were two shafts and one was used for raising men and the other for material. If there should be a breakdown in one, the engine which operated that would cease to be a winding engine. Evidently Mr. Lynn is seeking to amend the clause in the direction of saying that an engine, irrespective of whatever size it may be, is not a winding engine.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Hon. members do not appear to understand that under the Mines Regulation Act there must be a certificated



man on an engine, and that under the coal mining laws we are compelled to employ certificated men. This is a machinery measure, and the clause in question will come into conflict with the existing Acts. The clause may be construed into meaning that where there are small winders which are not operated by men with certificates, the same class of certificated man must be employed on that small winder. So that there may be no misunderstanding respecting what a winder is, we say take out the words "or material."

Hon. J. E. DODD: I confess I can hardly understand the hon. member's reasoning. Whether or not the law is to-day as has been stated, I am not aware, and I do not know whether or not a man in driving an engine such as described by Mr. Harris is not hauling men, and whether he comes under the same category as the man who is hauling men. The Holman hoist is specifically exempt under this Act, and rightly so. There may be similar engines exempt, and it struck me that it would be better to allow "or material" to remain and possibly have an engine of 400 horse-power simply hauling material without coming under any regulation whatever. It would be far better to make further exemptions if necessary than to cut out the words from the clause.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: This point has been well considered, and an attempt was made to exempt small engines and leave in the words "or material." It was, however, difficult to get the exemption necessary, and it was considered better to excise the words than to start exempting a hundred and one small winding engines. The question was debated at the conference for two or three hours, and it was found that this was the only solution of the difficulty. An attempt was made to solve the question along the lines suggested by Mr. Dodd, but it was found that this would be too cumbersome a method.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I would draw the attention of members to Section 56, Subsection 7, paragraph 2 of the Act, which sets out that an internal combustion engine-driver's certificate would entitle the holder to do certain things, and the words "or material" are made to apply. If the section were not to apply to engines where material is raised or lowered the certificate would not apply either.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: Mr. Lynn would be better advised to withdraw his amendment and leave the matter in the hands of the Minister. The man who is in charge of a winding engine that is hauling material has a position of great responsibility, seeing that he is often hauling dirt or coal over the heads of numbers of men engaged below. That being so, the driver of such a winding plant should be a certificated man.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Mr. Lynn has referred to some conference that was held.

Hon. J. CORNELL: A star chamber.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: We are told that the conference decided upon the deletion of the

words "or material." Where was this conference held and whom did it comprise? Apparently some outside body has dealt with this Bill, and we are told that we ought to agree to what was done there.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: There was no star chamber about the matter. The hon. member may be concerned about something to do with his own organisation, but I would have him know that I am not accustomed to sit in a star chamber.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Who was represented at the conference?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I told the Leader of the House that certain amendments to the Bill were necessary. I suggested that it should be referred to a select committee, so that evidence might be taken and the Bill presented to the House in an intelligible form. He suggested I should see the Minister for Mines. I did so, and also referred to the advisability of having a select committee. The Minister said there was no occasion for that. He went on to tell me that there was nothing in the measure that need be feared, and that if there was anything that we desired to have made clear or more intelligible and some slight amendments could bring that about, he would be only too pleased to agree to that so long as the principles of the Bill were not violated. Members need have no fear that the Bill is loaded in any way. Accordingly we met the Minister and the chief inspector of machinery, and found there was nothing very dangerous about the Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Who were there?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: There were representatives of the Chamber of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Mines in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Was the working man represented?

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: Did Mr. Arthur Wilson attend?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: He could have been there if it had been thought of. None of the amendments I have suggested will violate the principles of the Bill.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: Why labour the clauses? Let them go.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: If some hon. members had as much to do as I have with industrial affairs and had seen how the interpretation of clauses was twisted to convey something that was not intended by Parliament, they would be as anxious as I am to see that all interpretations were made perfectly clear. I have no desire to have any conflict of opinion or misunderstanding in this matter. If members would like to see the winding gear electro-plated it would not matter to me. We should know what the clauses of this Bill really do convey. The suggestions I have made are for the benefit of industrial peace.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not for a moment accuse Mr. Lynn of any ulterior

motive. I am sure he is acting according to what he feels to be the right, but the effect of his suggestions may be very bad. The department is evidently responsible for the introduction of the words "or material" and must have had some reason for putting them in. The conference Mr. Lynn refers to was made up of employers. For certain reasons they objected to this definition. The employee, the man who runs the risk and is entitled to consideration, was apparently not present at the conference. If an engine is used for the lowering or raising of men or material it should be classed as a winding engine.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Before the tea adjournment I sought information from an hon. member. I asked for that information in all good faith, believing that the information I sought was fair and reasonable. I take strong exception to the remarks made in reply. I made no reference to star chamber methods. Someone interjected about those methods, but I did not insinuate there were any star chamber methods in connection with the conference. I merely asked for information. When I find that hon. member retorting about the star chamber methods that I adopt, I resent his actions. I do not adopt star chamber methods. The tone of the hon. member's remarks was not in keeping with the general tenor of the debates in this Chamber. I do not indulge in personalities nor do I intend to do so. I think I have a right to the information, and that information should have been given without any trouble. I try to avoid star chamber methods in the course of my life. I trust that in future that hon. member will have the decency to answer questions courteously. I still oppose the amendment because I do not think the hon. member has adduced any argument to warrant the words "or material" being struck out. It has been included in the Bill by the officers of the department because they think it should be in the Bill and the House should support them.

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

Ayes .. .. .	11
Noes .. .. .	7

Majority for ..	4
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#### AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. R. J. Lynn	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. R. G. Ardagh
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Non-application of Act:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause to stand as Sub-clause 7 be added as follows.—"Or any engine driven by oil or petrol."

The addition I propose aims at exempting small engines driven by oil or petrol. If it is right that oil launches and motor cars, other than those driven by steam, should be exempted, why is it not right for small oil and petrol engines to be placed in the same category? I take exception to the inspection of such small engines, for no good purposes can be served and the cost is unnecessary. I recently heard of a case where an inspector was sent along the coast to inspect small machinery on pastoral holdings.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The Bill only requires such machinery to be inspected once in two years.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: True, but why is there a difference between a motor car with an engine running up to 60 horse power and an engine on a farm which has perhaps two horse power? There can be no danger from an oil or petrol engine, because neither can be started unless there is a proper mixture secured. Inspection would not obviate accidents because they are merely due to carelessness and an inspector would not be on the spot all the time, so that he would not be able to prevent accidents occurring under such circumstances.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Engines driven by oil or petrol have been included in the legislation ever since 1904.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why make an exemption for traction engines and motor cars as indicated in the clause?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It will be competent for the Governor-in-Council to exempt such engines driven by oil and petrol but we would not be justified in exempting all engines driven by oil and petrol.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I suggest to Mr. Baxter that instead of making his amendment so wide, it should read "any internal combustion engine not exceeding 20 horse power." That would cover the requirements of farmers. These engines are really fool-proof. There is no need for inspection because they will not explode if one has less than 5 per cent. of air and if one exceeds a certain percentage of air, there will be trouble in getting the engine started. These engines do not jeopardise life in any way. It is open for any member to see such engines, running up to 60 horse power, driven round the town by girls and no one ever hears of accidents.

