

AYES	
Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. W. Kingsmill
Hon. F. Connor	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. M. Sewell
Hon. J. Duffell	(Teller).

NOES.	
Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)
Hon. J. J. Holmes	

Question thus negatived.

*House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 18th November, 1915.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTION — WHEAT HARVEST, ARRANGEMENTS FOR HANDLING.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture: Whether he can make a statement to the House with regard to the arrangements made for the handling of the harvest so that the producers and others

interested may know exactly what they have to look forward to.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I quite recognise that things are somewhat unsatisfactory owing to the fact that the harvest is now being reaped and the farmers are not in a position to know definitely what is going to happen. For that the Government are not responsible. The work of formulating the scheme was not completed in Melbourne when it became necessary for me to return to this State, and the best I could do was to leave Mr. Sutton, who had accompanied me, in Melbourne to assist in finally completing the details of the scheme. Since then I have been in close touch with Mr. Sutton. The conference is still sitting, it is sitting to-day. Until the work is completed it will be impossible for me to make a definite statement in regard to it. This morning the matter was considered by Cabinet, when the Premier pointed out the necessity for the making of a statement so as to relieve the existing uncertainty. It was then decided that I should notify the Chamber that in the event of the House not being sitting at the time the completed scheme came to hand we would call members together in order to explain the scheme, or alternatively, if that could not be done, I should make a statement through the Press.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I assume the Minister is not yet in a position to judge whether legislation will be necessary. It may be necessary for us to pass some machinery Bill in connection with the scheme when it is decided upon. I suppose the Minister is not in a position to say anything about that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It may be considered necessary to pass legislation. Only this morning I wired to Mr. Hughes, pointing out that in Western Australia we had no machinery—we had the machinery until another place removed it—and that the only way we can put the scheme into operation will be by Federal action. I have explained to Mr. Hughes that if any legislative action becomes necessary the Com-

monwealth will have to provide it, because we have no power to acquire wheat other than that for export—we are controlling the shipping—no power in respect to the local consumption.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This matter is of such serious importance to every one concerned in this State that it may be advisable for us to delay the prorogation, to adjourn for a week or so if it is thought that it will be necessary to put through legislation. I think we shall require some legislation, and I am of opinion that it will not be advisable to leave it to the Federal Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Personally, I do not think any legislative action will be necessary, because the Flour Millers' Association have voluntarily agreed to work under the scheme. If they voluntarily work under the scheme, no other action will be necessary.

Mr. Thomson: What is the scheme?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The details have not yet been finalised.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You will probably hear further from Melbourne this evening?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope to.

#### QUESTION — FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST, ANNUAL REPORT.

Mr. CARPENTER (without notice) asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood): Has the last annual report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners yet come to hand, and if so will he lay it on the Table?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The report has not yet come to hand, or at least I have not come across it. I regret having forgotten to ask the Colonial Secretary, at the request of the hon. member, for the report.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood): 1, Report of the Chief

Harbour Master for the year ending 30th June, 1915. 2, Amendment of Food and Drug Regulations, 1913-15. 3, By-laws under "The Health Act, 1911-12," of the municipal councils of Albany and Cottesloe and of the Meekatharra local authority. 4, Port Regulations—amendment of No. 45. 5, Regulation under "The Jetties Regulation Act, 1878." 6, Resolution of Moora Local Board of Health adopting Model By-laws. 7, Rules and Regulations of Perth Public Hospital. 8, Regulations under "The Health Act, 1911-12"—Meat inspection and branding. 9, Amendment of Regulations under "The State Children Act, 1907."

By the Minister for Works: 1, Report of the Public Works Department for the year ended 30th June, 1915. 2, Balance sheet and Profit and Loss Account, together with the Auditor General's report for the year ending 30th June, 1915, of the State Sawmills, under the State Trading Concerns Act, 1912.

By the Premier: Return showing position of audit of Government Trading Concerns as on 13th November, 1915.

#### BILL — LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT CONTINUANCE.

##### *Council's Message.*

A Message from the Council having been received notifying that it could see no reason for departing from the procedure it had adopted in amending the Bill, as the amendments were relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, as the case was fully dealt with under the Standing Orders of the Council, as there was no analogy between the Bill and an Expiring Laws Continuance Bill of the British Parliament, and as if such analogy existed there was a precedent this session for the course adopted by the Council, the Message was now considered.

Mr. SPEAKER [3.10]: In this Message the Council has made a new departure and has followed a course in opposition to that laid down in the Legislative Council's Standing Order 227, which

