

man who, under prevailing circumstances, having a little to sell wants to ensure that he shall be permitted to see how high he can force the figure at which the other man has to buy. That is all I have to say.

The Premier: I wish you would deliver that speech in the Council. It would do much good there.

On motion by Mr. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 14th January, 1915.

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

QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST REPORT.

Mr. CARPENTER asked the Premier: When will the report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners for the year ending in June last be laid on the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied: The report is at present with the Printer, and should be available early next week.

QUESTION—SUBSIDIES TO MUNICIPALITIES.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that, by the amalgamation of the municipalities

of North Perth and Leederville with Perth, under the existing payment of municipal subsidy regulations Perth will be penalised in the amount of the subsidies now receivable by North Perth and Leederville municipalities? 2, Will he immediately take steps to alter these regulations, so as to obviate this injustice to the city of Perth, so as to provide that the city of Perth shall receive not less than the amount of Government subsidy that would have been payable to the three municipalities if the amalgamation had not taken place? 3, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The question will receive consideration. 3, Answered by No. 2.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. GILCHRIST (for Mr. Male) leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. George on the ground of ill-health.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: Report of the Board of re-classification of Poison Lands. (Ordered on motion by Mr. E. B. Johnston.)

By the Minister for Works: Regulations under "The Workers' Homes Acts, 1911, 1912, and 1914"—Amendment to Schedule.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

BILL—LOCAL OPTION VOTE CONTINUANCE.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day. Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.38]: In common with a good many in the agricultural districts, I have been waiting for this Bill with a great deal of anxiety, re-

cognising that it is not only necessary, but a positive duty devolving upon Parliament, to assist those settlers who, forsaking the comforts of town, have gone into the virgin bush to carve out homes for themselves and their families, hoping some day to attain a competency. I desire to emphasise the fact that it is not the Government who have created the values of the agricultural land, but the labour of the settlers themselves.

Mr. Carpenter: Not entirely.

Mr. THOMSON: I say it is the settlers themselves who have created the values by clearing the land and bringing it under cultivation. They have created the necessity for the railways and their efforts have led to the springing up of towns in the various agricultural districts. For proof of what the agricultural industry means to the State, we have only to view the existing condition of affairs. It is not the war which has affected the State so seriously; it is the drought from which we are suffering. This is an object lesson as showing the value to the State of the farming industry. If by reason of the drought which we are experiencing, the State is in such a bad way, clearly it is the duty of the Government to afford the settlers every assistance to enable them to remain upon the land, so that they may render it productive. It is to the advantage of the State from the financial point of view that the settlers should be kept on the land. The Agricultural Bank has advanced huge sums of money to assist those settlers, and in assisting them now to remain upon their farms the Government are not only doing their duty to the settlers, but are also protecting their own assets; because, unfortunately, if the settlers are allowed to leave their farms, the land will quickly revert to its virgin state. I am disappointed in the Bill. I was expecting something better. It seems to me it represents a case of, heads the Government win, tails the other fellows lose. That is as I view it.

The Minister for Lands: I will await with interest your amendments in Committee, which will show how it ought to

be done. Kindly put them on the Notice Paper.

Mr. THOMSON: If the Government are going to demand, as they propose to do under Clause 15, that they shall have a prior claim against all other creditors, I do not see how they will be helping the settler very much.

The Minister for Mines: Do you want to pauperise him?

Mr. THOMSON: No, but I would draw attention to the treatment the unemployed are receiving in the City to-day. The Government are providing them with free meals.

The Minister for Works: We are doing the same for the settlers.

Mr. THOMSON: And with free beds. Yet I have not noticed that the Government are asking for any mortgage on the future earnings of those men in the unfortunate position of requiring assistance.

The Attorney General: What have they to mortgage?

Mr. THOMSON: As much as many of the settlers. Yet you are asking the settlers to mortgage themselves lock, stock, and barrel, body and soul to the Government. You say, "We will not give you assistance unless you give us a first mortgage over the whole of your land and stock and implements. We are going to take prior claim over everybody else." If the Government would take the lien over the crop, the same as the private banks are doing, they would have ample security; because, after all, it is the crops we expect to reap from the farms this year which are going to enable the farmers to pay the interest to be demanded of them by the Government.

The Minister for Mines: And it is the assistance we are rendering which is going to enable them to pay.

Mr. THOMSON: I maintain it is the duty of the Government to give the settlers that assistance. Previous Administrations have been responsible for their going on the land, and it is now our duty to keep them there. The Government should be content with the same security as any private bank.

Mr. James Gardiner: Does the private bank advance the full amount on growing crops?

Mr. THOMSON: The Agricultural Bank holds the first mortgage and private banks are advancing to farmers to enable them to put in their crops.

The Minister for Lands: To what extent?

Mr. THOMSON: If the private banks asked the Government, or the manager of the Agricultural Bank for priority of claim over the Agricultural Bank mortgage, I wonder whether the Government would be agreeable. I very much doubt it.

The Minister for Lands: They take it.

Mr. THOMSON: They would if the Government would give it, but the Government would not do so.

The Minister for Lands: It is not a matter of the Government giving it. The individual gives it before the bank makes the advance, or he would not get the advance.

Mr. THOMSON: If we intend to give assistance to the farmer, we should not hedge it around with difficulties such as will arise if Clause 15 becomes law.

Mr. Thomas: Send them along a few feather beds.

Mr. THOMSON: The average farmer is dead lucky if he has chaff to sleep on.

Mr. Thomas: You seem to think they need feather beds from the Government.

Mr. THOMSON: No, they do not, but they are entitled to the same consideration as other sections of the community. No mortgage is being placed on the future earnings of the unemployed who are in receipt of Government assistance, and the farming community should not be tied up to the extent proposed under this Bill. Paragraph (c) of Clause 9 provides that the Government may make advances to settlers to enable them to pay rents due to the Department of Lands and Surveys. The settler, by his labour, and not the money advanced by the Agricultural Bank, has created the value of the land.

Mr. Foley: How much labour could he have put in without that money from the Agricultural Bank?

Mr. THOMSON: I admit the force of that argument.

Mr. Foley: Well, where is the logic of your argument?

Mr. THOMSON: I quite admit that, without the assistance of the Agricultural Bank, the settlers would not have been able to put in the necessary labour; but are the Government prepared to advance money on the virgin forest of this State? Neither the Agricultural Bank, nor any private institution would do so. It is the labour of the settler, rendered possible by the advances of the Agricultural Bank, which has created the value of the land.

The Minister for Mines: The whole value?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, because they have made it productive. Otherwise it would not be worth a snap of the fingers.

The Minister for Mines: Does not the expenditure on railways and water supplies give some value?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, but who has created the necessity for railways and water supplies?

The Attorney General: The people of the State.

Mr. THOMSON: No; those men who have gone out into the agricultural areas and blazed the track. I am not aware that any member has suggested legislation to construct a railway into the forest where there is no settlement.

Mr. Willmott: It would be a good idea if someone did.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government should be prepared, under the special circumstances existing, to waive their land rents. The Minister for Lands smiles.

The Minister for Lands: We are doing it every day. Why urge the doing of that which is already being done?

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Why not give credit for it?

Mr. Mansie: Would you advance further money on that which is forfeited?

Mr. THOMSON: Then bring in a measure to provide that holdings shall not be forfeited under prevailing conditions.

Mr. Munsie: You want such settlers to be given a clean sheet.

Mr. THOMSON: If the Government gave the land to the farmers, and told them to clear it and bring it into cultivation, the farmers and not the Government would be conferring a benefit on the people of the State.

Mr. Heitmann: Would you give it to the miners also?

Mr. THOMSON: I am dealing with a subject of which I claim to have a little knowledge. I am not conversant with the goldfields districts. I am very disappointed with the provisions of this Bill and I hope that in Committee some amendments will be made.

The Attorney General: What did you expect to find in the Bill?

Mr. THOMSON: I did not expect to find anything so drastic as Clause 15. Seeing that the private institutions, which hon. members on the Government side say have no soul above finance, are making advances and seeing that it is a business proposition to assist farmers by making advances and taking a lien—

The Minister for Mines: They will not want our assistance.

Mr. THOMSON: This has been done year after year. The millers have advanced to settlers on their wheat.

The Attorney General: This Bill will not prevent them from continuing to do so.

Mr. THOMSON: I did not say it would, but why penalise those unfortunate enough to be in such a bad position by tying them up body and soul to the Government? They will have no say in the matter.

Mr. Thomas: Would you advance without security?

The Minister for Mines: Would the private banks advance without security?

Mr. THOMSON: The banks are doing so to-day. They are advancing on the crops.

Mr. McDowall: Will you give us their addresses?

Mr. THOMSON: I will give them to the hon. member privately and give instances as well. I am not at liberty to make the names public.

Mr. Heitmann: Three years ago not a penny could be squeezed out of the banks.

Mr. Taylor: I wish the banks would give me a chance.

Mr. THOMSON: Members do not seem to realise the seriousness of the position. They seem to treat with levity everything brought forward in this House.

Mr. McDowall: That is why the Government introduced this Bill.

Mr. THOMSON: We have been sent to this House at one of the most serious stages in the history of the State and it behoves all members to assist to mould legislation so that it will not press unduly on any section of the community. In my small way I am endeavouring to protect a section of the community worthy of consideration, and so long as I am a member in the House I will do my duty to that section. They are entitled to our consideration in this House where we have an opportunity to voice our opinions and endeavour to persuade the majority to model the legislation we pass on acceptable lines. I favour the cancellation of contracts made prior to the 1st October. Under ordinary circumstances one would not ask for the cancellation of contracts, but considering that we are living in extraordinary times, it is only fair that in cases where farmers made a contract prior to the outbreak of the war, they should have an opportunity to cancel it and obtain the benefit of the present market price.

Mr. Thomas: Heads I win, tails you lose.

Mr. THOMSON: If we had not been confronted with such exceptional conditions, this Bill would not have been introduced. Under the third schedule the Government again will be very well protected. Paragraph 2 embraces "current year's rates and taxes." I presume income tax will be included, and any poor unfortunate devil who has had no income for four or five years, but is lucky enough to make over £200 this year, will have to pay income tax. He should be exempted from such tax.

Mr. Munsie: Thousands of men working in this country have not earned sufficient money to have to pay income tax.

Mr. THOMSON: And thousands, who for two or three years have not had the happy privilege of paying income tax, have had to pay on the rare occasions when their earnings have exceeded the limit. In the lean years such men are not allowed a rebate, and I consider they should be.

Mr. Foley: That is not heads I win, tails you lose, is it?

Mr. THOMSON: We are looking to the farmer to help the Government to reduce their deficit. Members of the Government stated from public platforms during the election campaign that the farming community were largely responsible for the deficit.

Mr. Munsie: Which is a fact.

Mr. THOMSON: Then, is it not the duty of the Government to assist them?

The Minister for Mines: Are not we assisting them? Why talk nonsense?

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Has not the assistance rendered created the deficit?

Mr. THOMSON: The farming community deserve every consideration and the Government intend to make them pay for it. The Government are not giving them any charity.

Mr. Heitmann: Should not they pay for it?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

Mr. Heitmann: Then what are you growling about?

Mr. Foley: If the farmers want charity they will not get it.

Mr. THOMSON: Provision is made that after the payment of rates and taxes those persons who have advanced money to the farmers shall have the privilege of being paid. Water rates and such like charges are provided for, and why is not provision made for the storekeeper? I am not here to battle for the storekeeper; he is able to look after himself, but the storekeepers in some instances have been carrying the farmers for years and surely they are entitled to be included.

The Attorney General: This very Bill will help to pay the storekeeper.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, for current supplies.

The Attorney General: Well!

Mr. THOMSON: It does not help to pay the storekeeper who has carried the farmer for years.

Mr. Heitmann: Will not the storekeeper benefit by this Bill?

Mr. THOMSON: I hope that, when the Bill reaches Committee, Clause 15 will be deleted. It is not fair that the Government in assisting the farmer, should insist upon having a first mortgage over his property.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That affects the moneylender, not the farmer.