All these things have a harassing effect upon people and are not conducive to increased production. Rather do they tend to increase unemployment. The more of these things we can keep out of our legislation the better.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: How will this clause affect engines on pearling boats?

The Minister for Education: Any steam or oil launch is exempt.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I just wanted to have the Minister's assurance.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The engine on a pearler is not used for propelling the boat, but is there for air purposes or heating.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There is a good deal in what the Minister and Mr. Lovekin have said and I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That the following new subclause be inserted:—“Any internal combustion engine not exceeding 20 horse power.”

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot see sufficient reason for taking a retrograde step of this kind. These engines have been subject to inspection for the last 17 years.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Will this amendment cause increased danger to life or limb?

The Minister for Education: I am not competent to answer that question.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It cannot.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not think it can. I am prepared to go a long way to protect life and limb, but I sympathise with the views of the mover of the amendment and Mr. Lovekin. To insert these things unless they are necessary will merely increase trouble and unemployment. People will not be pestered to death by these regulations and departments and inspectors. I can speak with some knowledge regarding an analogous effect in the fruit industry. I am convinced that the effect of Acts and regulations has been very bad for the fruit industry. This incessant Government inspection simply to please some Government department—

The Minister for Education: It has always been provided for.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then now is a good time to strike it out. I would like to see the reports covering the last five years. There is no desire to stop proper inspection, but when we get an opportunity we should prevent unnecessary inspection and irritation.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The argument of the Minister does not touch the question. He argues that because there is a certain provision in the old Act, therefore, it should be continued. If we followed that principle, we would never revise any legislation. This Bill is largely designed to collect fees. If a girl can drive a 20 horse power internal combustion engine about the streets of the city and look after it, why cannot the same internal

combustion engine be used on a farm? Is it any more dangerous to life on a farm than in the streets? If there is any danger to life I agree that people must put up with the harassing and pay the fees. I hope the amendment will be accepted in order to give the farmers a chance of doing their business without being worried and harassed unnecessarily.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The Minister said that the engines on pearling boats were exempt. Under what paragraph are they exempt?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think that the engines used on pearling boats for supplying air to the divers would be exempt. The engines used for propelling the boats would be exempt.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Could the engines used for the divers be exempted by regulation?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That has been done in the past. Members should bear in mind not only the type of engine, but the purpose for which it is used. The engines referred to by Mr. Baxter would be used for driving chaff cutters. We have quite a long list of accidents—

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Not with the engines.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, with the chaff cutters.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That is a very different thing.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Do you promise to exempt pearlers by regulation?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is the intention.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The present Minister may grant exemption by regulation, but I am concerned as to what the next Minister may do. The Minister told us to-day that too much had been done by regulation in the past. I agree that we should make this provision in the Act. If we included the 20 horse power internal combustion engine, the pearlers would not be affected. It might happen that an inspector will be done out of his job and that the department will lose a few fees, but these fees cost more to collect than they actually amount to. This is a revenue collecting measure, dragging in everything possible and employing a crowd of inspectors. The amendment would be the means of saving the community a lot of harassing and expense.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I agree with the view that we should not go so far as to deal with one-horse power engines, but I take exception to carrying the exemption to 20 horse power. I have looked through the reports for some years back and I have discovered eight or nine accidents. A man had his left arm taken off just below the shoulder with a chaff cutter. I wish to show that a 20 horse power engine would be utilised for driving a chaff cutter and that, if the department had no record of the machinery, it would have no opportunity to indicate where safeguards might be provided. Another man had his right arm crushed in gear wheels and

subsequently died. These accidents occurred with chaff cutters where engines of perhaps 20 horse power were used.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They may have been operated by horse works. The engine was not responsible.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If the department had the engine registered, there would be some control over the contrivances used for the protection of the men employed on the chaff cutter.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I support the amendment, because I realise the necessity for leaving the people using these engines as much freedom as possible. The point raised by Mr. Harris is not affected by the amendment, because most of the chaff cutting is done by steam engines. Chaff-cutting is, as a rule, done with small oil engines, which are driven by the farmers themselves. No system of inspection would prevent such an accident as a man putting his arm through the wheels or the cogs of a machine. Inspection is principally directed against the danger of an engine bursting, and for the purpose of providing adequate protection of machinery used in factories. If motor cars are exempt, it is quite right to exempt internal combustion engines throughout the country. The inspection of these latter would merely tend to harass men who are endeavouring to develop the industries of this country. Frequently the cost of inspection must greatly exceed the amount of the fees received. Many farmers will not have steam engines on their premises because certificated drivers are required for them.

Hon. T. MOORE: I oppose the amendment, for the simple reason that no case of harassing has been proved; and this legislation has been in operation for 17 years. During my travels about the country I have heard no complaints whatever as to harassing by inspectors, or on the score of payment of the fees which have been so frequently mentioned to-night. Now, are there not other industries which might come under the 20 h.p. exemption? Are the small timber mills not to be inspected under this measure? Many spot mills are driven by engines of less than 20 h.p.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Are oil engines used on the sawmills?

Hon. T. MOORE: They are as likely to be used there as anywhere else. Moreover, there is plenty of wood and water on the average farm.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Looking back to the earlier portion of the clause, hon. members will see the definition of "machinery." Reference has been made to accidents through chaffcutters. I myself pointed out that it was necessary to consider not only the engine, but also the machine driven by the engine. Hon. members replied to the effect that if the danger lay in the machine and not in the engine, it could be attended to. However, from the definition

of "machinery" it follows that if we exempt any particular class of engines, such as oil engines, we shall be automatically exempting the machines those engines drive. Therefore the amendment represents a very far-reaching proposal.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Baxter is seeking to amend the clause in the wrong place. The effect of his amendment would be as stated by the Leader of the House. I suggest to Mr. Baxter that he restrict his amendment to Subclause 6, and raise the horse-power there.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But an internal combustion engine is not a motor.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I submit that internal combustion engines are covered by the definition of "motor." Whilst I would be prepared to increase the horse-power of the exemption, I would never be a party to raising the exemption as high as 20 h.p. A 20 h.p. engine is pretty powerful. Engines of that power have been used for winding. Mr. Baxter's amendment would exempt half the engines used in the metropolitan area. The hon. member is, of course, out to assist the man on the land; but not 20 per cent. of the farmers in this State use so powerful an engine as a 20 h.p. Moreover, horse-powers differ: a Talbot 10 h.p. motor car is something vastly different from an American 10 h.p. motor car. I trust Mr. Baxter will restrict his amendment to something reasonable.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: On page 38 of the Forest Department's annual report hon. members will find a list of engines used by sawmills. The information there given somewhat astonished me. I take it a great many of those engines will be oil engines.

Members: No; steam engines.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I know something about this matter. They are not all steam engines. I myself have an oil engine, which is used for cutting timber with a circular saw—cutting firewood and fruit cases. It is also turned on to a water mill, and on the grindstone; and I would like to use it for electric lighting purposes. Cannot the Minister, with the assistance of his experts, devise some scheme by which settlers who have these small oil engines shall not be subject to inspection and the payment of fees. Why should a person who has a small oil engine pumping water have to submit to the payment of inspection fees? Of course, a small powered engine, when harnessed to a circular saw, is a very dangerous appliance indeed.

Hon. J. Cornell: It all depends on the diameter of the circular saw.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Nonsense! If the hon. member puts his finger in front it will be cut off, no matter what the diameter of the saw.