provides the practice for dealing with Messages on Bills between both Houses of Parliament. The Legislative Council now asks the House to rescind a decision, and leaves the Bill itself in an uncertain position. In my opinion, long arguments between the Houses on points of order are unseemly and undesirable, and this House should not continue the argument, but give only its decision in reply. At the same time, I would not be treating the House with proper respect if I did not make some statement in reply to the arguments adduced in the Council's Message. I propose to take the arguments one by one and discuss them in their order. First, "The Legislative Council sees no reason to depart from the procedure it has adopted in amending the Bills to continue the operation of the Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1914, as in its opinion the amendments introduced are relevant to the subject matter of the Bill as required by Standing Order 193 and the title has been altered to the extent required under Standing Order 198." This House has not hitherto stated that the Council is not acting in accordance with its Standing Orders. We have merely respectfully pointed out the point having been raised in this House and the question having been referred to the Speaker, the Chairman's ruling that the amendments made by the Council were inadmissible on the ground that they were not relevant to the subject matter of the Bill was upheld, and this House intimated to the Council that the making of such an amendment will be a violation of our own procedure. The attitude taken up by this House is that required by Standing Order 391. Standing Orders 193 and 198 of the Legislative Council are in effect the terms and conditions of our Standing Order 391. They provide one and the same procedure, the only difference being that the Council has embodied the conditions of our Standing Order 391 in two Standing Orders, 193 and 198. Standing Order 391 of the Legislative Assembly provides "that the House have power to make such amendments to Bills as they shall think fit, provided they be relevant to the subject matter of the

Bill; but if any such amendments shall not be within the title of the Bill they shall amend the title accordingly and report the same specially to the House." This House holds that the amendments submitted by the Council are not relevant to the subject matter of the Bill and amendments not relevant to the subject matter of the Bill cannot be made. The amendments proposed by the Council are not amendments to this Bill, neither are they amendments to the Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1914, but such amendments could only be made to the Licensing Act, 1911. The Council is apparently of the opinion that under Standing Order 193 any amendment can be made to a Bill of this character, provided the title is altered to cover such amendments as required by their Standing Order 198. This assumption is not correct. Amendments can only be made which are relevant to the subject matter of a Bill, and if such amendments be not within the title, then the title may be amended, but an amendment of the title does not bring within order amendments which are not relevant to the subject matter of a Bill. On a previous occasion I gave examples of the application of the rule showing the distinction between the title and the subject matter of a Bill. The examples will bear repeating. A Bill to enable municipalities to establish fish markets is introduced with a title for an Act to amend the Municipalities Act. A new clause is moved to alter the mode of election of mayor. The new clause is well within the title, but foreign to the subject matter of the Bill as introduced and is therefore disallowed. On the other hand, a Bill to license motor cars in Perth is introduced with a title of an Act to regulate the licensing of Perth motor-cars. A new clause is moved to extend the provisions to Fremantle. The new clause is outside the title but relevant to the subject matter of the Bill and may therefore be allowed, the title afterwards being amended to cover it. These examples show the distinction clearly. If the present Continuance Bill had been the Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1914,

these amendments would have been allowable, but only by a special instruction to the Committee, as provided in the Legislative Council's Standing Order 311. By this special instruction the amendment proposed by the Council could be moved to that Act. Without such special instruction the amendment could not be made and under no condition can the proposed amendments be made to this Continuance Bill. The Council further states "that since the point is fully dealt with under its Standing Order there is no necessity to seek other authorities." With this opinion I concur. Our Standing Orders are sufficient for our guidance, but in the interpretation of the Standing Orders when doubts occur we have recourse to the application of similar rules in the Imperial Parliament and the British Dominions. A recognised authority, *May*, states "that it is not within the scope of a Committee on an Expiring Laws Continuance Bill to amend the provisions of the Acts proposed to be continued." The Bill to continue the operation of the Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1914, is purely an Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. That is the only principle contained in the Bill; it contains no other. The Council meet this argument by stating that there is no analogy between an Expiring Laws Continuance Bill as presented to the British Parliament which re-enacts several expiring Acts set forth in a schedule to a Bill, and the Bill under consideration. Such an assertion is astounding and depends on a false assumption. I have here the example of an English Act to continue the operation of a single Act, the reference being an Act to continue the Employers' Liability Act, 1880. The analogy in this case is complete and convincing, and this one instance is sufficient to show that the assumption of the Council is unfounded. The last assertion of the Council is "that if any such analogy does exist precedent is afforded during the present session for the course adopted by them as a Bill to amend and continue the operation of the Roads Act, 1911, was considered and amended by both

Houses without protest or demur." But here I desire to point out there is a very important difference. The Roads Act amendment was not entirely a Continuance Bill. It was a Bill for an Act to amend and continue the operation of the Roads Act, 1911, whilst the Bill under consideration is a Bill for an Act to continue the operation of the Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1914. The first is an amending and continuance Bill whilst the latter is a continuance Bill only. Hon. members will, I am sure, readily understand and appreciate the distinction.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna) [3.25]: In pursuance of your ruling, I desire to move—

*That the following Message be sent to the Legislative Council:—"Mr. President: The Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council that it sees no reason for departing from the decision to which the Legislative Council's Message No. 27 purports to be a reply. The Legislative Assembly still holds to the opinion that the amendments made by the Legislative Council to the Licensing Act Amendment Act Continuance Bill are not within the Standing Orders of either the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council, but are strictly contrary to Parliamentary practice in this State and the British House of Commons. The numbered paragraphs of Message No. 27 have no bearing on the question, inasmuch as Number 1 is an assumption not supported by facts, and Number 2 refers to a Bill of another character to Continuance Bills, since the measure amended was itself an amending Bill, as declared by its Title and subject matter, and the amendments made thereto are relative to the subject matter thereof."*

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [3.27]: I am quite in accord with the Message which the Attorney General proposes should be sent to the Legislative Council. But—and perhaps he will pardon me for saying so—I think we might draft it in a little more temperate lan-

guage and in a way that is not quite so much calculated to irritate.