Mr. THOMSON: I regret that the Bill is not all that I expected it would be. Perhaps we cannot get all we expect, but the measure will be very disappointing to a majority of the farming community who so urgently need the assistance which it is the duty of the Government to afford under the exceptional conditions prevailing to-day.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [5.0]: Unlike the member for Katanning I am not disappointed with the terms of the Bill. In it, if I see through the measure aright, I see a break in the clouds which have been hanging over the farmer for quite a period. I hope that each member of this House on the Government side, as well as on the Opposition side—we know what to expect from the Country party—will give the matter that earnest and quick attention to the question that will soon place this measure on the statute-book, in order that we may give to the farmers of the Eastern districts the benefit of the provisions of the Bill at the earliest possible moment. If I understand the Bill aright, the Government are prepared to go to the assistance of the farmers and finance them out of their present difficulties. Each side of the House is agreed as to the object of the Bill with regard to the farmers. If the Minister for Lands is sincere, and his sincerity has been questioned in the speech of the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), and if Cabinet are sincere with regard to other industries that have to be assisted, as they are at present in their efforts on behalf of the farmer as

contained in this Bill, surely we, as members, can trust to this sincerity on the part of the Government. The Minister for Mines and other Ministers represent industries upon which doubtless money will be carefully and judiciously spent. In this Bill I see that the Government are seeking power to relieve the farmer from his present position and put him on a cash basis.

The Minister for Lands: That is one of the most important questions of the Bill.

Mr. HARRISON: It means that we are going to pay six per cent. for our money. It is most likely that that six per cent., with the aggregate purchases, will more than clear us in our buying in the first instance.

The Minister for Lands: You will clear it on fertiliser alone.

Mr. HARRISON: We will clear it on the one line of purchase. At the present time we are paying, under the usual methods of purchase, one penny per bushel per month for accommodation by way of interest. When the price of wheat was 3s. per bushel that used to work out at 33 per cent. If we get reduced from 33 per cent. to six per cent., is not that good for the farmer? If we get a reduction of from 15 per cent. or 17½ per cent. down to six per cent., is not that an advantage? If we are going to get other reductions in percentages by and from the Government, so that we shall be brought down to six per cent., is that not going to be of assistance to us? I think there is daylight showing in this. I am glad that the Government have taken the measure in the spirit they have. They do not appear to have mentioned the period. Some hon. members have objected to a period not having been fixed. How could the Government have fixed a period? They do not know what the period will be, or how long we are going to have a continuation of the bad seasons we have had. Can the Government tell in what part of the State the result will be below the average, and in what part of the State it will be above the average. There are perhaps some portions of the State where the farmers will be able to win out in one or two years, whereas perhaps in other parts

of the State they will not be able to win out under less than five years. I do not see how the Government can fix any period, and I am pleased that no period has been fixed. Another query has been raised as to how much money will be required, but until every one of the applications are gone into the exact amount that will be required can only be gauged approximately. It may be three-quarters of a million or half a million, or even more than that. The Minister for Lands, however, has stated that he is prepared to assist the farmers according to these conditions by supplying them with seed wheat, fertiliser, horse feed, and even stores, to enable them to carry on through this year 1915. If he is willing to do that, and circumstances arise in 1916 and the finances will allow him to carry on this good work, he still wishes to do so, and I trust we shall be able to take full advantage of this. There has been great objection taken to Clause 15 on the question of security. I would like myself to have had that made a little more elastic. The first portion deals with advances by the Agricultural Bank. This has first security over these. The second deals with those who are being assisted by our chartered banks. Most likely a large number of private securities will be carried forward by the chartered banks, but there may be a small minority which they do not feel prepared to carry forward. There are financial institutions that I believe have got wonderfully good security with only small amounts against them. It is in regard to this small section that we are going to have a difficulty. The best of our settlers have been working and getting on, and as a result of their efforts only have a small amount upon their holdings. At the present moment if these properties were put upon the market we could not realise upon them. If the mortgagee steps in he is going to reap the benefit that should accrue to the honest worker, the man who has been thrifty and has only a small mortgage over his property. It would, to my mind, be a good thing if the Government and the mortgagee could both be put on the first security basis somehow. We

will take the proposition this way: supposing a first mortgagee has got £1,000 on a certain security; it will not take, we will say, more than £250 to carry him over to the next season. If the amount could be divided pro rata between the mortgagee and the Government so as to make the security of equal value to both, both parties would be secured as well as the farmer. I do not know whether that could be embodied in the Bill. It is a suggestion which I think might perhaps work out. I know there are some such cases as I have mentioned in our district—

Mr. S. Stubbs: A great many.

Mr. HARRISON: Where they have a splendid security, with comparatively little on it. There is a certain section that most likely will be assisted by the Government, as the Minister for Lands has pointed out, which will not turn out a success, but that will only be in the case of a small minority. We have now had four years of anything but good seasons in the Avon electorate and in this, the fourth year, a great many of the farmers have only a return of an average for the four years of only three bushels to the acre. If the return were 12 bushels to the acre on the ordinary price of the world's market before the war there would be a margin of profit to the farmer, and it can be seen at once what these men have had to contend with during this period. The very fact of these farmers being on the land to-day is the best guarantee as to their bona fides and their willingness to win through.

Mr. Heitmann: It also shows the bona fides of the Government who have kept them on the land.

Mr. HARRISON: I admit that the Government have shown their bona fides in this respect. The hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) was sincere in his policy to get men settled on the land. He succeeded in his desire, and the men are on the land, and I believe that the Minister for Lands now wants to keep them there. I trust that the Bill will not be emasculated in this House or in another place. I have great pleasure in supporting the measure, but would be glad if

Clause 15 could be made a little more elastic in order to meet the bona fide settlers who are desirous of winning through.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Greenough) [5.10]: I feel it my duty to give my general support to the Bill. The fact that the Government have brought it forward shows that they have been conscious of the duty which devolves upon them as administrators of the affairs of the State. We are passing through a very critical period in our history, when we are affected not only by a big drought, but by the greatest war the world has ever known. This is a time when a great responsibility is placed upon those who represent the people in the Parliament of the State. I think that the Bill before the House shows that the Government are making an honest endeavour to cope with the difficulties that lie before us. Throughout nearly every district in the State we find that there are many farmers who, if they do not get assistance in the direction proposed by the Bill, will have to leave their homes. I consider that this would not only be a calamity for those who have spent years of toil upon the land, and who have risked their all, and who, in many instances, have lost it all, but it would be a calamity to the whole of the State. We know that if the productive powers of the State go down, so do prices have a tendency to go up. In that way, therefore, the consumers generally would be affected. In the interests of the people of the State and of the industries of the State, I think that every effort should be made to keep this industry going. There may be some difference of opinion as to the security that the Government require for the assistance they propose to give to the farmer. Most of the private individuals, when they have to lend their money, take every possible precaution as to the security they get, and I think it is the duty of the Government who represent the people of the State, to also take steps to see that they have good security for the money they lend. Whilst I commend the Government for their efforts in trying to get good security for the money they

expend in this direction, I think that possibly, where the holding is mortgaged to other banks or private individuals, apart from the Agricultural Bank, the Government might see if they could come in with them on an equal security. Hardship may be brought about, of course, in some instances, if we take away the privileges people enjoy under the second mortgage. No doubt many of these people have advanced money which in many instances has gone to make holdings what they are to-day, and to give a start to those people who are in distress, and I think for that reason they are entitled to some consideration at the hands of the Government when bringing forward a measure of this kind. I do say that if there is any alteration it may be in the direction of giving the Government equal security with the people who hold a mortgage over the holding. When there is a return to good seasons, and I hope it will not be long, I believe that the farmers and the people of the State generally will derive full benefit from them? I believe if there is any slight amendment needed in this measure the House will give the Bill fair consideration. I do not know that I wish to say any more upon the Bill at the present time.

Mr. THOMAS (Runbury) [5.15]: I do not know that I should have taken any part in this debate had it not been for the *ad misericordiam* appeal made by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson). I have listened to a good many speeches in this House, but I have never listened to one that has more impelled me to laugh.

Mr. Thomson: You would not laugh if you were in the position of those drought-stricken settlers.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member made a painstaking, if blundering, attempt to find fault with a Bill which obviously has originated purely from a desire to assist the people whom the hon. member is supposed to represent. His coming here to make the charges and claims that he has advanced on behalf of the farmers leads me to believe that the hon. member does not understand, or at all events does not accurately appreciate,

the wants, the wishes, and the intentions of the farming population of Western Australia.

Mr. Thomson: How do you know?

Mr. THOMAS: My knowledge of farming is equal to the hon. member's.

Mr. Thomson: You may know more about it than I do.

Mr. THOMAS: I am satisfied that the farmers of this country often suffer very severely from the advocacy of their alleged friends. Not for one moment do I believe that the members of the Country party want this Parliament to look upon the farmer as a political mendicant.

Mr. Thomson: Who suggested it?

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member did.

Mr. Thomson: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member suggests that when he makes the assertion that because the Government are helping a few unfortunate people in Perth twice a day to a meal costing 6d. and do not take security over their hides for it, the Government have no right in a legitimate commercial transaction to ask the farmer for security, when they are advancing him possibly hundreds of pounds. If that suggestion of the hon. member does not amount to political childishness, I do not know how far we shall have to go to meet that characteristic.

Mr. Thomson: Probably we will learn it from you.

Mr. THOMAS: It would not be very difficult for the hon. member, if he were attentive, to learn something from anybody. This Bill, so far as I am able to judge, belongs to no particular party. It evinces no party spirit of any description whatever. It has been introduced in order to meet a most unfortunate emergency. I do not believe there is a member of this House but recognises the fact that it is a great misfortune such a Bill as this should be necessary at all.

Mr. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Mr. THOMAS: Then why introduce into the discussion this spirit of carping criticism? For an hon. member representing a farming district to say that he is grievously disappointed with the Bill, that he expected so much more—

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is not carping criticism.

Mr. THOMAS: Great Caesar's ghost, what does the hon. member want? Does he wish us to throw wide open the doors of the Treasury and allow his friends to come along with wheelbarrows and cart the gold away?

Hon. Frank Wilson: There is no gold in the Treasury.

Mr. Thomson: The Treasury is empty.

Mr. THOMAS: We expect to have a little there presently, and I applaud the Government for their generosity in proposing to give so much as they do propose to give out of what little they have. The taunt is continually thrown at the Labour party that we have no sympathy with the farmer, but our actions have shown the direct contrary. Every individual who has at heart the interest of the genuine development and prosperity of Western Australia must recognise the fact that the very foundation, the absolute basis, of all our prosperity is, of necessity, the primary producer. If we were actuated by no other than selfish interests, we would realise that in order to bring prosperity to the rest of the community we must lay the firmest of possible foundations; and in order to achieve that object we must render every reasonable facility to the man who makes his home upon the land. We must grant him every reasonable assistance to achieve prosperity and ultimately a modest competence for himself and those dependent upon him. I have never heard anyone belonging to any party deny that truism. But my friend the member for Katanning seems to see beneath this Bill a subterranean motive of some description—he did not indicate where it existed—whereby the measure would be made to press heavily upon the man on the land. This Bill is in my opinion the most generous that has ever come before the Parliament of any Australasian State.

Mr. Heitmann: Of any State of the world.

Mr. THOMAS: Of any State of the world, one might reasonably say. And yet an hon. member who is supposed to represent the agricultural interest gets

up and declares that the measure is going to press heavily upon the man on the land.

Mr. Thomson: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. THOMAS: That was the burden of the hon. member's entire speech.

Mr. Thomson: I did nothing of the sort. Do not impute to me motives by which I am not actuated.

Mr. THOMAS: I have no need whatever to impute motives to the hon. member, whose speech I presume *Hansard* will record.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The member for Bunbury cannot help imputing motives.

Mr. Thomson: I suppose he cannot.

Mr. THOMAS: The gibe from the leader of the Opposition may be justified—

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is deserved.

Mr. THOMAS: But I wish to remark that I have sat in this House for something like four years listening to a great many lengthy speeches by the member for Sussex, without having on one single occasion heard him offer one piece of constructive criticism.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Mr. THOMAS: I have never on any occasion whatever known the leader of the Opposition to make any attempt at constructive criticism.

The Premier: That is why he is where he is.

Mr. THOMAS: Therefore I consider that the hon. member's attempt to reflect upon me for criticising another hon. member who, I claim, has strayed from the right path in this matter, is entirely out of place.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have no right to put words into his mouth.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member who misleads the Opposition reminds me very much of an old gentleman residing in my electorate. That old gentleman has a fiddle made out of a tobacco box and fastened on to a kerosene tin and furnished with a single string. He evokes very tolerable music from this one string, but there seems to be a tinge of monotony about the tune when one has heard it say twenty-five times.