Hon. J. Cornell: I am speaking of the power, not the result.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The same danger to limb is there. If the Minister and his

advisers think the circular saw should be subject to inspection, I will gladly support them. It is quite possible that the amendment will not carry out the intention of the mover, and so I ask the Minister to give us a distinct opinion on the point as to whether it is the engine itself, or what it is harnessed to, which counts and should be made the subject of inspection.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The definition of machinery shows clearly that it applies only to machinery driven by a steam engine, motor or other source of motive power. So any machine driven by something not included in the definition of machinery is itself excluded from the operations of the Act. If the amendment be carried, any machine driven by an internal combustion engine of less than 20 horse power will be excluded from the operation of the Act. The course followed would be to exercise the power vested in the Minister under Clause 14. Personally I see no other means of doing it. The inclusion of this as machinery, and power to exempt it, would mean in practice that where an oil engine was used for driving machinery with which some danger was associated it would not be exempt, whereas a small engine used for, say, pumping water, would be exempt. It is not possible to have legislation of this kind unless members are prepared to give those administering it credit for commonsense. I have not heard of a single instance of harshness or unnecessary interference in the administration of the existing Act.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No good reason can be advanced for the imposition of the inspection. What I had in mind in framing the amendment was the fact that many Ford car engines are to be found doing useful work on farms. On consideration I can see the danger of bringing 20 horse power machinery into the amendment. Possibly it would be better to modify it to 10 horse power. Accidents will happen, with or without inspection.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Already we have exempted steam or oil launches and motor cars. Why, then, can we not exempt these internal combustion engines? I hope the hon. member will not agree to modify his amendment. Scores of Ford car engines are doing invaluable work on farms.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That "twenty" be struck out and "ten" inserted in lieu.

A 20-horse power engine might be utilised to work large machinery which ought to be made the subject of inspection.

Amendment on the amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I will vote against the amendment as amended, because its effect in practice will not only exempt a 10-horse power engine, but will exempt the machinery which it is driving.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	..	10

Majority against	..	..	2
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#### AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. Mills	(Teller.)
Hon. E. Rose	

#### NOES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. R. J. Lynn	Hon. J. W. Hickey
	(Teller.)

Amendment as amended thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Chief Inspector and Inspectors:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 6 the words "is under the Public Service Act, 1904," be struck out, and "has given evidence as to his competency as provided by Subsection 3 hereof" be inserted in lieu.

In matters of this kind where we are dealing with boilers of large power, inspectors should at least supply some evidence of their competency. We are not told in the clause what a competent person is unless we go back to Subclause 3.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: The subclause might well be struck out; I do not see any use for it at all.

Hon. J. Cornell: Unless it is useful in connection with the appointment of temporary inspectors.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Subclause 3 gives the Chief Inspector the necessary power.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I do not mind if it is struck out altogether.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: In connection with the appointment of inspectors, one would naturally think that they would be drawn from the most competent men, and I claim that the most competent man would be a boilermaker. There are only two inspectors at present employed who can be said to be qualified men. That may come about by the fact that the Chief Inspector himself has had no boilermaking experience. I claim that a man who holds a position of inspector should have been a boilermaker. Why is it that there are only two inspectors who have served their apprenticeship as boilermakers? We find that some of the machinery inspectors go through the country and they have to be followed up by boilermakers to pass the boilers. I certainly think more boiler-

makers should be appointed to the position of inspectors. When the Railway Department, who are exempt from this Act, make their appointments, they draw men from the ranks of boilermakers.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Did you say the Railway Department were exempt?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Yes, under this Act.

Hon. J. Cornell: Their inspection is practically limited to boilers.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: At any rate, I think the appointments should be in the manner of fifty-fifty.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The hon. member has told us that the Railway Department is exempt from the operations of the Machinery Act.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They have their own inspectors.

The Minister for Education: If the hon. member had been present during the debate on the second reading, he would have known all about it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am not like the hon. member, tied to the State. I have more freedom and less responsibility.

The Minister for Education: The Railway Department is exempt because it has inspectors of its own.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am surprised. This is a very important matter.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Railway Departments all over the world are similarly exempt.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Is the Midland Railway exempt? And what about the State steamers?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If this subclause is struck out it may involve a good deal of extra expense. The inspectors contemplated by the earlier portion of the clause are permanent inspectors appointed for districts. It is easy to conceive that circumstances may arise when an inspection is desirable, and the man on the spot not permanently appointed as inspector may be deputed to do the job. I have no objection to the words suggested by Mr. Lovekin, for they simply define what a competent person is. The intention is that some person may be appointed to do a special job, and the clause would therefore be useful and save a good deal of expense.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I hope the hon. member will not press his amendment. If a Government official happened to be travelling, for instance, to the North-West and there was a small inspection of machinery to be made, he could very well do the work and cut out the expense of sending a special man for the purpose. I hope the clause will be passed as printed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This is a case in which the lives and limbs of people are in jeopardy. Any inspection that is made by an incompetent person would be of no value. My object is to show what a competent person is. It is no qualification to say that a man comes under the Public Service Act. I must press the amendment.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I agree that the words should be struck out, but I do not agree to the insertion of the other words moved by Mr. Lovekin. It is hardly likely the Government would appoint any incompetent person.

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

Clause 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Impersonation of Inspector:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Is imprisonment for six months sufficient punishment for a man who falsely represents that he is an inspector?

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 14—agreed to.

Clauses 15—Young persons not to be employed in certain cases:

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I should like to strike out the word "sixteen" and insert "eighteen." I therefore move an amendment—

That in Subclause 4 the word "sixteen" be struck out and "eighteen" inserted in lieu.

The Arbitration Court has recently made an award under which it is compulsory for a person in charge of a lift, not to be younger than 18. Boys under 18 are too young to take on the responsibility of managing a passenger lift.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have no objection to the amendment. All these positions of lift attendants should, in my opinion, be filled by partially incapacitated soldiers.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Bill should lay that down.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We can hardly do that, but most of the owners of buildings recognise the principle.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I support the amendment. It is desirable that there should be no conflict in the matter, seeing that the Arbitration Court has fixed the age at not less than 18. Apparently, the court overrides Parliament, and everything else.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I should be more inclined to see the age reduced to 14. Boys of 16 are certainly quite fit to carry out these duties.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 4 the words "allowed to be in charge" be struck out and "employed in the control" inserted in lieu.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: What does the amendment mean? What is the difference between a boy being allowed to be in charge of a lift and employed in control of a lift?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: It may be construed in this way; that any person under the age

of 18 may be in charge of a lift, but may not be actually employed by the owner of the lift.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Then he would have no business there.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: If a boy is not in charge of a lift and yet employed on it, the owner of the lift may be prosecuted.

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

Clause 16—Persons having machinery subject to this Act to notify inspector:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I am doubtful regarding the wording of Subclause 3 which deals with the inspection of machinery. It seems to me that if a man has a motor driving various forms of machinery, he will have to take out a certificate for each of them.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: He would take out a certificate for one group driven by one motor. The wording of the subclause is quite clear.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Suppose a man had three motors?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If they were driving different machinery, he would have to take out three different certificates.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It seems to me that this is a money making Bill and that the Government are trying to get rid of the deficit. Suppose a man had a portable motor and took it from one set of machinery to another?

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: That would not apply.