Mr. George: In not quite so discourteous a manner.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It might perhaps be considered to be discourteous. We say that the amendments made by the Legislative Council to the Licensing Act Amendment Continuance Bill are not within the Standing Orders of either the Legislative Council or of the Legislative Assembly. I think it would be just as well to leave the Legislative Council to decide for itself on this matter, and simply say that they are not within our Standing Orders. I suggest that we should take out the words "Legislative Council" where they occur in this particular place in the Message. Then, further down we have the statement in paragraph 1 as an assumption that is not supported by facts. That is a bald challenge to the Council. I think I would state, "In our opinion it is not supported by facts." If the hon. member would take my advice he would tone it down somewhat; it may then be received more reasonably.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna) [3.29]: I was simply moving in accordance with the Speaker's ruling. I have no objection to cut out the Standing Order of the Council.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no reason why we should cause irritation. My idea was to set out clearly our position here.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition and in deference to the opinion you, Mr. Speaker, have expressed, that we should not continue any discussion with the other Chamber, I have consented to agree to an amended draft of the Message to the Council, with a view that it may be carried and may remove the asperities or fighting signals and reduce the Message to facts. I move—

*That the following Message be transmitted to the Council:—"The Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council that it sees no reason for departing from the decision already*

*conveyed in Message No. 28. The Legislative Assembly still holds to the opinion that the amendments made by the Legislative Council to the Licensing Act Amendment Continuance Bill are not within the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly but are, in the opinion of the Chamber, contrary to Parliamentary practice in this State and the British House of Commons. The numbered paragraphs of Message No. 27 have no bearing on the question, inasmuch as No. 1 does not appear to be supported by fact, and No. 2 refers to a Bill of another character, since the measure amended was itself an amending Bill as declared by its Title and subject matter and the amendments made thereto were relative to the subject matter thereof."*

Question put and passed.

#### BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION.

##### *Council's Message.*

A Message having been received from the Council that objection had been taken to the Bill on the ground that the definition of "licensed premises" contained in Clause 2 was outside the scope of the Title of the Bill and consequently the Bill was not in order, the Message was now considered.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Message from the Legislative Council on the Notice Paper explains itself. I do not want to waste any time, but I want to take the House into my confidence. I propose, so that we cannot have any argument with another place, to reintroduce this Local Option Bill, trusting that there will be no debate on it, and this new Bill amends the Title to meet the objection which the Council have raised. I now move—

*That the following Message be sent to the Legislative Council:—"The Legislative Assembly, who, while maintaining that the term 'Licensed premises' in the Sale of Liquor Regulation Bill has not the restricted meaning of those words as used in the Licensing Act, 1911, but includes State hotels,*

*refreshment rooms, restaurant cars, and clubs, as expressed in the interpretation clause, nevertheless requests the Legislative Council to lay aside the Bill with a view to the introduction of a Bill intituled 'An Act to regulate the closing time for the sale or supply of liquor on licensed premises, and in State hotels, refreshment rooms, restaurant cars, vessels for which packet licenses are held and registered clubs, during war time.'*"

I am convinced that the Council were absolutely wrong.

Mr. Robinson: Otherwise the Bill is the same as the previous one.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: With the exception that the poll will not be taken in connection with the Federal referendums which are to remain in abeyance.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Can we re-introduce this Bill?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We are able to do so because the other Bill is only laid aside.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Before the question is put I should like the Attorney General to explain to the House the position of this proposed Bill. Is not this a Bill for the same purpose and bearing almost the same title as the other, which was passed by this House during this session? Can the Attorney General, therefore, submit such a Bill?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member's point is really one for the Chair to decide, but I think it is recognised that the measure which is withdrawn or laid aside is not the Bill which was introduced and passed by this House. If, at any stage, by the volition of the Legislature, the Bill is withdrawn, it is not treated as having been dealt with, and the subject which may be of a similar kind can be reintroduced.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Is it not a question of introducing a Bill which is similar to the one introduced before?

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not take it that the hon. member raised a point for the consideration of the Chair. If, however, the question has been raised I shall give my opinion.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I should like to be quite sure as to how we stand. The point is that a Bill has already been passed in this Chamber which is almost identical with the one the Attorney General now proposes to introduce, and, having requested another place to lay it aside, is it permissible for us to reintroduce what is practically the same Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER: Before a Bill can become law it must pass this House and it must receive the approval of another place and go through all its stages. Any question so dealt with by both Houses cannot be reintroduced in the same session. The Bill which is the subject of discussion has not been dealt with by both Houses. Several years ago a Bill of a similar character, the Tramways Bill, was introduced, in which there was a clause which made an amendment of the Railway Act. That Bill had to be withdrawn under similar circumstances.

Question put and passed.

#### BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION (No. 2).

##### *All Stages.*

On motion by the ATTORNEY GENERAL Bill introduced and read a first and a second time.