Hon. Frank Wilson. He is one of your supporters, I suppose.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member reminds me of that aged violinist. Now, another one of the complaints of the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) is that the Government have not also made provision to recoup the storekeeper for all the money he has spent on the farmer in past years.

Mr. Thomson: I said nothing of the sort. I said that the storekeeper should receive the same consideration as the others.

Mr. THOMAS: As the farmer?

Mr. Thomson: As the others whom the Bill mentions.

Mr. THOMAS: Let us yield to a wave of generous feelings, and let us all get assistance. The Government should borrow 25 millions, and then every one of us could receive financial aid. But even if that were done and a Bill were introduced for the purpose, the member for Katanning would say, "I am extremely disappointed; the measure does not go far enough by a long way."

The Minister for Mines: And then he would whine about the deficit afterwards.

Mr. THOMAS: Now, not only do I recognise the fact that the Government are doing what is generous in this matter, but I say that if there is a fault to find it is, in my opinion, that they are going if possible too far. In advancing the money that they propose to advance they are taking grave risks—risks that no private institution would take. However, the Government are conferring lasting benefits upon the farmers in the dry areas; and while I am prepared to concede the point taken by a previous speaker that probably the member for Norriham (Hon. J. Mitchell) was in earnest when, as Minister for Lands, he settled so many people at such extreme distances as he did, I claim, in the light of present day knowledge that possibly the hon. gentleman's enthusiasm led him a long way too far afield. We have now arrived at this position, that the amount of money necessary to tide the farmers

in the eastern areas over their difficulties means that every other portion of Western Australia will for some time to come be starved of its rightful development. Most people, I think, will recognise that fact. I myself as representative of a south-western constituency lay claim to some credit for generosity in so far as I am prepared to support a measure that allocates such an enormous amount of money for the use of the farmers, and deprives the people of the South-West of all participation, practically, in the benefits of the present loan. I am of opinion that in the past too much attention has been devoted to this one industry of farming in the eastern areas, with consequent detriment to development in other portions of the State. Although I am quite prepared to support the Government in their effort to carry on people who are in need of assistance—because I believe that, having gone into the thing, we should see it through—I still hold that opinion. However, I also believe that ultimately a very large proportion of those whom this measure is intended to assist will succeed. Indeed, there can be no doubt of it. But I am unable to understand why for so many years that portion of the country which would yield the most certain returns for developmental effort has been left severely alone, while the State has gone into this huge gamble in the wheat belt. I cannot consider that we have done right in developing one section of the State out of all proportion to the development of the remaining parts of Western Australia. It is a most remarkable thing that while this unfortunate drought has been in progress, and while so many appeals for assistance have been made and have been met, from one part of the State—and that is the South-West—there has been practically no complaint whatever. The whole of the settlement in that portion of Western Australia has been able to bear up against all difficulties that have come along. Once a reasonable effort is made to settle the people upon land in the mild climate of the South-West, with its assured rain-

fall, once the initial expense has been incurred, there will be rarely if ever from the South-West such claims as have been made here for special assistance.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Is not most of the land in the South-West alienated?

Mr. THOMAS: Of course it is not, and the hon. member knows that is so. In any case, there are in the South-West numbers of large estates that could be broken up, and there is any number of schemes by which closer settlement might be introduced, placing a successful and happy population on that part of Western Australia, when such advances as we are discussing to-day would be rendered unnecessary. I hope the time is not far distant when the turn of that section of Western Australia will come, when it will get its measure of recognition; and that will be so much the better for all concerned, because it is not possible to carry continuously the burden of one section of the community needing large financial assistance. Therefore, we should develop on surer lines in a section of the State that is able to carry its own burden. In conclusion, I wish to say that while everybody recognises the worth and value of the farmer, while we know all the stereotyped platitudes about blazing the track, and so forth, which our friend uttered to-day together with other things that are perfectly familiar, we must also recognise and realise that there is a danger in going too far. There is becoming a tendency in Western Australia—avoid looking at it as we will—a tendency on the part of a large section of the community to lean just a little bit too much upon the Government. There are people who seem to think that the Treasurer possesses a kind of political Aladdin's lamp, and that the hon. gentleman has only to rub the wick to place millions of money at his disposal. On the other hand, if one offers the suggestion that a little extra taxation, a slight increase in the charges for faci-

ties, should be introduced, then of course the government of the country is all wrong.

The Minister for Mines: It is equally wrong to borrow the money.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes, it is equally wrong to borrow the money; and if the Government gives assistance it is likewise wrong to have a deficit. I maintain there are to-day evidences from those who have received assistance from similar measures that "increase of appetite doth grow from that it feeds on." I honestly believe that too much help merely serves to debilitate the individuals who receive it. I am convinced that if we pursue these lines too closely and too long, we shall sap the virility of the people we are seeking to aid. No Government under the sun can go on for all time juggling out money to all sections of the community, continuously dealing out to them artificial sustenance which is not wholesome for them.

The Minister for Mines: In other words interfering too much with private enterprise.

Mr. THOMAS: No. I do not think that my argument is quite on those lines. The hon. member is disposed to be facetious this afternoon, and he is listening to my story and waiting for an opening to work in his humour.

The Minister for Mines: I am deadly serious.

Mr. THOMAS: The hon. member does not look it. I trust that this Bill will be passed, and I hope that in the administration of it due caution will be exercised to see that those people who are not deserving of assistance do not get it. I am not going to cast any slur on the farmers as a whole; I am not going to question their *bona fides*, but there is a small percentage who have taken an unfair advantage of the assistance rendered in times gone by. I may have been incorrectly informed, but I have been told that a number of these people have said, "Oh, the Government have put us here; we did not want to come here, but now that they have put us here, they will have to keep us here, whether they like it or not." If there are any such cases I

do not think that that sort of spirit will win success. I do not care how difficult the position of the individual may be, provided he has the proper stamina, and provided he is prepared to face the situation fairly and squarely, and with the assistance of the Government to battle with nature and win some reward, I shall be prepared to support the Government in rendering help to enable such an individual to win through. But for the carping individual who declares, "Now I am here, the rest of the world will have to keep me here," the safest method for the Government to pursue would be to cut him off, and let him earn an honest living somewhere else.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin) [5.35]: The Bill now before us is one of the most important which has come along during the period I have had the honour of being a member of this Chamber. I am not going to take up the time of the House to any extent, but I think I can claim honestly to represent about 1,500 honourable men who follow the occupation of farming in this State, and I think I can also claim to have had considerable experience, as much indeed as any other member, of the methods adopted by the farmers of the State during the period of eight years in which I have had a holding in the Great Southern district. The Bill, to my mind, or 99 per cent. of it, is good. The only portion that is causing me anxiety is Clause 15. The Government lately notified the storekeepers and the inspectors of the Agricultural Bank throughout the State that any farmer who has been known to have had a failure in his crop had only to send in an application duly verified by a justice of the peace, and he would then receive assistance, provided, of course, the claim was found to be *bona fide*. A good many farmers in my district have, unfortunately, suffered severely during the past two or three years through circumstances over which they had no control. It is not fair that some hon. members opposite should engage in audible conversation while another hon. member is on his feet.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Finish your speech; never mind the noise.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will hon. members please observe order?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have always endeavoured to be as brief as possible in all my remarks in the Chamber, and I claim that when I am endeavouring to do my duty as a member of the House, if there are members in the Chamber who do not want to listen to what I have to say, the least they can do is to keep quiet or retire. Perhaps I may now proceed to briefly state my case, believing that I have a duty to perform to the House and to explain the reason which actuated me in speaking on this measure. My remarks may be of assistance to those hon. members who are not as conversant as I am with the provisions of Clause 15. If the statement is not worth anything, I can only say afterwards I tried to do my duty.

The Premier: You understand that the priority in that clause is only for the purposes mentioned in paragraphs (a) and (b) of Clause 9?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Government have generously guaranteed the storekeepers' accounts for 12 months, or have agreed to do so, and they are justified in getting every farthing back. I claim they will get it all back in the first crop.

The Premier: We may and we may not.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Let the hon. member place himself in this position: If he had retired from commercial life, and advertised that he had money to lend on fairly good security, and then lent some thousands of pounds to various farmers in the State, Clause 15 would take away that security.

The Premier: Oh no.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Then I cannot read right.

The Premier: You do not understand it, that is evident.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It appears to me that this clause is absolutely going to take away the undoubted security of the first mortgage.

The Premier: We are making the security absolutely safe.

Mr. S. STUBBS: A man who has a first mortgage will be nothing less than a fool if he does not agree to give the Government a lien over the whole of the

proceeds of the crop. Clause 15 says that as long as there is any money owing to the Government—

The Minister for Lands: Read paragraphs (a) and (b) of Clause 9.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Would not the Government be just as well secured if they had a lien over the crop or succession of crops until the money was paid?

The Minister for Lands: We are advancing again this year after having advanced in 1911. We came to an understanding in 1911 that we would look after the proceeds of the 1911 advance.

Mr. S. STUBBS: And you did it well.

The Minister for Lands: We have not been paid, and neither have they.

Mr. S. STUBBS: And I have not been paid, and I am prepared to stand aside.

The Premier: You are quite wrong, you know, in your reading of the clause.

Mr. S. STUBBS: My point is that every farthing the Government have advanced should be a first charge upon the crop that comes off the land.

The Premier: Supposing that none comes off.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Government take risks and so do all private individuals. The Government would be just as secure.

The Premier: If you have lent money to a man in the past and hold a mortgage over his property, unless you can advance him further you may lose what you advanced before.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Not necessarily. Suppose a man who holds a first mortgage says that you have not been a success on the land, and he will wait until the seasons change, he may be agreeable to allow his principle and interest to stand over for 12 months, but the Government are now going to undermine the security.

The Premier: And we have another obligation to see that the rent is paid us, and the man cannot do that without getting money from somewhere.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I thought the Government would be just as secure as they are.

The Minister for Lands: Suppose we do not get a crop next year, what then?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Government would just have to do as private individuals have done in the past. I can point to scores of individuals who have advanced money year after year. I myself have advanced money for five years, and I have every confidence that it will all be paid back.

The Premier: You will get it all back from us; we are not affecting your mortgage in the slightest.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Government are going to interfere with the man who has a first mortgage.

The Attorney General: Suppose the first mortgagee sells out the man lock, stock, and barrel—

Mr. S. STUBBS: He would if he were a lunatic, but in these days you cannot sell a farm.

The Attorney General: If he could, where would the people's money come in then?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I take it it would be subject to the provisions of this Bill. But the property could not be disposed of.

The Premier: It could if we did what you suggest.

Mr. S. STUBBS: However, the Bill is a good one save for this clause.

The Minister for Lands: Will the hon. member tell me this: When he read Clause 15 did he take the trouble to read Clause 21?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yes.

The Minister for Lands: The Bill is in two parts. Clause 15 deals with one, and Clause 21 with the other.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I do not want to take up the time of the House. I know for a fact that the Government have honestly dealt with every application that has come from the district I have the honour to represent, and British fair play has been dealt out to every man in accordance with the position he finds himself in to-day. I believe that the Bill is a good one, and will commend itself to every section of the community. The only thing that agitated me, as I have already said, was Clause 15. If in Committee it can be proved that my reading of that clause was not correct, I will

be prepared to go into the matter again and reconsider my decision, and, if necessary, withdraw anything that I have said that will have the effect of proving to the outside world that the Government have no intention of shaking the security of any person who has a mortgage over any property which will be likely to be affected by the passing of this Bill. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narogin) [5.45]: The Bill has been brought in largely to give statutory authority to work the commencement of which has already been made by the Farmers' Assistance Board. Where such a huge expenditure of public funds is involved, it is desirable that Parliament should lay down the lines on which the assistance is to be given. Hon. members will be pleased to notice that it is proposed in the Bill, not only to continue the present assistance being given to farmers, but also to assist others of our industries. In this connection perhaps I may endorse the words of the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlin) in regard to the timber industry. In my own electorate there are timber-cutters on the western side of the Great Southern who in all probability will be out of work presently unless they can get assistance. It is the desire of the Government to keep the people on the land—a very big task to face in this time of financial stress. In regard to the present work of the Farmers' Assistance Board, I hope the Minister will see that the assistance being given is given as largely as possible to the right class of people. At the present time a large section of farmers who need help the most are not getting it at all. The Farmers' Assistance Board has sent letters to all settlers who did not put in a crop last year, pointing out that no assistance will be forthcoming for those men.