The Minister for Education: In that case it would be only one group, and one certificate would be required.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: A man may have a two or three horse-power engine driving a chaffcutter, another one driving a milking machine, and another for crushing barley. Each of those would constitute a group. Why should such a man have to pay for three groups whereas another man might have one motor and haul it with a horse from one machine to another and he would only have to pay for one.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 17 and 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Faulty or defective machinery:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I understand that two or three members have amendments to move commencing with Clause 19. Perhaps it would be preferable if members having amendments had them placed upon the Notice Paper for the guidance of the Committee.

Progress reported.

## BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

### Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H.P. Colebatch—East) [9.6] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is an

exact copy of the measure passed last year. The rates of tax, super tax and other provisions are the same as were embodied in the Bill of last year, so that it is not necessary for me to take up time in discussing the measure.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is there not an amendment to get over a High Court ruling?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That comes under the Assessment Bill and not under this measure. There is a Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill which is under consideration in another place. That measure contains some important amendments and will require careful consideration when it comes before this Chamber. This Bill contains nothing new. It is highly desirable that it should be passed as quickly as possible. Hon. members will know that the time for receiving returns has expired, and in the interests of the revenue of the State it is essential that assessments should be issued without delay. Assessments cannot be issued until this measure is passed. Any amendment made under the Assessment Bill can be applied after the assessments have been issued, so that there need be no anxiety on that score. So that the work of the department may be expedited, it is necessary that there shall be no delay in connection with this measure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Grant of land tax and income tax for the year ending 30th June, 1922:

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I suggest that the Committee stage be left till later on. We are rushing through this very important matter. The Minister says he wants to get the Bill through as quickly as possible. The majority of people in this State would be only too glad if the Bill went through as slowly as possible. The Bill has only been put on the Table to-day and it is not fair to go into Committee without some little thought being given to the measure. I have an amendment to move to this Bill myself.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have explained that it is identical with the Bill of last year.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I did not say it was not.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I can understand the hon. member's contention that many people in Western Australia would be only too glad if this measure were held up altogether. I take it that members are agreed that we must have taxation, that we must have a land tax and an income tax and that the present is not the time to reduce

taxation. This House cannot increase taxation if it wants to.

Hon. J. Cornell: We can reduce it for a change.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member can move to reduce it if he thinks this is the time for a reduction. The Bill is exactly the same as that of last year.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I do not want to do anything that will lead anyone to think that I wish to take the business of the House out of the hands of the Minister. I suggest, however, that he should leave the Committee stage for the next sitting. The Bill has only come before us to-day.

The Minister for Education: That is not so; it has been before members for longer than that.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I ask the Minister to delay the consideration of the Bill in Committee, for it is only fair that we should have a little time to look through it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: This Bill came into my hands yesterday afternoon. To say that the interests of the country will suffer if the Committee stage is taken to-morrow or next week is difficult to accept. In order to preserve the decencies—that is a strong word, and I mean it—of public affairs, this Chamber, which is supposed to be a Chamber of review, should have an opportunity of having the Committee stage delayed. Whether the measure be the same or different from that of last year, we should have an opportunity of looking through it before passing it so hurriedly.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The matter is entirely in the hands of the House. To take the Committee stage to-morrow, however, does not mean merely a delay of a day but practically a delay of a week. If the Bill is taken through Committee, the work of getting out the assessments can be proceeded with straight away. If the Bill is not taken till to-morrow, the work cannot proceed until towards the end of next week. If members have any serious intention of amending the Bill to an extent they think would justify involving the State in expense, by all means let them do so. If they are not serious in their intention to amend the Bill, I think the Committee stage should be dealt with. It is no use saying that members have not received the Bill for they know perfectly well what the taxation has been during the past 12 months, and that taxation continues.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I must again state that I do not wish to interfere with the rights of the Leader of the House, but I do insist that when a Bill like this is before us we should have some time to consider it. If he will not accept the suggestion I make, I cannot help it. I hope he will accept the suggestion and report progress.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: By way of explanation I would like to say that I telephoned to-day to find out what was on the Notice Paper. I received an important letter point-

ing out that this Bill has worked differently from what was anticipated and suggesting a clause for insertion in the Bill.

The Minister for Education: What, in this Bill?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes. When I heard the contents of the Notice Paper, I did not dream that we should reach this measure to-night, more particularly seeing that the Machinery Bill was to be considered first. I have not the letter or the amendment with me at present and I do not know that two or three days will make any difference so far as the State is concerned.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not going to be a party to prevent any member moving an amendment if he desires to do so.

Progress reported.

## BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

### Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH—East) [9.15] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to empower the State Government to control wheat marketing during the forthcoming harvest. The measure is being introduced at an earlier stage this session than has been the case in previous years, and while there is no desire on my part and no necessity for hon. members to hurry through this Bill with undue haste, I do ask them to apply themselves to the Bill with a view to passing it as speedily as is convenient. That is merely suggesting that they should take an early opportunity to study the Bill and be prepared to deal with it, because it is obviously desirable that if the Bill is to be passed, it should be passed within a reasonable time. The harvest is upon us and there is a great deal of work to be done with regard to the chartering of ships and matters of that kind, which cannot be finalised until the Bill is passed.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why did not another place hurry it up?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It was hurried up much more than in previous years.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There was need for it, too.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I cannot help that. While I am not suggesting that anything should be done which might militate against full and complete consideration being given to the measure, I do ask members to apply themselves with a view to passing it, if it is to be passed, with as little delay as possible. We have had similar legislation for the past six seasons, but this Bill differs from previous measures, mainly because they related to a wheat pool for the whole of the Commonwealth in which the State was merely one of four partners, whereas now that the



Australian pool has ceased, we propose to form a pool of our own, a Western Australian pool, to market our own product. Early in May of this year the Government of this State took steps to ascertain the views of the Governments of the other States as to whether there should be a Commonwealth pool. Prior to this, the Prime Minister had said that, whilst there was no particular desire on the part of the Commonwealth Government to conduct another Australian pool, he was prepared to do it conditionally on the whole of the States applying for it to be done. He also suggested two or three other conditions which are not important, because they could very easily have been complied with. It was in consequence of that statement that the Western Australian Government approached the Governments of the other States with a view to deciding whether or not they would be prepared to go to the Prime Minister with a request for another Commonwealth pool this year. The only reason animating the Western Australian Government in the matter was that we felt it was a matter of importance, not merely to the farmer, but to the State, that the full value of the wheat crop should be realised. Many other of our industries are in an extremely difficult position. The wool market seems to be improving, but at that time it was in a desperate position. The metal market was bad and is still bad. Members are well acquainted with the difficulties which confront our other industries such as gold mining and pearling. The Government felt it was imperative that we should get the full value for the season's wheat harvest, not entirely in the interests of the farmers, although they are the persons who first handle the money, but in the interests of the State. Fortunately, there is every indication that the harvest will be an abundant one and will represent a very considerable increase on the harvests of recent years. The latest estimate I have seen is 15,000,000 bushels, and there can be little doubt that the present rains which appear to be general throughout the country will not only confirm the estimate but probably increase it. In view of the large yield expected, it is a matter of importance, not to the farmers entirely, but to the whole of the State, that our wheat should realise its full value in the world's markets. The Government considered very carefully how this result could be brought about and, with the expert advice at our disposal, we had no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that there was a far better chance of realising full world's value by forming a pool than there would be by reverting to the old conditions and leaving it to the open market.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are you content to go on for all time with the pool?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No. That decision was arrived at because the condition of affairs all over the world does