##### *In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Districts:

Mr. GEORGE: I do not like the idea of bringing a Bill before the House in this form. I have a distinct recollection of Clause 3 being amended. The amendments were moved by the Attorney General himself and I cannot see that they have been included in the clause of the Bill before us. For instance, the Attorney General moved to strike out the words "electoral districts" and substitute "subdivisions" and in Clauses 1 to 4 he moved to strike out various words and insert others. I do not think those alterations have been made.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As I have already explained, this Bill is pre-

cisely the same as the one introduced in the first instance. The amendments moved were with a view of co-operating with the Commonwealth when it was thought the referendums would be taken.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: And make our poll fit in with the Federal roll ?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Exactly. Now we know the referendum proposals are held in abeyance and therefore we must make some other provision. This Bill makes provision for taking a referendum on this question at the time of the Legislative Council elections in May next. That is the only alteration. Otherwise the Bill is precisely the same as the one first introduced.

Mr. Hudson: What will it cost to take the referendum at the same time as the Legislative Council elections?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I estimate it will cost between £2,500 and £3,000.

Mr. Hudson: You have money to burn.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Attorney General has just stated that the cost of the proposed referendum will be in the vicinity of £3,000 and I notice that the measure terminates at the end of December, 1916. The war may be over by then, at any rate let us hope it will. How much more will it cost to have the referendum taken at once, because after all, it is reducing the thing to a farce to take the referendum six months hence. Let us carry the thing out wholeheartedly if we want to do it at all. If it is worth doing it is worth doing well and if the matter is worth £3,000 six months hence it is surely worth £5,000 immediately.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is nothing to prevent us taking the referendum to-morrow, or as soon as the Bill is passed. We have to do it by proclamation and I only suggested, by way of cheapening the matter, that it should be taken at the time of the Council's elections.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: What would be the difference in the cost ?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It would cost more than twice as much to take it just now. There would be not only the poll, but polling booths, returning officers, and all the accessories of taking a poll in connection with a general election, to be considered, if we were to hold the referendum now.

Mr. Heitmann: If it is not necessary till next May we can do without it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That might be so. A similar Bill has already been passed and sent to the Council where a technical objection was taken to it. In order to get a vote on the real issue of the Bill I desire to get this measure before the Council as speedily as possible so that it cannot be said that it reached them at the last moment.

Mr. GEORGE: If the referendum were to be taken on the date previously proposed, I would agree with the Attorney General. Now, however, it is to be postponed for five months.

Mr. Heitmann: Why does not the State close the hotels and save money?

The Attorney General: Why do not the people close their appetites?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why do not the Government close the hotels if it is necessary?

Mr. Heitmann: They have not the power under present legislation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, they have.

Mr. GEORGE: If this matter is of such importance surely the vote should be taken earlier than May next. I do not like the division of the State into districts and I think we are justified in reconsidering this matter in the light of knowledge gained since the question was last before the House. I move an amendment—

*That all the words after "Australia" in line 2 be struck out and the words "shall be taken as one electorate and the rolls under the Commonwealth Acts of 1902 and 1911 may be used in taking the vote" inserted in lieu.*

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: While I agree with the principle of the amendment I cannot support it because the Bill is before us under extraordinary con-

ditions. I have not gone back on my former opinion that the poll should be taken over the State as a whole but that question has previously been decided.

Mr. ROBINSON: I support the clause. It would be wise to carry the Bill on much the same lines as the previous one. The district system is preferable to a block vote over the whole of the State.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Referendum as to Closing time:

Mr. GILCHRIST: I intend to test the feeling of the Committee by moving an amendment to give effect to the wish expressed in another place which has received a good deal of support outside, that Parliament should take the responsibility of curtailing the hours for the sale of liquor instead of shifting the responsibility on to the electors. It has been urged that the measure is necessary owing to the war and yet it is proposed to take a vote in May next. If there is any necessity for curtailing hours, the curtailment should have been introduced immediately after the declaration of war. We would not be doing our duty if we agreed to any further postponement. I move an amendment—

*That the clause be struck out.*

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot move that; he must vote against the clause.

Mr. GILCHRIST: Then I suggest that the vote on the clause be taken as an expression of opinion on fixing the hours from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. instead of taking a referendum in May next.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Duration of Act:

Mr. HEITMANN: It is absurd for the Government to say that this measure is necessary on account of the war and then to suggest taking the vote six months hence. Does not this appeal to the Attorney General as being farcical? While I do not use the war as an excuse for taking the vote, I am prepared to use it as an opportunity to give the people

a right to express themselves on reducing the trading hours of hotels.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is speaking outside the clause which merely deals with the duration of the Act.

Mr. HEITMANN: I hope the Minister will further consider the question and, if the vote is necessary, have it taken at any early date.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When the original Bill was introduced, it contained this clause, and the other clauses fixing the time. The original Bill has been in another place for some considerable time already, and my desire was to introduce the present Bill without any amendments whatever, so that it could be dealt with to-night. There are amendments which, apart from that consideration, I myself should have liked to make.

Mr. Heitmann: I am not asking for amendments.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is nothing in this Bill to prevent the Government from taking, by proclamation, a referendum as soon as arrangements can be made.

Mr. Heitmann: I am asking what you are going to do.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is a matter for Cabinet to consider. The Government want to get the fullest possible vote on the subject. It would not do, for instance, to take the poll during Christmas week. The Government intend to try and get the referendum taken with as little expenditure as possible.