Mr. Griffiths: That is provided for.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It may be, but not very clearly. The assistance contemplated in the Bill is assistance to settlers and others affected by drought

or other adverse climatic conditions, and if the Minister would give me the assurance given by the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) I would be content; but from conversations I have had with the board I am convinced that unless Parliament gives some instructions on this point the farmers who have land cleared and felled, but who put in no crop last year, will not get any help from the board. The Agricultural Bank has stopped advances until such time as the settler has 250 acres cleared. So a man getting on towards having his farm fairly well established might still have had no crop in last year, and, under the present administration of the Farmers' Assistance Board, if he had 50 acres cropped last year, he may get considerable help, but if he had no crop in last year he receives a letter telling him that he cannot get any help whatever from the board. If the Bill is going to alter that, the board will not be justified in turning down these applications for assistance. I hope the Minister will cast some light on this point before the Bill goes into Committee. In regard to the question of Clause 15, it appears to me the provision affects the moneylender far more than it does the farmer. I do not think the farmer will be very much concerned as to whether the State's claim will come before that of the private bank or not.

The Premier: It affects the farmer materially, because it protects him.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is so, and the opposition to this clause is not in the interests of the farmer. One gratifying feature of the clause is that the Treasurer is going to relieve the farmer from the payment of mortgage fees and the stamp duty on the mortgage as well. If the State is going to carry out the duty that the private financial institution and the moneylender ought to do, namely, that of assisting over a bad year the man who has already borrowed, the least the Government can do is to see that the State is secured in its commendable action.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Nobody on this side wants to see it without security.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Then why the opposition?

Mr. Smith: You would take away the security of the mortgage.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Of what value is the mortgage if the Government do not come to the assistance of the farmer and he is forced to leave his holding? With the assistance of the Government in providing seed wheat and fertiliser, the mortgage is going to be more valuable than if the State remained inactive and allowed the settler to go off the land, in which case the owner of the mortgage, for his own protection, would have to carry out the duty which the Government propose to accept. As to the subject of wheat contracts, I endeavoured by way of question to refer to certain wheat buyers who have lately sent out claims against farmers for the difference between the values of wheat to-day and on the date at which it was sold. In many cases these contracts were entered into at prices of from 3s. 5d. to 3s. 9d. per bushel.

Mr. Smith: Speculative contracts.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It has always been the practice to sell in advance, and the contract forms referred to the grain as being the crop "now growing on the land," but I am assured that this year those words were omitted from the form.

The Premier: What about the speculative buyer who may get a contract, the same as a farmer?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is the point; because the man who has re-sold it outside of Western Australia—

Mr. Smith: Suppose it had been the other way about?

The Premier: There are circumstances which neither can control.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Government propose to give some relief to those settlers, but only as far as concerns the wheat which they cannot supply. If a man has wheat for sale, the Government will compel him to keep his contracts as far as his surplus for sale will go. But why should they do so, in view of the fact that the man who bought it has been relieved by Federal and State enactments from any liability to deliver his

wheat if re-sold outside of Western Australia? Surely in these circumstances it is the duty of the Government to see that the grower of the wheat gets its full market value.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Suppose the buyer of the wheat re-sells to a flour mill operating in the State.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: There may be a few cases of that kind, but we have to deal with a big general principle.

The Premier: You propose to protect him. What are you going to do with the farmer?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: As far as contracts between farmers are concerned, I think most of them will keep their contracts with their neighbours, whether the amendment which I urge is carried or not. If that is the only objection the Premier has to the proposed amendment, I would urge the exemption of contracts between farmers. Let them still stand. But I venture to say that contracts between farmers were not made before the 1st October last and so would not be affected by my proposal. Up till then every farmer thought he had enough seed on his holding, and there was no need for him to arrange to buy from another farmer; and, in respect to contracts made since the effects of the drought became apparent, the progress associations and farmers' associations throughout the State do not wish them to be altered. It is their desire that the contracts entered into between the 1st and the 10th August should be entirely cancelled. In my own electorate agents armed with the knowledge that war had broken out, went round the farms and persuaded the unsuspecting farmers to sell their wheat at the low prices then obtaining. The Government have accepted the principle that relief ought to be given. Why not, then, accept it in full? If they do justice in this direction to the farming community, they will be doing a very fair thing to a worthy section and will be carrying out to some extent the Labour principle of seeing that the producer gets the full value of his product. Existing laws relieve the buyer if he has re-sold outside the State, and in this matter we have a

chance of materially helping the settlers on the land. Another point is in regard to advances to applicants to assist them to pay their land rents. It appears to me a somewhat dangerous principle to use Loan funds provided under the Bill to pay land rents due on unimproved holdings which the settler may hold in connection with his improved farm. Many men have a thousand acres well improved and a thousand acres comparatively unimproved. I do not think Loan funds provided under the Bill should be expended in paying land rents on blocks that in a few months' time might be forfeited. If, however, the House decides against me on that point, I contend that any Loan funds expended on paying the rent on unimproved blocks which are subsequently forfeited should be recouped from Revenue.

The Premier: A very good sentiment, but you cannot legally put it into execution.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am sure the Treasurer will find some way out of the difficulty if he does not wish the Revenue to benefit by any amounts paid on lands forfeited.

Mr. S. Stubbs: There will not be many cases like that.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I think there will be, and I am afraid that in the hands of any future administrators less scrupulous than those we have in power to-day, this provision might be used to advance a lot of Loan money into Revenue by making payments of rents of blocks about to be forfeited.

Mr. Willmott: They put £10,000 of the Coolgardie Water Scheme money to Railway revenue.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am sure the Treasurer will give proper assistance under the Bill. It has been promised throughout the agricultural districts that no farmer will be allowed to leave his holding for want of assistance in respect to seed wheat, fertiliser, wages to farm hands and advances in cash towards putting in the crop and taking it off. It is a big contract and the estimate of £600,000 or £700,000 will, I think, prove short of what will be required if the Government

do what is expected and desired. I urge the Government to make a special duty of this. If they succeed in keeping the people on the land and getting every available cleared acre in the State cropped, given a good season next year the wheat belt, which the member for Bunbury despises, will lift the State out of its present depressed condition on to the high road of prosperity.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The member for Bunbury did not despise it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It appeared to me that he did.

Mr. Willmott: He will alter his tune when the wheat goes through for shipment from Bunbury.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The second and more important question is the patriotic duty of growing as much wheat as possible so that if the unfortunate war continues, we in this State will be able to play our part by having a large quantity of foodstuffs for export.

The Premier: You can only grow wheat when you put in the seed.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Emergency measures have been introduced and I hope the Government will take steps to have them passed, in order that the objective of the Premier may be realised. If the Government rise to the occasion—

The Premier: We have a majority in this Chamber but cannot control another place.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Premier need have no fear regarding the main provisions of this Bill.

The Premier: I am referring to another measure.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If I followed the Premier in that direction I would be out of order. If the Government can see the State through this crisis by giving the settlers the assistance they need—and it is in the interests of the State that this should be done—it will be a lasting memorial to their administration.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [6.2]: I have listened to the very fine sentiments of the member for Williams-Narrogin, and am in accord with them and with his general ideas as to the utility of the Bill. It is only natural that I, as a representative of one portion of the country seriously af-

affected, should be in sympathy with this measure, but there are one or two points to which I wish to draw the attention of members. According to the Press this morning, the Treasurer will gather £300,000 in rents, will be robbing Peter to pay Paul and falsely inflating his revenue. I will leave the Premier to fight that out with his critics, but I would emphasise the matter of rents. In the back country the amounts for rents, interest, fertiliser, seed, fodder and food, will make a pretty heavy burden to place on the settler in one year. To illustrate: at Baandee recently, a settler informed me that during the season before last he received a cheque for £319, the proceeds of his year's work. He handed it to the Seed Wheat Board and the money was more or less fairly apportioned, but he questioned the fairness of the Lands Department taking £60 on account of £122, which was owing for rent, etcetera. There was a balance of £2 14s. 5d., which the board handed to him for spending silver for his wife and grown up family during the balance of the year.

The Premier: They did not take a trip to the old country on it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No, and did not go in for race horses.

The Premier: Some of them have done so.

The Minister for Mines: It is a wonder he did not go to the dogs on that sum.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is unfortunate that the farmer should so often have to ask for assistance, but when he has an opportunity he disburses his money freely. A farm presents a wide open door for the expenditure of money. In regard to the Bill, time is the essence of the contract. The measure should be put into operation as soon as possible. I know that already certain provision has been made for settlers, and during my journeyings recently I was able to give Mr. Sutton and his colleagues some assistance. If the settlers in the back country are to continue their operations, it is important that this measure should be passed immediately. The commission which inquired into the reappraisalment of land values recommended that the maximum price

should be 15s. an acre, that the terms should be rearranged and arrears tacked on to the end of the period. This year the farmer will have a very heavy burden to bear and I consider the burden should be eased somewhat. The departmental officers naturally consider that the rents owing should be paid, but I hope that in Committee a suggestion will be offered which will have the effect of easing the burden. With the general principles of the Bill I agree.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [6.9]: I have pleasure in supporting the Bill. Part 3, providing for assistance to mining and other industries, stipulates that such assistance shall be given if it is not practicable for the applicant to obtain assistance from the ordinary financial channels. I urge that the hewer should have the right to dispose of his sleepers to any buyer. At this particular time, when the timber trade is practically at a deadlock, it is inadvisable to throw any obstacle in the way of the sleeper hewers.

The Minister for Lands: Do you honestly think there is a market for sleepers?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I desire to find out if there is. I have had to listen to the remarks of sleeper cutters all over my electorate, and buyers' agents have repeatedly said they were prepared to purchase large numbers of sleepers.

The Minister for Lands: Who?

Mr. WILLMOTT: I said buyers' agents; I will not mention names. They made definite statements that they were prepared to buy up to 100,000 sleepers.

The Premier: They want to get on to Crown lands again.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There are sufficient private paddocks to supply all demands.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The Government should give these firms a chance to carry out their offers and show whether they are genuine.

The Minister for Lands: Heads I win and tails you lose.

Mr. WILLMOTT: If we do not give these buyers a chance—

The Premier: We will. We have any number of sleepers lying in the bush.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We have 700,000,

Mr. WILLMOTT: Those sleepers are already cut.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not within his rights in discussing that matter on this Bill. I am sorry to embarrass the hon. member, who is new to the House, but this Bill is for the purpose of making advances and granting assistance, and his remarks constitute a general discussion on the sale of sleepers.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Will not sleepers come under "other industries"? By allowing them to be cut, we will be assisting industry.

Mr. SPEAKER: This Bill does not provide for the disposal of sleepers or timber areas as indicated by the hon. member.

The Minister for Lands: You will have an opportunity on the Estimates.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I wish to direct the attention of the Minister for Mines to the fact that the small tin mine at Greenbushes is in a very bad way. The market for base metals has been closed, and this mine is deserving of consideration. In providing huge sums for the assistance of the farmers, we must not overlook the small sums required by the tin miners. These men should not be squeezed out. It will be much better to keep them at Greenbushes than to cause them to come to the city where they may need assistance in the way of free meals. With very slight assistance, these men will be able to remain at Greenbushes and make enough to keep them going.

The Minister for Mines: I offered some months ago to advance but the market opened again and they resumed dealings through the old channels. These have now been closed and I am arranging to advance against their tin right away.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I am glad to hear it. They were foolish not to accept the offer made by the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: They soon came back to me.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes, and they will stick to the Minister this time. These men require protection against the speculator, who is on the lookout to grab the tin as soon as the market opens.

The Minister for Mines: I am even buying bags for them.

Mr. WILLMOTT: If the banks advance on the tin, they require a clause in the agreement stipulating that the tin be sold immediately the market opens. If the Government make the advances, instead of the banks, these miners will be protected. If the banks make the advances there is not the slightest doubt that the speculator will be able to grab the whole of the tin as soon as the market opens.