not admit of a return to pre-war conditions. It is all very well for the hon. member to smile, but if he thinks that we have got back to the conditions which prevailed prior to 1914, he is greatly mistaken. Before 1914 the different operating firms used to sell their wheat almost before they had bought it. They certainly sold it before they shipped it and the money was available before the wheat was put on the boats. Firms with a reasonable amount of capital and in fact a comparatively small amount of capital, could go into the market and buy wheat and pay the farmer for it, and there was competition between the firms. To-day these conditions do not apply.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Why will not South Australia take it up?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know. The farmers of South Australia are agitating for a wheat pool, and after all it is well worth remembering that the farmers are the people who will suffer if they do not realise the full value for their wheat. The farmers of South Australia are consistently agitating for a pool. They are the people most intimately concerned and they feel that their interests will be imperilled if there is no pool. At the present time buyers could not purchase the wheat and sell it straight away and get the money before the wheat was shipped. They could not sell the wheat in London, which means that only firms with very big capital could enter into the business. All the advice pointed in this direction, that if there were no pool, there would be only one or possibly two buyers operating here.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I was not criticising; I was only asking for information.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We approached the Governments of the other States and I do think we are entitled to complain of the manner in which we were treated. As a result of our preliminary negotiations, the acting Premier of New South Wales convened a conference of the representatives of the wheat-growing States. Members are aware that it is always the practice for the Premier of New South Wales to convene these conferences, that State being regarded as the senior State. The N.S.W. Premier was away at the time and the acting Premier convened the conference for the 26th of June last. All the States accepted this conference and were to meet on the 26th June to discuss the matter and decide upon a common basis of action whether or not to approach the Prime Minister and ask for a continuance of the Commonwealth pool. The Minister for Agriculture had been charged by the Premier to represent this State and had been authorised by the Government to advocate a continuance of the pool for another year. While on his way to the conference, the Premier of South Australia

publicly announced that his Government had decided to have nothing to do with it, and on the morning of the conference the Premier of Victoria made a similar announcement in behalf of his Government. It does seem that this action was not in keeping with the spirit in which this pool had been conducted for six seasons.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Was not that the main issue on which the South Australian Government went to the country?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No; I do not think the matter was mentioned during the South Australian elections. At the instance of the Western Australian Government, the Governments of the three other wheat producing States had been approached. They had been partners in these pools for six years and had been approached as partners to come together and confer as to whether we would ask the Prime Minister to continue the pool or not. The Acting Premier of New South Wales convened the conference. South Australia and Victoria had accepted the invitation to attend the conference and while the delegates were on their way to the conference, these two Premiers made the announcement that they would have nothing whatever to do with another pool. The conference was held, and although the Premiers of South Australia and Victoria had announced their decision to stand out they attended the conference. They stated that definite assurances had been given them by merchants and financial institutions that no serious obstacle existed with regard to payment on delivery or advances against delivery at any time, and in addition to that they stated that Messrs. Sandy & Co., who I understand are a very big firm operating in India and other places, intended to operate in Australia if de-control were decided upon, and that this would be tantamount to bringing fresh capital into the country. One of the other wheat acquiring firms, Dreyfus & Co., had been on the London board and on the Melbourne advisory board of the Australian Wheat Board, but had been dropped off both those boards, and there is no doubt that both in Adelaide and Melbourne the agitation for de-control was led by the firm of Dreyfus & Co. A question was asked by the delegate representing either Western Australia or New South Wales—I do not remember which, but it was by the delegate of one of the States which favoured a continuance of the pool—whether the expert advisers to the Australian Board had been consulted. The conference was informed that they had not been referred to as such but only from the point of view individually as to whether they would again operate as wheat acquirers on a free market. After the Victorian and South Australian representatives withdrew from the conference it was conducted by the representatives of Queensland and New South Wales and Western Australia. The Minister for Agriculture from Western Australia asked the advisory board's opinion. The advisory board

was composed of experts consisting, to a large extent, of the old wheat acquiring firms, and they stated that it would be most injurious to decide then for de-control, and that in all likelihood it would be wise to continue the pool until markets and shipping were re-established, at any rate for another season. That was the expert advice of the advisory board which included the old acquiring agents with the exception of Dreyfus & Co. The Victorian Government, as members will recollect, were defeated in Parliament on this very issue, and went to the country. The result was inconclusive. Now the Victorian Government are suggesting a voluntary pool. It seems to me that if there is to be a pool, and particularly if the Government are to carry any responsibility in the matter of making advances and that sort of thing, it would be preferable to have a compulsory pool so that everyone would be placed on the same footing.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It must be a compulsory pool or none at all. A voluntary pool cannot be successful.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It will be very interesting to see how the thing works out. I sincerely hope that the House will pass the Bill and that we in Western Australia shall have a compulsory pool. Victoria will have a voluntary pool, but apparently South Australia will have absolutely a free market.

Hon. J. Ewing: What about New South Wales?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not in a position to say what they propose to do. At all events we shall have a different system in each of the three States, and it will be very interesting to watch and see under which system the producer and the consumer fare the best.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The New South Wales Government say they will have a compulsory pool.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: New South Wales has not passed such legislation yet. One thing worth remembering is that there is an organisation set up. The handling of a wheat harvest is not a small matter, even the handling of a harvest of 15 million bushels. When we have an organisation set up, the proper course, to my mind, is to use it. When we are going to abandon it, let that intention be known a long while ahead. In my opinion, the proper course for the present season would have been for the Commonwealth Government to say, "We are going to have a pool this season, and that is going to be the end of it."

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why do not you say that?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I wish we were in a position to do so, but we cannot force the hands of the Federal Government. However, that course, to my view, would have been the proper course. Now, previously the Commonwealth Government ran these pools, and the Prime Minister, when he was going away, said, "Yes, we will have

a pool under certain conditions." And so the thing hung on indefinitely, until we have reached the stage when we have got to have a pool or else jettison our organisation at the last moment, trusting to luck how we come out. I believe that even at this hour it would be tremendously to the advantage of the wheat growers of Australia, and consequently to the advantage of the Australian community generally, if the Prime Minister would make that statement, and run a Commonwealth pool with the organisation he has, and say, "That is going to be the end of it." Such a course would allow the private acquiring agents and co-operative companies ample time to make their arrangements for getting to work.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Would the State be prepared to follow Mr. Hughes if he took that course?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Certainly, if he liked to make that announcement. The two last harvests have realised good prices to the farmer, and I am prepared to assert—I believe it can be proved to demonstration—that the results have also been advantageous to the consumer. It is no doubt a fact that at the present time the consumer is paying something higher than London parity; but, going back to the previous year, what do we find? The market opened at about 5s. 6d.; and, had there been no pool in existence, the bulk of the wheat would have been sold for 5s. 6d.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But, according to your statement, there would have been no money available to pay for it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I contend that had there been no pool, had we been working under the old conditions, the bulk of the wheat would have been sold for about 5s. 6d. The farmer would have lost the difference between 5s. 6d., and the 9s. or so that he actually received; and the consumer, instead of paying 7s. 8d. as he did, undoubtedly for the bulk of the year would have had to pay the world's parity for that portion of the wheat which he consumed, which world's parity would have amounted to about 12s. Thus the result would have been a tremendous loss to the farmer, and a higher price for the Australian consumer. The higher price would have represented a great excess over the extra amount he is called upon to pay this year beyond the export parity. During the time the pool has been in existence, it has handled six harvests. A total of 64,488,000 bushels has gone through the pool, and £18,835,000 has been paid in cash, and there is still more to follow. The amounts realised per bushel have been as follows:—1915-16, 4s. 4½d.; 1916-17, 4s. 1¼d.; 1917-18, 4s. 9d.; 1918-19, 5s. 2d.; 1919-20, 8s. 6d.; and 1921-21, 6s. 3d. I think it probable that 1919-20 will come out at about 9s., and 1920-21 at about 8s., per bushel. So that the operation of the pool has undoubtedly been successful, and the whole community has vastly benefited by it. So far as the price of wheat for local consumption is concerned,