Mr. George: We would save three times the expenditure in what we save on drink, besides saving misery and poverty.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.



**BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.**

Returned from the Council with amendments.

**BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.***Council's amendments.*

Bill returned from the Council with a schedule of six amendments, which were now considered.

*In Committee.*

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

No. 1—Clause 2, in paragraph (a), line 5, strike out the word "ten" and insert "nine":

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Clause 2 of the Bill as introduced here proposed to apply the measure to lands alienated since 1910. An amendment was moved here, unsuccessfully, to make the date 1909. I opposed the amendment on the ground that anomalies would still exist if the date were made the 1st January, 1909, just as there were anomalies if the date remained the 1st January, 1910. There is justification, however, for making the date the 1st January, 1910, because there was, generally speaking, an increase in the price of land as from that date. I am not arguing that there are not blocks of land alienated prior to the 1st January, 1910, in regard to which review will be required if this measure passes. Those anomalies, however, can be adjusted under the principal Act; and I have already promised that that shall be done if the date is fixed as originally proposed by the Bill. There is no need for the Council's amendment, which will convey an idea that is not in any way justified. I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The amendment I moved was simply to strike out the words "commencing on the 1st January, 1910," substituting nothing for them.

The Minister for Lands: Someone else moved the other amendment I have mentioned.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hold that we ought to deal with all land that has been priced beyond the pricing which the Committee now approves of. It would be better to take out the limitation altogether. Ministers and some hon. members have declared that the land was increased in price after I took over the department. I will not deny it. In 1909 the House warmly approved of an amendment which I brought in, that all lands should be priced according to their worth. The principle was in operation before that. If there are only half a dozen blocks beyond the limitation there is no reason why the Bill should not be made to cover them, rather than leave the people concerned at the mercy of the Minister. Why should we have any time limit at all in the Bill?

The Minister for Lands: Well, that proposition is more logical than is the amendment.

Mr. Willmott: Well, let us strike out the time limitation altogether.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Let me appeal to the Minister that he do what the Committee desires. A very large area of land was cut up and priced before my term of office, an area north of a point running from Kellerberrin to Merredin. A good deal of this land was settled by the public servants.

Mr. James Gardiner: That was about November, 1909.

Mr. Willmott: About 1908.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Certainly before 1910. However, are not those people to be considered? Surely the Minister will agree that we should be just to everybody. There should be no preferential treatment. It is unfair in the Minister to insist upon having a date limit, unless, indeed, his object is merely to suggest that only the land that I priced requires repricing. As for the time limit, it is obvious that the man who has been longer on the too-highly-priced land has the greater claim for a reduction of price. The Minister has said that he himself will adjust the prices of land alienated prior to 1910.

The Minister for Lands: I have said that the repricing board will remove any anomalies.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But under that system applicants for repricing will have to comply with all sorts of formalities. We should do our best to relieve the farmer from the necessity of writing countless letters and filling in innumerable forms. Hon. members have a right to say that this work of repricing should be done in the most economical fashion. The only fault I have to find with the amendment is that it should contemplate any date limitation at all. I hope I shall get sufficient support from hon. members to strike out the date altogether.

The Premier: Well, get a vote on it. The Minister is not accepting it and so the Committee must decide.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is obviously wrong to expect it. It is not fair to put in 1909.

Mr. Thomson: Why?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because the same position would still continue to exist. From 1910 the price of land was increased. Consequently we have limited the operations of the Bill to 1910. But, under the principal Act, the Minister has power at any time to review the pricing of any block of land. I am prepared to admit that when we reprice the land as from 1910 it will probably become apparent that certain other blocks, alienated before 1910, also require to be repriced. The price of those blocks will be reviewed under the power given to the Minister in the principal Act. If we make it 1909 we will still be in the same position in regard to land alienated before that date. The more logical way would be to strike out the limitation altogether.

Mr. Thomson: Well, why not do it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No Government would undertake such a contract.

The Premier: Yes, if we could increase prices as well as reduce them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To expect the Government to review the pricing of all the millions of acres

alienated in this State would be asking a little too much. Anomalies will be removed by the Bill. If the date is made 1909 we shall be in exactly the same position as if it is made 1910. There will be something to put right before 1909. The amendment conveys to the public and land selectors that the Government are going to review all the land alienated in 1909. We are going to review all land alienated since 1910 and some land alienated since 1909 under the principal Act. The area mentioned by the member for Northam will be reviewed, as otherwise an anomaly would be created, and something unfair done to the settlers who have selected the land. I appeal to hon. members to pass the Bill as it is. It is absolutely fair. It conveys to the people that we are ready to help those who have selected since 1910. Those who will be in a position worse than those who selected since 1910 will also get relief on the undertaking given by the Minister that the same board will review the prices of certain blocks alienated before 1910. The repricing board have got instructions to go on with the work now. I said to them, "When you take a district and you are repricing, do not leave the plan until you have made the whole thing fit in." By that means anomalies will be removed. When the thing is completed everyone will get justice.

Mr. WILLMOTT: What we want is a fair thing. If we make the date 1909 we shall minimise the evil considerably.