The Minister for Mines: We can sell to the best advantage when the market opens.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Yes; I hope the Minister will give these tin miners all possible consideration.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—The Colonial Treasurer may supply commodities and make advances:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Up to the present the board concerned in these matters has refused to make any advances to people who had no crop last year. If a man had only 30 or 40 acres in last year, however, he got assistance this year. If, on the other hand, a man carried out the advice of the Agricultural Bank and went on improving his holding and cleared as much as 250 acres he was refused any seed wheat at all. If there had been a good season this latter individual could have gone to his neighbour, who would know that his position was sound and have procured the wheat that he required in that district, but owing to the fact that the season has been a bad one, his credit has become impaired, and he is entirely dependent upon the board for help. I feel sure that the Minister for Lands will recognise that a man with a big area of land prepared for cultivation should be assisted in the way of putting in the crop, and should not be penalised because he did not put in 30 or 40 acres last year.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Have they applied for assistance?

Hon. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes, and have received a curt refusal.

Mr. S. STUBBS: An instance recently came to my knowledge in connection with this matter. There were two settlers in the Kukerin district who started farming side by side about two years ago. Both had large families and were worthy settlers. One took a risk last year and put in 30 acres of crop. The other went on clearing and cleared about 150 acres, but to his mortification his neighbour and not he himself was able to get assistance. I spoke to Mr. Paterson about it, and he said, "I have instructions from the Minister for Agriculture to assist only those farmers whose crops have been a failure. If Parliament or the Government instruct me to grant such assistance I shall be only too glad to do it." There are men in the State who will be seriously affected in this way.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There is nothing, I think, in the Bill to prevent assistance being given to them.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Mr. Paterson says that he cannot grant assistance without instructions to deal specifically with cases of the kind. I should like the Minister either to make an addition to the clause or to give an assurance that the board will deal with applications such as these on their merits.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have received three or four letters from people in farming districts similarly situated to those just referred to. I have also had a letter from one of the inspectors of the Agricultural Bank. From this it appears that owing to the advice given by the inspector to improve their holdings, these settlers were not in a position to go ahead with their crops. If the clause is allowed to stand as it is, the Bill will absolutely prohibit any assistance being given to those who have suffered from climatic conditions. On the other hand, there may be some danger of the Act being abused, for, possibly, many people will come in who are not entitled on their merits to receive assistance. The diffi-

culty may be overcome, if the Minister makes a provision that the Agricultural Bank inspectors, who have local knowledge of those who are bona fide settlers and know the circumstances under which they were placed last season, should vouch for them in this way. If something like this is not done many of the settlers will be deprived of assistance. I believe, however, that the Minister is not prepared to alter the clause, but if it is not altered no one can receive assistance.

The Premier: They were, I suppose, affected by climatic conditions because they were unable to crop successfully.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That may not be the reason in every case. I believe the difficulty can be overcome by the rendering of this assistance by responsible officers of the Agricultural Bank.

The Premier: There might be some clashing between the inspectors of the Agricultural Bank and the board.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not want to see anything of that sort. The inspectors of the Agricultural Bank know every settler in the various districts and those who are worthy of being assisted. These are, therefore, reliable officers to advise the board as to what assistance should be given.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I too have had several of these letters sent to me. In one or two instances the men have been devoting their attention rather to getting as much land cleared as possible, and have only put in a small area of crop. It would be hard for these people not to receive assistance merely because last year they put in most of their time in improving their property. I am sure the Government realise that as much land should be cropped as possible, and that no impediment should be placed in the way of this being done. It has been said in some cases that it was idle to put in crops last year, because there were no railway facilities for carting the produce, and the settlers instead went on clearing their land.

Mr. HARRISON: I too have had requests on similar lines to those which have been mentioned.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Would it not be better to strike out the word "climatic" and insert "adverse conditions?"

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That had just fallen from the lips of the Premier when the hon. member rose. The position is that we must impose some limit. We cannot give the board power to render assistance to everybody who applies; indeed, that position would not be fair to the board. The object of this Bill is to assist those who are suffering as the result of the drought; but people cannot be suffering from the drought unless they had a crop in. Again, the man who has lost 40 acres cannot claim the amount of assistance necessary to put in 300 acres. He will be assisted only to the extent of his actual loss.

Mr. Allen: You want as much land under crop as you can get, do you not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the object of the Bill. Farmers with land under fallow last year have applied to the board and have been refused assistance. Those farmers pointed out that, as a result of the drought, merchants now cannot be as liberal as they were last year. In that way those farmers claim to be sufferers from the drought. I thought it well, however, to limit the scope of advances under the Bill; and that is best done by providing that men who have actually suffered from the drought shall be assisted, but no others. I discussed the position of the farmers I have mentioned with the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank this morning, when the Trustees pointed out the dangers of rendering assistance in such cases. Consequently the Government are prepared to agree to the striking out of the word "climatic," thereby giving the board power to use their discretion. I have instructed the board that every case must be gone into very carefully, because already people are trying to take advantage of this measure; just as endeavours were made three years ago to take advantage of a measure somewhat similar in character. For instance, men with incomes apart from farming, men employed in the city but owning farms, have sought assistance. I am not pre-

pared to assist those men. Indeed, if I tried to do it the Treasurer would soon pull me up with a sharp turn. At the same time, it is not the wish of the Government to penalise men who are genuinely unable to help themselves. Therefore I move an amendment—

That in line 3 the word "climatic" be struck out.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I have two friends in Subiaco, of whom one has been endeavouring for about five years, and the other for about four years, to establish farms, into which they have put every spare penny. Would those men be debarred from obtaining assistance under this Bill by reason of their having small businesses apart from their farms?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In such cases assistance would no doubt be granted.

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

Clause 10—Who may apply for assistance:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As an amendment consequential on that just carried I move—

That after the word "drought" in line 5 there be inserted "or other adverse conditions."

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Colonial Treasurer may grant application:

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Will the Minister explain whether Subclause (d) applies only to the current year's rents, or whether it is intended to secure the payment of all back rents?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill provides that where land is liable to forfeiture owing to non-payment of rents, those rents must be paid.

Mr. James Gardiner: Land is liable to forfeiture for non-payment of rent one month after due date.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. However, a year or two ago the Government began to suspend the collection of land rents, although there is no legal power to suspend collection. Indeed, the Act calls on the Minister for Lands

to forfeit if rents are not paid. A result of the suspension is that the Government have not received interest on the amount of rents unpaid, whilst the holder who pays, but pays late, is charged a heavy interest in the form of a fine.

Mr. James Gardiner: Would the fine be equal to 6 per cent?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Equal to about 10 per cent.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Is it your intention to fine men now in arrears when they do pay up?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. Collection has been suspended for one and two years, and in some cases for three years; but this cannot go on indefinitely. As the leader of the Opposition pointed out the other evening, not only should the back rents be paid, but interest should be charged on them for the time they are outstanding. Under this Bill the affairs of each farmer receiving assistance will be brought into one account, and the Government will know exactly where he stands. The farmer will be placed on a cash basis, but this means a lot of deferred rents will be paid; and they ought to be paid. It would be unfair for myself as Minister for Agriculture to make, without inquiry, advances on certain lands because I know that as Minister for Lands I will not forfeit for non-payment of rents, which I have allowed to drift. On making an advance to a farmer, a banking institution would at once say, "Here is your money, go and pay your land rent." So far as the State is concerned, that has not been done for years. The interest will only start when the Bill passes. There will not be interest charged on the back money. The man who is late in paying, but who ultimately pays, will be charged interest, but the fines will not be enforced.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: There are many settlers who have asked me about crops which are put in on a partnership basis. Will there be assistance granted them?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill does not anticipate that there will be urgent necessity to render assistance in cases of share farming. That kind

of farming in Western Australia is carried on where a man has a big holding, and he lets part of it on the share system with the idea of getting a portion of the crop. In the majority of cases that man is in the position to make advances.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 13, 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Advance to be first charge on land, crops, etc., of settler:

Mr. ROBINSON: I am quite in accord with the need for this clause. I think the Government and the people of the State realise that the time has arrived when assistance should not only be given to farmers or others in distress, but that that assistance should be secured in a proper legal fashion. Up to now where assistance has been given I am not aware of any legislative enactment which has enabled the Government to properly cover itself. In this clause an attempt is made for that purpose. I have heard various hon. members say, particularly the member for Bunbury, that the Government are exceedingly generous in going to the aid of the farmers and giving this assistance. I fail to see where any generosity exists, if the Government in making the advance, step into the shoes and over and above the first mortgage, who for many years may have carried on the farmer through distressing circumstances. In a small country like this the generality of mortgagees are those who have rendered *bona fide* assistance to the farmer, and have helped him to build up his farm and get into the position he finds himself in to-day.

The Premier: By charging him high interest—12 per cent.

Mr. ROBINSON: I know of no such instances of people charging 12 per cent.

The Premier: I will give you numerous instances.

Mr. ROBINSON: I am talking about the generality of cases. We are legislating, not for the man who is charging 12 per cent., but for ordinary cases, and in such cases I see no reason why the Government should take upon themselves to say, "We are generous in giving money to that farmer," and seeing

at the same time that they (the Government) are top dog.

Hon. James Gardiner: How do you suggest it should be done?

Mr. ROBINSON: When the Premier was answering some of the interjections and some of the speeches on the second reading he said they were not interfering with the first mortgagee. I hardly know what the Premier means. If to place one's self in the position above the first mortgagee so that the Government are going to be paid first is not interfering with the first mortgagee, then I do not understand the language. If this clause is passed in its present form any of the advances of capital under paragraphs (a) and (b), and the interest on all advances, that is advances on rents or any other purpose, become a first charge in priority to all other encumbrances, (a) on land, (b) on crops, and (c) on implements. I see no objection, and I do not think anyone else does, that when the Government goes to the aid of a distressed farmer they should be placed in a priority position in respect of crops, implements and live stock, and in respect of all chattels, but I do not think the Government should be placed in a priority position in respect of all mortgages.

Mr. James Gardiner: Assuming I advance on his stock?

Mr. ROBINSON: The man who has advanced on the stock only does that as a last resort. The man first of all gives an advance on the land which is the real security. When the case is hopeless, and he saves the position, let him be paid first.

The Premier: That is our position.

Mr. ROBINSON: The Government are making that a general rule.

The Premier: If it is a hopeless case the mortgagor need not appeal to us.

Mr. ROBINSON: The mortgagor is not going to ask you once you have thrown wide open the doors of the Act. Anyone who is in a fix will go to the Government, who will be flooded with applications.

The Minister for Lands: They are coming in without throwing the doors wide open.

Mr. ROBINSON: If the case is hopeless, and it is hopeless where the stock has been touched, and the position is so involved that no one will advance any business, then if the Government save the position I do not object to them then getting the security. Take the case of a farm which is well worth £7,000, and which has a mortgage on it of £4,000. In these times I defy any man to get on business grounds any more money. He cannot do it. Suppose a man who has advanced that money has advanced it with the best motives in the world, and not at the usurious rates of interest spoken of by the Premier, suppose he is charging five, six, or seven per cent.—

The Premier: Such cases do not exist. Do you ever read the *Trade Gazette*?

Mr. ROBINSON: Thousands of such cases exist. We must take the general rule, and not draw conclusions from isolated instances. If £4,000 is advanced on a £7,000 farm, will anybody say that because the Government come along and advance a couple of hundred of pounds for seeding purposes, the Government should take priority over the man who has carried the farmer along for the last six or seven years, but is unable to carry him any further? Whilst we open the doors so wide to protect the farmers to the fullest, we must realise that those who have advanced their money and helped to carry on the country by legitimate business must be protected also. Only two years ago one could not borrow money anywhere, and the rate of interest went up exceedingly, because there was a dread over the land in respect of certain threatened legislation. If we pass the clause as it stands, it will be impossible to borrow money on farm lands at any rate of interest at all. By doing this the Government will be helping the farmer of to-day, but killing the farmer of to-morrow. I gave the Government credit for coming down with a Bill designed to meet the situation.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are all right, but you do not understand the question.

Mr. ROBINSON: I do not wish to discuss anything with the hon. member.

I desire to discuss it with those who are interested in the welfare of the country and who can dispassionately and argumentatively and intelligently discuss the question, and not in the fashion invariably adopted by the Honorary Minister. Now, in order to meet that case—

The Premier: The Honorary Minister's case?