I have always taken the view that whilst there is a compulsory pool the farmer should get for the wheat sold for local consumption exactly what it is worth—no more, and no less. I contended for that principle when I attended a conference in Melbourne before the price was fixed for last year. I contended that the price should be fixed every month, and that it should be exactly what the wheat was worth. That was not agreed to. All sorts of difficulties were raised against it—difficulties of which I confess I was unable to appreciate the force. However, in the result a price of 7s. 8d. was determined on; and that price the farmer continued to receive for wheat for local consumption even when the export parity rose to a higher figure. Twelve months later I again urged, and this Government again urged, that the same course should be adopted, of paying for wheat for local consumption exactly what it was worth; but again we were overruled, the price being fixed at 9s. That price turned out to be in excess of the amount of the export parity for the whole of the year, and probably evened up to some extent the unduly low price charged during portion of last year.

Hon. T. Moore: We are paying fully 3s. too much to-day.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not so much as that; the difference is not nearly so much as that. Probably the difference represents about ½d. per loaf of bread. One reason why it was said that the price for local consumption could not be fixed as we suggested was a reason of finance. The Commonwealth Government had announced for that year a guarantee of 5s. per bushel. That was for the 1920-21 harvest, which was estimated to amount throughout Australia to about 140 million bushels. This quantity, at 5s. per bushel, meant 35 million sterling; and that amount had to be financed. It had to be financed through the banks, and before the banks would agree to finance this amount of 35 millions sterling, they had to be assured of substantial sales. At that time—this was in November of 1920—a fairly large parcel of wheat and flour, to be delivered in periods extending from March of last year to October of this year, had been sold to the Egyptian Government, the total quantity being 193,000 tons, and the price 10s. 2d. per bushel f.o.b. That sale yielded £3,670,000. Further, a parcel of 76,000 tons had been sold to the United Kingdom at 10s. 3d. per bushel, representing a value of £1,500,000. Thus the two sales represented a grand total of approximately five millions sterling. This amount was not considered by the banks as sufficient to justify them in providing the 35 millions sterling required to pay the 5s. per bushel advanced. Then it was determined that a sale for local consumption should be made; that is to say, that the Government should buy sufficient wheat to carry on the various States as regards their local consumption during the 12 months. The quantity involved was estimated at 30 million bushels, and the remain-

ing point was the fixing of the price. This was ultimately fixed at 9s. It was a fair price on the sales that had then been effected. In view of the sales at 10s. 2d. to the Egyptian Government and at 10s. 3d. to the United Kingdom, the 9s. seemed to be a reasonable price, giving the local consumer even some advantage. The amount of the sale for local consumption at 9s. per bushel meant 13½ millions sterling. Added to the other two sales, there was the substantial total of 18½ millions sterling represented by wheat already sold; and on the strength of those sales the banks were prepared to make the necessary advance, so that the 5s. per bushel could be paid on the delivery of the wheat at the siding.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do not you think that the guarantee of 7s. 6d. in New South Wales and of 8s. 6d. in Queensland had something to do with it?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No doubt the Governments of both those States were influenced to a large extent by the fact that these guarantees had been given. But there was the position. There were financial considerations, and because of those financial considerations it was decided to buy in advance the wheat required for Australian consumption during the 12 months. Of course, that policy had the advantage of keeping the necessary quantity of wheat in the State; and, as I have said, the price fixed was a fair price at the time. Now, for next season those circumstances do not arise. For next year there are no financial considerations compelling us to make a big sale locally, because the finance has been arranged. Provision is made in the Bill for fixing the price of wheat for local consumption on the basis of the actual sales made overseas during each preceding month. That system will ensure that the consumer shall not at any time pay more than the export value of the wheat.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: A very poor system, which will work out badly.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: But by an amendment passed in another place the price is limited to a maximum of 7s. per bushel. I personally do not approve of that; I do not think it is right. As I have said over and over again, I consider that the farmer should get for his wheat what it is worth—no more, no less. To restrict the price to 7s. even when the overseas parity rises above 7s. is to my mind not fair. When the amendment was originally tabled, there was tacked on to it a provision for a minimum price of 4s. A minimum price might have been sustained, I have no doubt that it could have been sustained, had there been a Commonwealth pool and had that minimum been decided upon throughout Australia. But without a Commonwealth pool a minimum price could not be sustained, because, if wheat dropped to 3s. as against the 4s. minimum, it would mean that the South Australian flour-miller would mill his flour from 3s. wheat in South Australia and send his pro-

duct here, and then our flour-miller would not be able to carry on. The 7s., however, is the maximum. If wheat drops to 5s., all the pool will get for wheat for local consumption will be 5s. I think the 7s. maximum was accepted so readily as it was because it is generally believed that the maximum will have no effect. The general opinion seems to be that the 7s. maximum will never be realised, and that therefore the amendment will prove meaningless, of no effect. However, as I have said, in principle a maximum price is bad. The Bill also contains power to ensure that any variation in local prices shall be to the advantage of the producer or of the consumer, as the case may be. So that next year, if the price-fixing law now in operation should then be no longer in existence—

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is not going to be any "if" about that.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am now talking about this Bill, and not about any other measure.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am simply telling the House that if next year the Prices Regulation Act should be no longer in operation, there will still be power, under this Bill, to ensure that any variation which may take place in the price of wheat shall be to the advantage, as the case may be, of either the producer or the consumer. Without such a provision, the advantage of variations in price would probably go to the middleman, who in circumstances like these, when dealing with a controlled article, has no right whatever to it. Under the machinery provided in the measure, any reduction made in the price of wheat will be passed on to the person who eats the bread, and not be collared, as might otherwise be the case, by the miller or the trader. It will be very interesting to see how we get on with probably three Australian States operating under different methods. I say candidly that I think the position would be very much better if the whole of the Australian States were acting together. Still, there are certain advantages about a Western Australian pool. Whether those advantages will compensate for the difficulties and disadvantages that may arise is a matter that only experience can prove. But, still, there are advantages in a Western Australian pool. For instance, we shall under those conditions receive the benefit of our geographical position. In the case of many wheat cargoes shipped during recent years, there has been a lower freight from Fremantle than from the other States; lower by about 5s. per ton. We have not had the full advantage of that, for it has been a pool matter and the whole of the wheat exporters of Australia have shared in it. Under a State pool we should be able to get cheaper freights than they can get from the other States.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Is that a certainty?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think it is. The hon. member is aware of the general conditions of trade between the