The Minister for Lands: But you do not remove it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: It cannot be removed because we would have to go back, to be absolutely fair, to 1905. I find that for the years 1905, 1906, 1907, and 1908 certain lands were taken up at a very much higher price than I am sure they would be valued at by the department to-day. In my opinion 1905 should be the date. The date of 1909 will just take in the Yorkkrakine people, or the bulk of them, and the Government will have to bring into force the old Act for these people.

The Minister for Works: Many of these people are only paying 10s. an acre.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Some of them are paying a great deal more than that. Some are paying up to 27s. 6d. an acre.

The Minister for Works: Forty of them, I think, went on the land at a low price.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Why did the Minister fix on 1910?

The Minister for Lands: Because we are reviewing all the land alienated since 1910, but cannot review all the land alienated since 1909.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Was there such a large area alienated since 1909?

The Minister for Lands: All land since 1910 has been increased in price; at least some of it was increased in 1909 but not all of it.

Mr. WILLMOTT: The departure in the methods had begun in 1909.

The Minister for Lands: But to a limited extent.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I think the Minister would be wise to accept the amendment. It would be better for the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: No, it would spoil the Bill.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I understand the Minister to say that if there are anomalies previous to 1910 they will be rectified.

The Minister for Lands: Absolutely; I promise that definitely.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Would they be rectified in the new Bill or in the existing Act?

The Minister for Lands: Powers would be given to me to do it under the principal Act, but the prices would be reviewed by the board which are doing the work.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Under the principal Act I understand that a person who considers his land is priced too high has to lodge an application to have it reclassified.

The Minister for Lands: It is not necessary for the Minister to have that application before moving. The Minister

has power to review the price without an application being made.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: There is also, I understand, a fee to be paid on reclassification and although the principal Act does not clearly define it, it is provided by regulation that the lease has got to be surrendered and thrown open again for reselection if it is classified at a lower price than it was granted at in the first instance. Is that so?

The Minister for Lands: That is for reclassification. We are not reclassifying land, but the Minister can review the price of land. I propose to use the power under the Act to review prices. I am not going to put the settler to the expense of making application, as provided for in the principal Act for reclassification.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: And it would not be necessary to surrender the lease?

The Minister for Lands: No, certainly not. That would not apply.

Mr. THOMSON: That would be satisfactory if we were sure that the present Minister for Lands would always occupy that position. Seeing that the Minister is prepared to give us that assurance, why cannot he embody it in the Bill, so that if we have another Minister in his place he will have to abide by that decision?

Hon. Frank Wilson: We cannot accept an assurance like that.

Mr. Bolton: It is in the principal Act.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister says he is going to put the present Act into operation. I would like to see 1910 deleted altogether. I cannot see any reason why we should not review the whole of the land. The prices were low, particularly in the early stages of settlement. Possibly the Minister would like to raise the price of land. According to his argument land which was taken up in the earlier days was taken up at a cheap rate. If so, there is no need to worry about it. I hope the Minister will accept this amendment. He is surely not going to jeopardise the Bill for the sake of one year. I am going to vote for the Council's amendment.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: The Minister intends that the clause as amended shall

apply only to certain areas. Those who suffer to-day under the need for a repricing measure are chiefly those who selected prior to 1910. I have in my mind the Eastern areas where the people are suffering from want of railways. If those areas are not to have the benefit of this provision I do not feel like taking the Minister's word for it. If it was in the measure that we could go back to 1907 it would be a very much better measure. Whilst those who selected since 1910 are to have the benefit of a repricing, those who selected prior to that are not to have any benefit at all. I understood that we were to get a reclassification Bill and not a repricing Bill. I hope the Minister will accept the date 1909, which will afford much relief to deserving settlers.

The Premier: We will go back to 1909 and give you an undertaking that we will not go back any further, if you like.

Mr. PIESSE: I am sorry the Minister will not accept the amendment, because I fail to see why one year more will be disadvantageous to the department. There is the Yorkrakine settlement and also the civil servants' settlement, which took place for the most part in 1909, to be considered. It is admitted that those who selected land since 1910 are suffering a wrong, and that those who selected in 1909 are also suffering.

The Minister for Lands: If we make it 1909, what about 1908?

Mr. PIESSE: I believe that only a very small number of leaseholds was taken up in 1908. I do not doubt the Minister's assurance. Therefore I do not see why he should object to the inclusion of 1909. Where no hardship has been caused, the State will not suffer, even if we went back to 1905. The Minister would not deny a settler remedy if he had a grievance, if that grievance existed in 1905. Then why not make the Bill go back to 1905?

The Minister for Lands: Because we only want to review the land that was increased in price.

Mr. PIESSE: It must be proved to the discretion of the department that there is an anomaly, therefore it is ques-

tionable whether a difference of opinion exists as to values. Let us extend the Bill to a date which will give justice to all.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I would like the Minister to go back to 1907. I and several others took up land in that year and we do not know what luck we might have, provided always that the Minister has not the right to increase the rent.