Mr. ROBINSON: It is impossible to meet his case except when you suppress him, as you did the other night. I wish you would suppress him more frequently. To meet the difficulties that have arisen, I was going to suggest to the Minister in charge of the Bill that he let this particular clause stand over for a couple of days. The clause has not received sufficient discussion. Not every member has realised its far-reaching effects. The Government, no doubt, have been considering the different clauses for some weeks, but it is impossible for hon. members to grasp the full significance of the Bill in a couple of days. I have no wish to do other than than help the Government put Clause 15 into workable shape. I would suggest that the Government permit a small committee of three or four members to discuss the clause with the Solicitor General and get it into more workable shape. Although scarcely satisfied that they represent the best that can be done, I propose to move a couple of amendments. First of all I would suggest that we omit paragraph (a), dealing with the security of lands. Alternatively I would suggest that we leave paragraphs (a), (b), and (c), but provide that any loan which the Government may make shall be taken with other loans already made and be considered a charge on a priority footing with the loans already made as first security on the land.

The Premier: That has been suggested to us long ago.

Mr. ROBINSON: It is not in the Bill.

The Premier: And not likely to get there.

Mr. ROBINSON: I feel sure that the suggestion I have made could be amplified and improved, even to the point of meeting with the approval of the Govern-

ment, if we had a little more time to consider the clause. However, I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) of Subclause 1 be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is impossible to accept the amendment. The hon. member suggests that we advance money for the purpose of putting in a crop and that we be satisfied with the security of the crop without the security of the land. In such a case, the mortgagee, to whose assistance, equally with that of the mortgagor, we are coming, would be in a position to sell the land on which our crop was growing.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Subject to your lien?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We do not anticipate that the advances we are to make will be confined to advances in regard to the crop. Hon. members are forgetting that when we get a lien over the lands concerned the mortgagee will be the Government, in other words, the people. If it were proposed that these powers should be vested in an individual, it certainly would be drastic; but it must be remembered that the powers are to be given to the Government, and not to an individual who is to exercise his functions irrespective of the influence it may have on the welfare of the country. Again, Clause 16 prescribes that while the Treasurer can call up the advances made, he is limited as to how he shall call them up, and must take into consideration the profits made by the mortgagor from the lands charged with such advances. If there is a good crop he can call up a fair amount, but if the crop is a poor one the Treasurer must be influenced by that fact. Again it must be remembered that we are not forcing people to come to us for assistance. If the man who has been carrying on a farmer for some years refuses to carry him any farther, it is reasonable to assume that the security is not too good.

Mr. S. Stubbs: He may not have any more money.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the mortgagee has a sound mortgage over a

property and cannot manage it himself, it is easy to transfer it without much loss.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you tried lately to raise money privately?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I am not prepared to admit that the difficulty experienced in getting money to-day is due solely to the fact that money is tight. Institutions will not advance to-day because the drought has depreciated the property and the prospects of getting the money. When the security is bad we pick the man up, and when we take a doubtful security it is only fair that we should have full control of the man's affairs until we get back what we have advanced. Under Clause 15, while the Treasurer will get a first mortgage, he will be limited as to his exercise of it. He will be able to utilise it to get the interest on the money advanced, and then to obtain what he has advanced under paragraphs (a) and (b) of Clause 9. Under paragraph (a) of Clause 9 he advances for food for the farmer, fodder for his horses, fertiliser and seed wheat, and under paragraph (b) he pays the stud fees for horses. Consequently he is limited to get back what was essential to obtain the crop. Therefore, under Clause 15 he should have the right to secure that which was necessary to create the crop, and having exercised that right, and obtained interest on the money advanced, the Treasurer would have to come in under Clause 21 with other mortgagees. The method of sharing the surplus, over and above the return for the supply of commodities which made the crop, is a matter for argument. The third schedule is the result of an understanding arrived at with the Chambers of Commerce.

Mr. Robinson: Will you submit Clause 15 to the Chambers of Commerce?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. Members in their desire to assist the mortgagee and the Chambers of Commerce forget that they have an obligation to the State.

Mr. Robinson: You were lauding the Chamber of Commerce.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; I said the schedule was inserted after a

conference between the old Seed Wheat Board and the Chambers of Commerce.

Mr. Robinson: It is quite good.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are asked to submit Clause 15 to the Chambers of Commerce because it provides that we shall have a mortgage to get back that which we advance for next year's crop.

Mr. Robinson: Stick to that; it is my amendment.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Get out!

Mr. Robinson: Is the Honorary Minister in order in addressing the remark "Get out" to me? I object to it. I am not accustomed to it and will not stand it.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not hear the remark but all interjections are disorderly and if objection is taken I must stop them once for all. An interjection which will assist to bring out information is always welcome, but interjections which insult, or do not throw any light on the question must be put down. I shall have to stop them all in future unless this rule is followed.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): If the hon. member takes it as an insult, I will withdraw it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We could not submit Clause 15 to the Chambers of Commerce, but I am informed that when discussing the matter of the distribution of the surplus they agreed that the first charge on the crop would be the cost of putting it in.

Mr. Robinson: Quite so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member thinks we are trying to get too much security.

Mr. Robinson: You want to take the security on the land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It does not matter what security we have so long as the Government do not get back more than they are entitled to. If the right to exercise the security were unlimited, there might be some reason for the objection; but there is a limitation.

Mr. Wisdom: You are not limited in your advances; that is the point.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, but the Government are limited in the matter of collection and repayment. The advances will be made under Clause 9, and there is no limit provided so long as the board are satisfied that the security justifies the advance.

Mr. Wisdom: But you take the whole of the security.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is true we take absolute security, but it does not matter so long as we are limited as to the amount we get in return. If we did not put in the crop there would be no surplus, but the fact that we put in the crop makes it possible that in a normal season there will be a big surplus over what we advance, and instead of doing the mortgagee harm we shall be doing him good. If we did not step in there would be no surplus and he would get nothing next year. With the assistance we render, however, he will, granted the season is normal, have an absolute guarantee of some return. If the Treasurer could exercise his security to get back all he advanced, the mortgagee would have a complaint. In the circumstances, I cannot understand the opposition.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The South Australian measure was introduced under similar circumstances and it contains an even more drastic clause.

The Minister for Lands: It covers all lands there.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Yes, irrespective of the lands mentioned in this Bill, the man loses his right in all lands. I wish to hear the clause debated to see if we can possibly conserve two interests. The member for Canning would conserve only one interest.

Mr. Robinson: Certainly not.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The hon. member appears to be more concerned about the position of the mortgagee. There are hundreds of people whom mortgagees cannot assist, and we are going to help them. There are plenty of people who have no additional funds to advance and yet might have an admirable security. Are the men concerned to get off the land

because they got no crops last year, and cannot carry on?

The Premier: And perhaps both will be losers in consequence.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: This is the mortgagee's position if he cannot go any further: in the event of the man not keeping up his payments, the mortgagee has to sell the holding. He may eventually have to take it at the amount of his mortgage, but if he leaves it unoccupied the holder goes off and the security depreciates. The member for Canning wishes to strike out paragraph (a) and rely on paragraph (b) as the security for these advances. If the amount of the advance is not realised, who will pay?

Hon. J. Mitchell: The mortgagee, I suppose.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: If so, there can be no objection, but are the Government to bear the loss?

The Premier: They want us to.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We do not.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: If not, who will bear the loss? Will it be a charge on the property? The mortgagee cannot advance any more money because he has not got it, and the man cannot crop his land because he has not the wherewithal. The Government say they are prepared to crop it. It might help if the mortgagee gave his consent, and permitted the Government to take priority. Is a man to go off his land, and is the mortgagee's security to be depreciated as a result, or are the Government to step in and say they are only going to take security over the crop; and if it does not realise the amount advanced the general taxpayer has to pay? If the Government are going to take that stand, when we come to criticise State steamers and other services of the kind what position shall we be in? If one class of the community says that the Government shall bear the loss, who is to pay the loss if there is one?

Mr. Wisdom: The philanthropist.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Do not be childish. One is continually drawing attention to silly interjections from that side of the House. I do not want to interfere with the mortgagee.

The Minister for Mines: They have no answer to your question.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Are we going to let the land go out of cultivation because the mortgagee cannot advance any more, and because the man cannot carry on, or are we to go to his assistance? In my opinion the very inclusion of that clause has made a vast deal of difference in the policy.

Mr. Munsie: That has been proved during the last few days.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: If we are only going to take security over the crop, of course the mortgagee will give his consent to the advance upon it. We shall have every class of security going to the Government and the mortgagees saying "We are taking no risk, the Government are putting in the crop for us, and we are sitting on our security all along." That is the position if we follow the amendment of the member for Canning. It is a shocking thing for us to have to interfere where the security, so far as we have ever recognised it in the past, is absolute. To a certain extent we are protecting the mortgagee. If a man has not anything to carry on with, he has nothing to pay interest with. I believe the member for Northam says that there will be no risk in taking a mere security over the crop. If there is no risk in taking this security the mortgagee is not taking any risk. The *West Australian*, with a characteristic desire to report me very carefully, faithfully missed out a very important connecting word in my remarks on the second reading. I said, "As the hon member for Northam says, there will be no risk in this."

Hon. J. Mitchell: I said there must be some risk.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Then if there is no risk attached to it, there is no risk to the mortgagee. If this crop realises nothing what does its priority of claim represent? Assuming that we advance £300—for that will be about the average of the advances—if we get no crop at all the mortgagee is not injured. Assuming that £150 has been lent as a second mortgage, what happens? We place the Government in the position of first mortgagee, but collectively take the first and second mortgage and say that

the property, instead of standing at £500 as with the first mortgage, has now got to realise £650. Acting conjointly that would be the position. The second mortgagee would have to protect that property, and the loss is between the realisation of the crop and the responsibility. We have to evolve from this something which gives a man the right to cultivate and make his living, and protects the Government and alike the mortgagee. There are two things that govern me when lending money, the rainfall being one material factor, and the margin being the other. In the majority of cases there is a 50 per cent. margin, and most of the money I have lent has been at six or seven per cent.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Most of the money which has been lent out in the State.

The Premier: Nobody else can get it for that.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The mortgagee is protected to the extent that this difference would not materially affect that as a marketable security. I do think we ought to make provision for a consultation with the mortgagee, and for getting his consent.

The Premier: If you make the condition that if he does not agree we do not go any further.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I was going to say that this would be the position if he did not agree. There are plenty of men who never get into any better position even with a mortgage. In many instances the mortgagee may say, "You are injuring my security and you are not improving the land." If the Government are satisfied that the mortgagee will not do anything I would not even have his consent.

The Premier: The mortgagee then has only to do what we propose should be done.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The mortgagee wants to sit tight on this. Assuming that the Government do put in the crop and the man is in arrears in his interest, what is to prevent the mortgagee from selling the place over his head? He has certain rights under his mortgage.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We would have a lien over his crop.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: A lien over the crop can be of little use when the man has a right to the fee simple. It will not protect freehold land.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No one said it would, but it protects the crop.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: It is not so. If the mortgagor has not paid his interest and someone else chooses to go along and put a crop in that the mortgagee can sell, the property cannot be protected by the lien, unless some legislative enactment is brought down to enable this to be done. It would have to be done by a special Act.

Mr. Robinson: I have a special amendment to deal with that.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Something has to be done. So long as it is clearly understood exactly where we are in this matter I am willing to support anything that will enable the mortgagee to be protected as well as the Government and enable the mortgagor to put in a crop so that the land shall not remain idle in the State.

Mr. NAIRN: I support the member for Canning in his desire to see that justice is done between the two parties. I gather that the problem we are endeavouring to solve is not one as to which of these two interested persons is going to predominate, but as to how it will be possible, by some method, to bring their interests together in such a manner that they will not conflict. The member for Irwin made a statement with regard to the member for Canning, in which he said that Mr. Robinson only had the mortgagee in his mind. I think that was distinctly unfair, and the statement could not be corroborated by the words which fell from the hon. member. He was most emphatic in saying that if the clause was carried as it stood it would be providing for the farmers of to-day at the expense of the farmers of to-morrow, showing that it was the final result of this clause which was in the mind of the hon. member at the time. I think we might be reasonably sure that in some instances there are going to be failures, and that where there are failures there is going to be a

loss. It is not possible to conceive that the whole of the advances which it is proposed should be made by the department will have the result that is so much desired, and that every person, who has seed wheat or some other service rendered to him, is going to get back the full measure of that which he put into the land. It is in these instances where failures are bound to arise that we should endeavour as far as possible to conserve our powers. Under this clause the interests of the Government alone are protected, while those of the mortgagee are lost sight of entirely. In the case of failure of crop the first mortgagee's security would be correspondingly reduced. The suggestion of the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner), is one I had in my mind during the whole debate, as providing a way out of the difficulty, namely by obtaining the consent of the mortgagee.