older countries of the world and Australia. It is generally expected that a large number of vessels coming out for our wheat will come out in ballast, and undoubtedly the shorter voyage will be the cheaper.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We shall not be able to compete with Argentine.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We have always had to compete with Argentine and with every other wheat-growing country in the world. As for the finances of the scheme, arrangements have been made through the Commonwealth Bank, and the advances which it will be necessary to make will cost the pool six per cent. There will also be some advantage by the allocation of our boats to suit the ports. It is through that we shall be able to work more economically than when we had our freights allotted to us from Melbourne. In many cases the freights were thrown at the pool at short notice, and there was difficulty in meeting the decision arrived at in Melbourne. In this case the decisions will be arrived at here, and so in many instances double handling may be saved. Speaking generally, the contemplated pool is purely a co-operative venture and any profit arising from it will go to the people with wheat in the pool. As I have already said, the organisation which is to operate it has worked successfully for several years and I think it is well capable of carrying out the task. The State banks have agreed to assist us with their organisations in the payment of wheat certificates and dividends from time to time. We are in treaty with reliable selling agents in London, and it is not expected that there will be any difficulty in securing satisfactory terms. That will assure us of the sale of our wheat at the best price available. This matter cannot be finalised until the Bill is passed.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Can you give the names of those agents?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know whether it would be quite fair just now, but if the hon. member wants the names I will confer with the Premier before reaching the Committee stage. As for the acquiring of the wheat, the intention is to employ as agents the Westralian Farmers Ltd. and the country co-operative concerns, on similar lines to those of last year. The chartering and allocation of boats and the shipping of wheat and flour will be effected by the present wheat scheme management. Already we have had very satisfactory offers of ships, and no doubt the chartering can be done at a reasonable price. Without going into details, I think the chances are that we shall be able to fix up all the charters at less than 60s. per ton.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Cannot the wheat manager do the whole thing?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, he has not the organisation. Great responsibility will devolve on the local administration this year, and because of that it is proposed to take full advantage

of the provision in the Bill for the appointment of five members of the advisory board. The Government feel, and I think the farmers and community generally ought to feel, grateful for the work of the present advisory board during past seasons. It is intended to have five members of the advisory board.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you know whether the present members of the board will be re-appointed?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: One of them, I believe, will not be available. The total cost of handling the wheat from the siding on to the ship is estimated at 7½d. During the war period, when wheat had to be stored, the cost was heavier. The present rates are very favourable by comparison with what any private wheat merchant would charge. These handling costs are divided as follows:—Railway freight 4d., port charges, tallying, etc. 1d., interest 1d., country agents 1d., Westralian Farmers Ltd. ½d., the scheme's overhead charges ¾d., total 7½d. The Bill is more comprehensive than that of last year, because we have to deal with all phases of wheat markets instead of with our own portion as a member of the Commonwealth scheme. Provision is made so that we can go into the Commonwealth scheme if it be finally decided upon. Power is given to the Minister to reject unshipable wheat and allow it to be sold by the grower to whom he pleases. Another important alteration is that it is proposed to allow farmers to sell any wheat they like direct to consumers, except flour millers. The only conditions imposed are that the purchaser must be a consumer or user of wheat, and must not trade in wheat.

Hon. A. Sanderson: At a fixed price?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, at whatever price is agreed upon.

Hon. J. Ewing: But only a certain number of bags.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know that there is any limit to this number.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Yes, a limit of five bags.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: At all events, we can go into that in Committee. Even if there is a limit they can cut and come again. The intention is to enable poultry farmers, pig raisers, and others to buy direct from the farmer at a mutually agreed upon price.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: With the approval of the Minister the Westralian Farmers Limited can deal in wheat.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That provision has been placed in the Bill. We can discuss it in Committee. I understand it is not intended to give permission to deal in any but seed wheat.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Can the farmers sell f.a.q. wheat direct?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, direct to the consumer. I have now

found the clause, but I do not see any reference to a limitation to five bags.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Clause 11 will show that.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** It is made compulsory that new corn sacks shall be used and they must be branded to identify the grower. This has been the practice in the past, although it has not previously been included in the legislation. It is also provided that moneys payable to the Minister under contracts relating to the sale of wheat or products that have been acquired by the Minister, shall be debts due to the Crown. The object is to put beyond all doubt the right of the Government to claim that in such sales they are preferential creditors under any liquidation or bankruptcy proceedings. The Government are also protected where payments are made bona fide to apparent holders of wheat certificates. The question of whether tenders should be called for the acquiring agency was considered, but it was thought that no good purpose could be served by the adoption of such a course. The work has been well done in the past, and at a cost below that obtaining in the other States. Also it has been done by co-operative organisations, and so whatever profit was made went to the farmers themselves. It is the intention of the Government, and arrangements have been made with the Commonwealth Bank, to advance not less than 3s. per bushel at sidings. Hon. members will have noticed that the Victorian Government propose to advance 4s. less cost, which would be 3s. 4d. net. I do not know whether the amount here will be increased to 3s. 4d., but a minimum of 3s. is intended. That would mean the provision of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million sterling, but it is not expected that we shall have to borrow anything like that amount, because no considerable payments will need to be made until the middle of January, by which time sales will have been made both overseas and locally. Again, one-third of the deliveries are by Government assisted farmers, and the Treasury may find it convenient to hold the I.A.B. certificates instead of demanding the money. So, to finance the first payment, not more than three-quarters of a million will be required. Arrangements have been made for this money through the Commonwealth Bank at six per cent. The farming community are practically unanimously in favour of this method of handling the crop for the ensuing year, and they are the people most concerned. There is also a general agreement, even outside the farming districts, that whatever is necessary to secure for the country's chief asset its full value should be done. The time has arrived when wheat has become the principal asset of the State, and it must be agreed that whatever action is necessary to secure for the State the full proceeds of its principal asset, that action ought to be taken. The Government, following expert advice, are satisfied that this method is the method by which it

can be done. For that reason the Bill has been introduced. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.2]: I am going to respond to the appeal made by the Leader of the House to expedite matters as much as possible. That is to say, I shall be extremely brief in the comments I am going to make on the second reading of the Bill. I am not going to trace the origin of the measure. We all know it. It is a war measure, justified by the war. The question this House has to decide is whether it is going to be a permanent addition to the government of this country. Are we going to have this wheat pool permanently? The Leader of the House tells us that the great object is to get the full value of the wheat crop. It certainly is so far as it has been conducted up to the present, because you squeeze the local producer to the highest point and you dump the produce wherever you can get the price. That is the position of affairs at present, and the pool is looking only to its own interests, looking with the narrowest view in the direction of its own pocket. One farmer said to me, "We are going to move heaven and earth to make the pool a permanent affair." There is the essence of the contract. That is the question Parliament should have to decide, and it is very difficult for me to believe that this is really going to be a permanent addition to our system.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I do not think there was any suggestion to make it permanent.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Let the hon. member travel about the wheat areas and find out what the farmers are saying upon that particular point. If I can get an assurance from the Minister that the Government are going to make an honest attempt to see that this is the last pool, I shall certainly be brief in my comments and very mild in my criticism.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: The impression I got was that it was to be for only one year.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: What I want to know is, whether the Government intend to continue this measure in the future, and I require an answer as clear as that given by the Premier of South Australia recently.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: You will have to ask the Country Party.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Country Party at present are not in possession of the government of this country. I will take the assurance of the Leader of the House. If he says, "I am unable to give you any assurance," then, of course, I shall be able to draw my own deductions from the statement. If the Minister says, "It is our intention to continue this as a permanent institution," then we shall know where we are.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: You can vote against it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If the Minister tells us either that he does not know whether this is going to be a permanent addition to the management of the country—

The Minister for Education: How can I possibly tell you?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I should have thought it would have been the easiest thing in the world to answer the question.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: How can any Minister tell you that? He might not be here in 12 months' time.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is the position of all of us, but there are limits in which we work, and we take the position as we find it. Here are these gentlemen in possession of the Treasury benches, responsible for the government of this country, and I say that the country is entitled to demand from them on this question a clear statement as to their policy. What does the hon. member say? How will he answer the question? I am asking him to reply to the question as the mouthpiece of the Government. Let him go to Cabinet to-morrow and ask, "What is our policy on this question?"