Mr. HARRISON: Some of my constituents are the greatest sufferers in the State in this regard. There are some who took up land at high prices, a long way from railway communication, prior to 1910. The Minister has said that those who took up land in 1909 would be placed in the same position as those who took up land in 1910. There are some persons who took up land in 1909 a long way from railway communication and whose land is not as productive as it was thought to be when the land was taken up, therefore this land should be reviewed. I want to know if all anomalies will be attended to prior to the date mentioned in the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: The only difference is this—all the land taken up in 1910 will be reviewed, but it would be unfair to the State to convey that all the land taken up in the State in 1909 will be reviewed.

Mr. Harrison: I want to be clear on that point.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Supposing the House inserts 1909, what is the Minister to take as his direction? That members want to go back to 1909 and start from there. If 1909 is inserted, that will convey that all land alienated from 1909 should be reviewed. That is unfair because at that time the price was not increased all around. Some areas alienated during 1909 were increased in price, and those will be reviewed. If we were to fix the date at 1909, then it might be shown that there were anomalies in 1908. Is it fair to say that from 1909 all lands will be reviewed? Only some of those taken up in 1909 will be reviewed; the anomalies existing in 1909 will be dealt with.

Mr. Willmott: We want a guarantee.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Will settlers who have applied for relief prior to the date fixed in the Bill have to pay a reclassification fee?

The Minister for Lands: No.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: To-day there is a provision in the original Act for reclassification, and the Minister says that those who have land that is priced at more than its value will be dealt with under the existing Act.

The Minister for Lands: The Minister has power to reprice without reclassification. We are not waiting for applications, but are now removing anomalies.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If a person says that anomalies exist, the land will be reclassified without fee?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Then the wiser course would be to strike out the date altogether in the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: If that is done, it is not a question of putting anomalies right, but the whole of the land will have to be reviewed.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, it says "the Governor may." I move an amendment—

*That the Council's amendment be amended by striking out the words: "after the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ten."*

The Minister for Lands: We are not going to review the whole of the lands of the State.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: This, to my mind, would make the position absolutely clear; it will show the Minister what is the desire of Parliament. Some of the biggest anomalies that I know of are in regard to lands taken up prior to 1910. At that time there was one price of 10s. an acre for all first-class land. People could not get land at less than 10s. an acre unless it was in a large area and was regarded as second-class land. I know of land which could be taken up at the present time at less than what the improvements have cost, and they are in the hands of the Agricultural Bank.

The Minister for Lands: The Agricultural Bank have very few blocks of land on their hands.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: There are many blocks of land of the character I have described west of the Great Southern railway. I mention that as showing that there are good grounds for urging that where a reduction is going to be made it should be made wherever the price is too high.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot take the amendment of the hon. member. It can hardly be classed as an amendment of the amendment sent down by the Legislative Council. If the hon. member desires to alter the Council's amendment he may do that.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Then I shall move an amendment—

*That the Council's amendment be amended by striking out "one thousand nine hundred and ten" and inserting "one thousand nine hundred and seven" in lieu.*

Almost the whole of the land between the Great Southern railway and the rabbit proof fence was alienated in 1908 at prices ranging from 18s. to £1. per acre, which prices were imposed by Sir Newton Moore. Under the Minister's proposal, as shown on the map, the whole of that land has been passed as "A," and at 25s. an acre, and it is quite clear that there is not going to be a reduction if the Minister's proposal remains.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I presume the Minister is reviewing all lands.

The Minister for Lands: I am reviewing all lands since 1910, and then working in the lands taken up previously to 1910 on the basis of the zones. I want to remove all anomalies as far as possible.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I cannot see why the Minister cannot agree to the extended powers, and I cannot see why we should not go back. I am going to support the amendment. I think the Minister might meet the House in this matter. Did I understand the Minister to say that if we alter this date he will

not deal with the land sold prior to that date?

The Minister for Lands: What further action could the Minister take?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We want the Minister to do what is fair by everyone. The Minister says that if we alter this amendment he will not consider persons who selected land previously to 1909.

The Minister for Lands: There is reason for 1910, but there is no reason for 1909.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I will tell the Minister why his officers put in 1910. The Act which gave power to price land beyond 10s. was assented to in December, 1909. We know the Minister is obstinate and determined, and, therefore, we have to persuade him to do what is right. I hope the House will vote for the amendment moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. THOMSON: I am sorry the Minister is taking up the attitude he has adopted. When the present Government went to the country one of the planks of their platform was not a re-ricing but a reclassification Bill, and the maximum price was to be 15s. per acre, and any reduction which was to be made to the settlers would be placed to their credit. The proposal before us is not the reclassification we have been looking for. The Minister should accept the suggestions which have been made by members of this House who represent agricultural constituencies. We are here to voice the sentiments of those people and the Minister would be wise to accept the amendment which has been moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin. The member for Geraldton interjected that if land was not worth 10s. an acre it was not worth anything at all. We want to get people on the land. I have had letters from various parts of my constituency where land has not been classified and where the settlers have paid from 18s. to 25s. an acre for land which contains poison. Surely those people are entitled to consideration, and the Minister will be wise in accepting the

recommendations of those who are representing agricultural constituencies.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The Minister says that he is going to take 1910 as a basis, but that if there are any anomalies existing which go even further back than 1909 they will be rectified. An area might have been taken up in 1910 alongside similar land taken up in 1909, both at 30s. an acre. To reduce the 1910 and not reduce the 1909 would be an anomaly, consequently the 1909 man would be brought to exactly the same basis as the man who took up his land in 1910. If alongside there was a 1908 man who took up similar land at 30s. an acre, it is not proposed to reduce the 1909 man and leave the anomaly of the 1908 man?