The Minister for Lands: In every case we get the written consent of the mortgagee.

Mr. NAIRN: It is a pity the Minister has left it to this late hour to tell us that. I am not prepared to maintain that the consent of the mortgagee should be absolutely indispensable; the point should, in the last resort, be left to the decision of the board. In most cases, no doubt, the mortgagee as well as the landholder will agree to accept the generous terms of the Government.

The PREMIER: I wish to point out to the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) what, no doubt, he already knows, that something of the same nature as here proposed is done in connection with marine insurance, by means of what is known as a bottomry bond.

Mr. Robinson: I agree, provided you tell me that the case here is hopeless.

The PREMIER: The Government ought not to be called upon to render assistance under the Bill unless the case is, in fact, hopeless. By this clause we propose merely to take in the interests of the public the same powers as already obtain under the law of bottomry bond in the case of a distressed ship.

Mr. Robinson: A bottomry bond applies only to services and supplies for

the want of which the ship would be lost.

The PREMIER: That is exactly the case here. Without this assistance the farmer would be lost. Therefore we must take a possessory lien over the farm.

Mr. Robinson: Is that a law book you are quoting from?

The PREMIER: *Greene's Law of Personal Property.*

Mr. Robinson: I hope your law is better than your finance.

The PREMIER: It evidently needs someone without knowledge of law to teach the member for Canning law, unless that hon. member has come here, as member for Canning, to protect the interests of the mortgagee, and not of the public.

Mr. ROBINSON: I think the Premier should withdraw that remark. He is imputing to me a motive that is wrong. I ask him to withdraw the observation in an honourable way. I did not come here with any motive of protecting the mortgagee. Both the mortgagee!

The CHAIRMAN. The member for Canning desires that the remark should be withdrawn.

The PREMIER: I made no such observation. What I said was "Unless the hon. member came here with the idea of protecting the mortgagee." The hon. member adopts a peculiar attitude in moving a specific amendment designed to protect the mortgagee.

Mr. Robinson: I am doing nothing of the kind.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Country party has clearly pointed out that at the present time many mortgagees have not the wherewithal to render further assistance. Any mortgagee who has the wherewithal and objects to this clause may render further assistance, and thereby avoid being affected by this provision. If, however, the mortgagee cannot carry on the mortgagor, someone else must do it; and the State proposes to do it. The member for Canning suggests that the State should advance three-quarters of a million of

money on the security of next year's crop. Now, a mortgagee, being well aware of the value of his security, and knowing that foreclosure would involve him in loss, might allow a crop to be put in by means of State assistance and then proceed to foreclose when a good harvest is assured; that is, unless we provide this necessary protection for the State.

Mr. Robinson: Put in a clause to stop that.

The PREMIER: All we want is to have a security over the farm until such time as the cost of the necessities which the State provides will have been repaid. We are not asking for priority over all other mortgages or other claims, until everything due to the Government shall have been paid. A reference to Clause 9 proves that. Subclauses (a) and (b) show to what extent the Government ask priority. Under this Bill the farmer will be placed on a proper financial basis, on a cash basis.

Mr. Smith: Suppose the farmer were not able to meet his repayments and the Government had to sell the farm?

The PREMIER: That would not matter to the State. To the State it is utterly indifferent whether Jim Jones or Harry Brown works the farm. The Government do not know the individual in this connection, but only the farming industry. For the purposes of this Bill, the Government would have no right to make advances as under ordinary conditions, because that is already being done through the Agricultural Bank. We are actually saving the first mortgagee, in many instances, by this measure. The State has no object in dealing harshly with its citizens, though there may be such an object in the case of a money lender. There is no danger in the clause. We gave it more consideration than all the other clauses in the measure combined because we were desirous of doing what was a fair thing to the mortgagee, the farmer and the State. If we modify it we shall be acting harshly to all concerned. Our desire is to be fair to all.

Mr. HARRISON: The mortgagor has put in 12 months of fallow to advance his security, but what has the mortgagee done to advance the security? If he is in the position to carry over the farmer the Government will not step in at all. Are we going to baulk and lose the small percentage who will not be able to carry through on the feeling that the next season is going to be a total failure? We have experienced bad seasons, and surely we are going to have better. Why, therefore, should we baulk at this kind of thing? As individual farmers we will all see that the privilege is not abused. If we work and do our level best and the climatic conditions favour us, the majority will be able to wipe out in the next year the advances made by the Government.

[Mr. McDowall took the Chair.]

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In this calling, as in every other, we have not only the question of the value of the property to consider, but the man who is working it.

The Minister for Works: No one knows that better than Mr. Paterson and Mr. Sutton.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I suppose they are suffering in the various departments for that very reason. A point that struck me in the debate was that every member, including the Minister, seemed to form the opinion that we are going to get through this huge transaction without loss. The question was that the Government must be protected against all loss, and that they would be able to carry it through successfully. I do not take that view. I take the view that we are out now under exceptional circumstances to assist an industry, not individuals, which is of vital importance to the prosperity and progress of the State, and in giving that assistance we are bound to make some loss. If we have another drought, who will pay the loss? The State will, and we are making this provision with the due knowledge that we are taking some risk and that we shall

certainly have some loss. The whole debate points to the conclusion in my opinion that we would have been wise to have adopted the suggestion of the member for Northam to submit the Bill to a select committee. Evidently the Minister has had some consultation, at any rate in regard to the third schedule, with an outside body, the Chamber of Commerce, and there is no reason why he should not.

The Minister for Lands: The wheat board had a conference with the chamber.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It amounts to the same thing. It is essential that Ministers should consult with outside bodies whenever they think they can get useful information. I should have been very happy indeed if the Minister had seen his way clear to refer the Bill to a select committee, giving them a time limit in which to take evidence calmly around a table from the class of people capable of giving advice on the different phases of the measure. Then the committee could have framed amendments which could have been adopted right away. The fear of the member for Canining who suggested the several amendments is that we may damage the credit of borrowers in the State by giving the Government unlimited power to make advances for certain purposes and take the whole security. We want to preserve the credit of the State and the credit of the individual as far as we can. It is refreshing to hear from the Minister for Lands that there is a great deal of money to be lent on good security. Then the member for Irwin remarked that there were hundreds of mortgagees who could not advance any more money. We know that money is scarce.

The Premier: It is not; the demand is greater.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is always the same amount of gold in the world, but it ebbs and flows like the tide, and at the present time there is a difficulty in finding money even on good security. We are entitled to consider the man who has already put his money into these estates, and to see that he gets fair play when we are making provision

to carry on a farm during next season. I have every hope that there will be a surplus next year, but I feel sure that in many instances we shall have to suffer a loss. I know that the mortgagees will have to suffer a loss, and the State also will have to put up with a reasonable loss.

The Premier: Oh, no.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There must be some loss in transactions of this description when we are helping a large body of men who find themselves in a difficult position.

The Minister for Lands: We are not advancing to everyone.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Even then we are bound to have some loss, and it is just as well to understand that. I realise that the Government should have first security for all the assistance it is going to give. A solution of the difficulty might be found in the suggestion of the Minister, that the mortgagees who have advanced money already on farming propositions shall be consulted by the department.

The Minister for Lands: We are doing that to-day, and consequently have no objection to putting it into practice.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The one desire is to see that securities are not undermined, and that credit is maintained, and that all concerned get a fair deal. I would have preferred the Government taking priority of claim against advances made under paragraphs (a) and (b) and that they should have ranked equal with any existing mortgage on the property. I would have preferred an amendment in that direction.

The Minister for Lands: You would have to do that under Clause 21.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That would bring about a better feeling, and would do a lot to retain confidence and credit.

The Premier: That is the Bill now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier argues that for the purpose of the Bill every title should be a clean one. To my thinking he should make it possible for any individual with money to lend to lend on equal conditions with the Gov-

ernment. Clause 9 provides that advances may be made for a variety of purposes. We are asked to legislate in such a way that the Government can advance for all these purposes at the expense of the mortgagee. But it is wrong to lay violent hands on the security of those people who have already advanced money. After having previously encouraged them to lend we are now asked to say that their security shall be set aside. It would be possible for the Government to advance for the purchase of horses, machinery, food, seed and a number of other purposes, a sum which, if the crop proved a failure, would jeopardise the security of the original mortgagee. It is unnecessary that the Government should insist upon so much security. It should be sufficient if they took a lien over the crop, in addition to which they can have a second mortgage. We have to meet exceptional circumstances by taking exceptional risks. There are bound to be some losses, but the State would lose far more if it did not provide reasonable assistance. The clause would make it very difficult for farmers to borrow in the future, and would be doing a positive wrong to those who have already loaned on farm lands. If it is wrong for the Agricultural Bank to have a second mortgage, surely it is wrong to compel the mortgagee of to-day to accept a second mortgage at the dictation of the board.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As the result of discussion between members on both sides an understanding has been arrived at by which the Government will continue to do what they have been doing, namely, consult the mortgagee before coming to the assistance of the mortgagor. Up to date this has been done in every case. It is now suggested that an amendment be made guaranteeing to Parliament that we shall continue to consult the mortgagee. In order that the wording of the amendment may be perfected, it is proposed that we postpone the clause. The Premier agrees that we may pass the clause on the understanding that it will be re-committed for the purpose of amendment by the

addition of a proviso somewhat in this form—

Provided that where a mortgage already exists on the lands sought to be charged, the board shall notify the mortgagee at his registered address of the intended advance, whereupon the mortgagee may make the advance and add the sum to his security. If the mortgagee fails to make the advance within seven days, the advance may be made by the board and shall be a first charge as before stated.

That is perpetuating what we are already doing, and there is no objection to it except that its form is capable of improvement. We propose, therefore, to pass the clause and re-commit it for the amendment.

Mr. ROBINSON: Why not leave the clause until we meet again? As the result of further consideration we may be able to considerably improve the amendment. I suggest that the clause be postponed until next sitting day.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We desire to make progress. If we postpone the clause, we will have a repetition of many of the speeches listened to to-night. It means delay. Until the Bill becomes law the Government cannot go on advancing, except in restricted manner. The better way is to pass the clause and re-commit it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the Minister had explained as much in the beginning I would have had no criticism to oppose to the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: I previously pointed out that we only came in when the mortgagee refused to do so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister says he will consult the mortgagee before making an advance. If he intends to do that, I will withdraw my support from the amendment—indeed, I feel sure the amendment would not have been moved had the Minister declared his intentions earlier.

Mr. ROBINSON: In view of the statement of the Minister accepting an amendment which has been drafted, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 16, 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Provisions of the Act to apply where commodities have already been supplied:

Mr. ROBINSON: Will the Minister explain precisely what he means by this clause?

The Minister for Lands: It makes the measure retrospective to legalise what we have done.

Mr. ROBINSON: Only for advances in respect to this matter?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. ROBINSON: How far back does the Minister want to go?

The Minister for Lands: In October I think we started.

Mr. ROBINSON: To the advances made by this very board?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. ROBINSON: I have no objection to that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The words in the clause do not justify that statement.

The Premier: When was the form contained in the second schedule drawn up?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Probably two or three years ago. The Minister might go back 10 years if he pleases.

The Minister for Lands: I have told you the intention and if you do not believe me, I do not care.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The point is, there is nothing in the clause to show that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause does not mean what the Minister says it does.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You mean the Minister is a liar.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will name someone presently.

Mr. Bolton: Good God!

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The member for Northam said distinctly the clause did not mean what the Minister contended it did.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I shall have to take some action if this sort of thing recurs. You said, "Good God!"

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I did not.

The CHAIRMAN: You did.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What you say is incorrect. I did not use the expression.

Mr. Bolton: It was I who made use of the expression.