Hon. F. A. Baglin: The policy is dictated by the Country Party.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If that is so, then what is the policy of the Country Party? It seems to me that the Labour Party in this Chamber are dictating the policy of the Government in a large measure, but I brush that aside and say, surely we are entitled to know in the clearest possible way what is the policy of the Government on this particular point. When I ask that question, I am not asking any more than is asked all over Australia. The Victorian Government went to the country on this question, or were forced to the country on it, and perhaps an inconclusive verdict was the result. At any rate, it was not altogether satisfactory. But here is a statement from South Australia, our next-door neighbour, and in many respects a State very much like Western Australia so far as its problems are concerned, and the statement appeals to me very much. It was made on the 20th September by the Premier of that State as follows:—

In the Assembly to-day the Premier said he could state definitely that the Government would not give any assistance for the establishment of a voluntary pool on the lines sought by the farmers at the recent deputation. It would simply mean a Government pool. However, the Government was for resuming the pre-war trading conditions as quickly as possible. While the present Government were in power there would be no pooling.

We, in this State, are entitled to a statement something like that.

Hon. J. Ewing: The Government here are not in the same position.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then let the Government say they do not know. That will be something. But after what the Leader of the House has indicated to-night, not perhaps in his usually clear manner—he has indicated pretty clearly what his views are—if those are the views of the Government, I shall be prepared to accept them, because it seems to me he is not in favour of this Bill as a permanent addition to the management of the affairs of this country. If we read his speeches on this subject from the beginning we must see that he is opposed to the pool as a permanent addition; because, reduced to its simplest form, it is only State trading in excelsis. That is why the Minister has the members of the Labour Party in this House behind him.

The Minister for Education: The State does not make a profit or a loss from this.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then it is a great deal worse than State trading. The State is simply acting as an agent in this matter. Why do they keep the whole field clear for these people if they are simply acting as agents without any responsibility? This is State trading in excelsis because you begin with the farmers under the I.A.B. and end up with the sale of the stuff—

Hon. T. Moore: Socialisation.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not know whether that is a new word, but call it what you like; it seems to convey something to the hon. member. It is State trading in excelsis, and to find the Leader of this House associated with people of that kind is certainly very painful to me.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Who is responsible for the payment of this 1½ millions?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is a very big question. I wish to respond to the Leader's appeal that this important matter, within limits, should be pushed through as quickly as possible. I have asked the Leader of the House to make a statement as clearly as the statement made by the Premier of South Australia. If the Leader will give that assurance, and make it as definite and in the same direction as the statement made by the Premier of South Australia, I will undertake, so far as I am concerned, to expedite matters and assist him, even though I do not entirely agree with the Bill, to get the Bill through on generous terms, recognising the difficulty of the position and recognising that everything is due to the farmer.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: His bosses will not let him.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If the Leader of the House will not give that assurance, the Bill must be fought in Committee clause by clause and line by line. That is not a threat. My desire is merely to protect the interests entrusted to my charge as representing the consumers in this State. If we can carry out this pool successfully without injuring the

consumer, and with benefit to Western Australia, we shall have established everything that the Labour Party have been fighting for for the last 25 years and are still fighting for to-day. That is why I regard this matter as being of such great importance. If it can be established that this method is good for the farmer, and good for the community—I do not believe it myself—and the Leader of the House is attempting to justify it, I repeat that the farmers are justified in explaining and demonstrating and putting into practice what the Labour Party, with singleness of mind—I am not charging them with corrupt attempts to line their own pockets—have already done. They have established this socialisation to which the hon. member has referred. I can leave the rest. I hope the Leader of the House will give us a clear assurance when he makes his reply on the second reading.

On motion by Hon. Sir Edward Witteoom, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 12th October, 1921.*

	Page
Questions: Hospital for the Insane, Royal Commission	1171
State Steamship Service, Launch	1171
Select Committee, Gratuity Bonds Disposals,	
Extension of Time	1171
Assent to Bill	1172
Bills: Factories and Shops Act Amendment, report	1172
Mining Act Amendment, report	1172
Stallions, report	1172
Stamp, report	1172
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, 1s.	1172
State Children Act Amendment, 2s., Com.	1182
Grain, 2s.	1190
Papers: Soldiers Settlement, Pytton and Herne Hill Estates	1172
S.S. "Penguin," Salvage	1173
Motion: State Insurance	1173
Return: State Implement Works, withdrawn	1182

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

### QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, ROYAL COMMISSION.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, On what grounds has Dr. Jones, of Victoria, been appointed chairman of the Royal Commission to inquire into the administration of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane? 2,

Are the Government aware that similar charges of maladministration to those made against the Claremont institution have been made against the institutions controlled by Dr. Jones in Victoria? 3, In these circumstances will the Government replace Dr. Jones by an independent Commissioner—say by Mr. A. B. Kidson, the Royal Commissioner on the Mable case? 4, Is it the intention of the Government to reciprocate with the Government of Victoria by permitting Dr. Anderson to visit that State for the purpose of reporting on the charges made against Dr. Jones's administration of the Lunacy Department there?

The PREMIER replied: 1, General fitness. 2, No; but all lunacy administration is naturally the subject of some complaint. 3, No. 4, Consideration may be deferred till the request is made.

### QUESTION—STATE STEAMSHIP SERVICE, LAUNCH.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it a fact that a motor launch was purchased some time ago for the purpose of facilitating the passenger service of the s.s. "Eucla" between Albany and Esperance? 2, Has this launch been used for any purpose other than Government service during periods when the "Eucla" was lying at the port of Albany? 3, If so, by whom, and what is the amount earned in freight and other charges?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, No. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

### SELECT COMMITTEE—GRATUITY BONDS DISPOSALS.

*Extension of Time.*

Mr. WILSON (Collie) [4.36]: Before moving for an extension of time, I think it due to the House to give some account of what has occurred in connection with this select committee since last week. Hon. members may have observed in Saturday's "West Australian" the following telegram from Melbourne:—

In the House of Representatives to-day Mr. Foley asked the Treasurer whether it was true that the Government had refused to allow a Federal officer to give evidence before the Western Australian select committee that was inquiring into the alleged frauds in connection with gratuity bonds. Sir Joseph Cook, in reply, said that a demand had been made by the Western Australian Government that a Federal officer should give evidence and produce papers. The Commonwealth, however, could not allow a State to take charge of its officials in that way. There was a proper way of doing anything of that kind. He was not against such investigations, and had indeed been fighting such frauds in order to protect the soldiers. He hoped to clear up the