The CHAIRMAN: I am very sorry I attributed it to the member for Subiaco. I heard the expression and it was not seemly when I was endeavouring to maintain order.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Under this clause the Government will take security for everything advanced at any time. The intention expressed by the Minister should be clearly stated in the clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 19, 20, 21—agreed to.

Clauses 22—Register to be kept for inspection:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The method of registering lands to be accounted first mortgages is to be by a record kept in one of the Government departments. This will be a faulty way of registering important documents. We already have the necessary machinery to register securities of this nature, and it should be used. It could be employed without expense as readily as by writing up a book in the Department of Agriculture.

The Attorney General: This is a simplification and will obviate the need for going from office to office, using stamps, &c.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The regulation fee and stamp might be done away with and still the proper authority could register the documents.

The Attorney General: It is an agricultural matter and it is more convenient to have it in the office of that department.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister should reconsider his determination in this regard.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 23—Relief to farmers from contracts for the supply of wheat for future delivery:

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: This matter has occasioned considerable concern in the farming districts, owing to contracts having been entered into at very low prices, mostly during the few days immediately after the declaration of war.

The Minister for Works: They are contracts and should be kept.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yet the Minister is supporting a Government measure which provides for the cancellation of a large number of them. I am glad the Bill proposes a large measure of relief to the people who were the victims of early contracts, many of which were obtained by a species of misrepresentation. I desire to have this clause deleted and the following inserted in lieu:—

Relief from Contracts—No action or other proceeding shall be brought or continued against any person for the performance of any contract made before the first day of October, One thousand nine hundred and fourteen, for the sale of wheat, flour, pollard, or bran, or for the recovery of damages for the breach of any such contract; and the provisions of this section shall be a sufficient defence to any such action whether commenced before or after the passing of this Act.

Mr. Bolton: That is an absolute repudiation of all contracts.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: A cancellation of all contracts for wheat entered into before the 1st October. It extends to flour, bran, and pollard, because the Commonwealth enactment prohibiting the export of flour from Australia has already given relief to the local buyer who purchased for export outside the Commonwealth. The amendment is intended to give relief to the miller of this State, who, before the 1st October, entered into a contract for the resale of wheat and expected to be able to deliver. The member for North Perth earlier in the day asked what about contracts between farmers. There is no reason why contracts between neighbours should be interfered with. My amendment will not affect them. Up to October the farmers expected good crops and only since then have they entered into contracts with their more fortunate neighbours for seed wheat. The amendment will do no injustice to any person in the State.

The Premier: It will cancel bona fide contracts between farmers.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No; they have been entered into since the 1st October. If the Minister prefers to make the date a month earlier I will accept it.

The Minister for Lands: You will have to accept less than that.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is a matter for the Committee to decide.

Mr. E. E. Heitmann: It sets up an extraordinary standard of business morality.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The hon. member supports the Government in cancelling most of the contracts, and I wish to give relief to the small man as well as to the big man.

The Premier: We are not cancelling any under this Bill.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The producer should get full value for his produce. The advantage of the Federal cancellation should go in to the pockets of those who produced the wheat, and not into the pockets of the agents who made contracts. As a matter of fact the man who entered into most of the contracts, the poor struggling farmers a long way from a railway, are the men who want relief. All sections of the farming community are pretty well agreed upon that point. Requests for the amendment I have moved have come from various progress associations and branches of the Farmers and Settlers' Associations. This amendment proposes to deal with the people most of whom had entered into contracts in ignorance that a war had broken out.

The Premier: If the war had broken out and we had had an ordinary season this measure would never have been introduced.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Residents of the agricultural districts desire this larger measure of relief, and even so important a body as the Northam Agricultural Society passed a resolution in favour of this particular amendment. Support has come for it also from dozens of quarters, both from the old established and the newly-established centres. The Government have an opportunity of showing the people that they can derive benefit from the action of the Commonwealth Govern-

ment in prohibiting the export of wheat from Australia, rather than of helping the agent who by underhand means got the contracts in most cases between the 1st and the 12th August.

Mr. Heitmann: Many agents only took the means which you would take yourself.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I deny that altogether.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I regret that my disorderly friend from Cue has led me off the track. I urge upon the Government to give this relief to the farming community, to see that the men who grew the wheat and have had so little as a result of their work at any rate get the ruling market price, rather than that the agent should be allowed to have the benefit of the increased price.

The CHAIRMAN: There is some little difficulty in regard to the Notice Paper. We cannot go back on a clause. Mr. E. B. Johnston's amendment affects the whole clause, for it proposes to strike it out. The Minister for Lands has, however, an amendment which provides for a new subclause, and I think this must be debated first. After the amendment of the Minister for Lands is added I shall put the clause as amended and the hon. member for Williams-Narrogin can then proceed with his amendment.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I feel sure that the Minister for Lands will allow this to be discussed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have been waiting for the hon. member to sit down to point out that we will have to deal with my amendment, which appears on the Notice Paper, before we deal with his amendment. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause 6:—"Every purchaser under a contract in respect of which relief is granted under this section, and every sub-purchaser under him, may claim relief from their obligations under contracts of sale made by them so far as they are unable to perform

such contracts in consequence of relief afforded under subsection (4) of this section; and in any action or other proceeding against any such purchaser or sub-purchaser for the performance or for damages for the non-performance of contracts of sale made by them, the court shall give effect to this subsection by granting relief to the same extent from the obligations under such contracts."

The object of the amendment is to meet the point raised by the hon. member for Canning. I did not think that there were any of these matters which called for special consideration under this clause, but the hon. member has pointed out that there is quite a number of re-sales by those who had purchased originally from the farmers and that consequently it would be unfair to leave them to the mercy of damages if we said that the farmer was not forced to supply the produce under the contract. The hon. member consulted with the Solicitor General and this amendment has been agreed upon. It has for its object the protection of the sub-contractor who has resold wheat that he bought from the farmer.

Mr. ROBINSON: The subclause is drafted by the Solicitor General and myself in conjunction to get over the difficulty which I pointed out, but it occurs to me that it does not go far enough even now. Section 23 only deals with the contract between the farmer and the purchaser. I pointed out that the purchaser may have sold to another, and he to another. This clause is drafted to get over that difficulty. I now observe that there is another difficulty. The clause reads that the purchaser may only get that relief corresponding to the relief, or to the same extent as that, granted to the farmer. If a farmer had contracted to supply 2,000 bags and he was only able to supply 1,800 and got relief for the 200, the purchaser would get relief to the extent of one-tenth of the contract on his sale to the next man, and the next man would get relief of one-tenth on his sale to the next man. I see another difficulty which we should get over in the interests of the farmer and the man following

him. A farmer has to make application. Supposing a farmer says, "I have lost my crop and I am not going to make any application." There should be some means to permit the purchaser or sub-purchaser to go before the court and make application. If the Minister in charge agrees to it I can easily recast the subclause with the Solicitor General in the morning.

The Attorney General: It is not too difficult to do to-night. All you want to do is to make provision for the sub-purchaser to apply as in the case of the farmer.

Mr. ROBINSON: The clause is, I think, cleanly drafted now. I do not want to interfere with the draftsmanship of it by putting in words in some place or other, which may necessitate further alterations lower down. If the Attorney General will give me a moment or two we might be able to manage it between us.

The Minister for Mines: It might be classed as hasty legislation in another place.

Mr. ROBINSON: Then let us not give them the opportunity.

Mr. Bolton: The only way to stop them is to get rid of them.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: May I suggest that we could amend the new subclause by inserting after "may" in the third line the following words: "in like manner apply for and."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think it would be best to pass this clause and recommit. The suggestion of the Attorney General would give the man who has resold an opportunity of applying. As the member for Canning has pointed out, the farmer might not apply, and consequently the other party should have an opportunity of applying.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I do not know whether the Minister has forgotten my proposed amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hoped the hon. member was asleep. A good deal of printing will be saved if my amendment is withdrawn and the Bill is recommitted. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 24—Power to make or guarantee advances to persons engaged in mining and other industries:

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: What do the Government intend doing under this clause? It appears to contemplate something outside the Mines Development Act.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The object of the clause is to legalise what has already been done and to permit, possibly, of something more being done. The Minister for Mines has made advances or given guarantees in connection with tin-mining and lead-mining.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 25—agreed to.

Clause 26—Accounts and Audit:

Mr. ROBINSON: This being an emergency Bill intended to meet an impending trouble which we hope will soon be gone, we should see the accounts once every quarter.

The PREMIER: That would involve a great deal of work. As regards accounts, this Bill makes more stringent provisions than are to be found in any other Act of the Parliament of Western Australia.

Mr. ROBINSON: The advances will all be made during the next three or four months.

The Premier: The thing may carry on for three or four years.

Mr. ROBINSON: All the more reason why we should have the accounts at the end of every three months. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause 1 the word "year" be struck out, and "quarter" inserted in lieu.

The PREMIER: The Auditor General's Department from day to day, and even from hour to hour, audits all the accounts in the public service; but there is a vast difference between providing that proper accounts shall be kept, and providing for the public presentation of audited accounts every quarter. In many cases accounts would not be operated on more than once in twelve months. One would think the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) believed that every officer required the Auditor General constantly at his back to see that he did his work honestly. In any case the accounts are

published quarterly in the *Government Gazette*; and the hon. member ought to know that that is as much as can be expected.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I support the amendment. The accounts should be audited and published every quarter. I wish to deprecate, as far as I am able, the warmth and the language of the Premier, and his habit of ascribing ulterior motives to any member who dares to propose something which does not meet with the hon. gentleman's approval. It is perfectly feasible to have these accounts produced every quarter. Indeed, if transactions under this measure are to be properly controlled they will have to be written up every day in the books.

[The Chairman resumed the Chair.]

Mr. James Gardiner: Is the hon. member suggesting that the accounts be audited once a quarter?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The member for Canning desires a quarterly statement. However, I am merely deprecating the warmth shown by the Premier.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I do not want to create a new department for auditing these accounts. Is there any other Government department which has to present these audited accounts quarterly?

The Premier: You cannot make a quarterly statement unless you audit every single account.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 27, 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Regulations:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That Subclauses 3 and 4 be struck out.

These subclauses are superfluous. There is no need for such a provision, and I cannot understand why the Parliamentary draftsman perpetuates it.

Mr. ROBINSON: Do I understand that the portion the Minister desires to leave in is that which is ordinarily adopted to deal with regulations? The draftsman seems to have gone out of his way to put in special subclauses that I

have never seen in any Act of Parliament.

The Premier: All this is covered by the Interpretation Act.

The Minister for Lands: It is superfluous to put these subclauses in, because the Interpretation Act outlines what shall be done.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to

Schedules 1, 2—agreed to.

Schedule 3:

Mr. S. STUBBS: This schedule is the outcome of some suggestions made by the Chamber of Commerce, but I do not see any provision there for assisting persons who have stood by farmers for years. Would it not be as well to include them?

The Minister for Lands: We are paying the storekeeper.

The Premier: Have you no security?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yes, a second mortgage.

The Premier: Then you come under Clause 3.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I certainly think they should be put in a position higher than seventh on the list.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The schedule is drafted to protect those men. It is not provided that all down to No. 6 shall get everything they are entitled to. They are to get a proportion only.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Why not put the storekeeper on the same footing as the machinery merchant?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because we are paying cash to the storekeeper and saying to the machinery man, "You leave the machinery on the farm and allow us to use it in taking off the crop." It is only fair that we should then say to him, "We will give you some little payment in regard to the machinery." The schedule limits everyone else to a proportion of what he is entitled to. It is protecting the storekeeper by limiting the amounts the others are to get.

Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 19th January, 1915.

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

PAPER—ESPERANCE DISTRICT MAP.

In laying on the Table a map of the Esperance district, the COLONIAL SECRETARY said: It will no doubt be interesting to hon. members to ascertain from this map the extent of the area from which the Registrar General obtains his returns. Various hon. members have commented on the point during the last few sittings of the House.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Map of Esperance district. 2, Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department, amendment of by-laws. 3, Timber tramway permit issued to Sons of Gwalia Mine, Limited. 4, Workers' Homes Acts 1913 and 1914, regulations.

MOTION—WHALING LICENSE, TO DISALLOW.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS (Metropolitan) [4.37]: I move—

That the lease from the Government to the "Aktieselskabet Australia" be disallowed.

I take this action on three grounds. The first ground is that the license has been granted to the company without proper consideration, and that if it was intended to grant such a license it should have