The Minister for Lands: Absolutely, and the board are actually doing it to-day.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: If the anomaly exists it will be rectified?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Is that being left to the board and free from Ministerial influence?

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The date then becomes immaterial. If there is an anomaly which gives the 1910 man a benefit over those surrounding him, the board will rectify it.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: There are lands taken up in 1908 and 1909 which have as much right to be re-priced now as the 1910 land.

The Minister for Lands: Isolated blocks.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: In the circumstances it would not matter if the date were made 1907. Wherever an anomaly exists it will be rectified.

The Minister for Lands: One reason for adopting 1910 is that the board have instructions that all land since 1910 is to be re-priced, and some of the land previous to 1910 is to be re-priced. If the year were fixed at 1909 it would mean that all land alienated since that year

would be repriced, which we do not desire.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The fear is that if we do not fix 1909, the remedying of anomalies may be at the caprice of the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: If we fix 1909 there will be the same position.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Yes, and if we fix 1905 there would be anomalies from the year 1904 to be rectified. So long as it is clearly understood that these anomalies will be rectified, it would not matter if we made the year 1914.

The Minister for Lands: But the review is going to 1910.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The review will be on the basis of 1910 selection, and all anomalies will be considered in their relative value to 1910.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Those conditions are preferable to a fixed date. The date is immaterial if it is recognised that anomalies existing in years anterior to the date fixed will be rectified.

Mr. Thomson: Then there is no need for the Bill.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Yes there is. If we say it applies to all lands in 1910 but not in other years, perhaps going back to 1905, there will be anomalies. There should be no fear that future Ministers would interpret the spirit of promises made by their predecessors.

The Minister for Lands: And in this case the board are actually doing it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Are you sure they are doing it?

The Minister for Lands: I told them to do it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I say they are not doing it.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: May we take it that the board have been sent into a district to reprice the land and to remove all anomalies, whether the land was taken up in 1910 or 1906?

The Minister for Lands: That is right.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: And 1910 merely gives a starting time for the review of all lands.

The Minister for Lands: That is the point.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I interjected just now that the board were not doing it. What I had in mind was my knowledge that before the general classification from the 1st January, 1910, although a few areas were surveyed and classified, most of the land was thrown open under free selection and, so far as I know, there is absolutely no record in the Lands Department of the quality of the land. I venture to say that is the reason why the date has been fixed at 1910. In fact the report of the reclassification board gives that as the reason. How on earth the board can revalue land granted before the 1st January, 1910, without classification, I cannot imagine. Many of the inspectors have been got rid of. There are no officers to report on the anomalies that exist before the 1st January, 1910, and I cannot conceive how the board can revalue any of those lands without special inspection by a proper officer.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We tried to arrive at a date from which we could start and, for land alienated previous to that, there will be no repricing.

Mr. Thomson: And you refuse to accept any date except 1910.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am referring to the discussion in the department with the repricing board. We decided to review all land from 1910 and I told the board that, if there was an anomaly such as the member for Irwin pointed out, they should rectify it straight away, no matter whether it was land alienated in 1909 or 1908. The member for Williams-Narrogin asked how they can reprice it when there was no classification. They are taking the price of adjoining land and, with their knowledge, this is sufficient to enable them to reprice the other land and remove any anomalies which might exist. This is being done to-day.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am concerned about the agricultural area blocks sold previous to 1910 and not about any other land, because it was only within the agricultural areas that land was priced under the present system previous to the Act of 1909 being assented to. I can quite understand that the Minister does not wish to be compelled to review the price of all land sold. The member for Williams-Narrogin will realise that if we bring in agricultural areas previously sold under this Act, we shall be doing all that is necessary because free selection was at 10s. an acre up to the 1st January, 1910. This would not extend the Minister's work very much and it would bring all the blocks dealt with within the scope of this measure. I suggest that after "1910" the words "and to land within an agricultural area sold previous to that date" be inserted. The Minister would then get in all he wants.

The Minister for Lands: It is not necessary to put it in the Bill in order to get that. Besides, the amendment would not be in order.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We can amend the amendment.

The Minister for Lands: Not to the extent you suggest.

The CHAIRMAN: The date could be altered.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This extends it to areas thrown open before that date but priced since that date.

The Minister for Lands: Why not leave it as it stands?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If land can be repriced without this Bill, a resolution of the Assembly approving such a course would be sufficient. I will support 1907 if I can get nothing better.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question (that the Council's amendment be not agreed to) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	16
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	5
				—

#### Ayes.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).

#### Noes.

Mr. Connolly	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Male
	(Teller).

Question thus passed, the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 2—Clause 2, in paragraph (b). line 4, strike out the word "seven" and insert "five":

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will be remembered there was some difficulty with amendments referring to poison land when the Bill was in Committee here, and that the Premier gave an assurance that the date would be altered to 1905 when the measure was in another place. I move—

*That the amendment be agreed to.*

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In this case, strangely enough, the Minister is willing to put back the date, while the very arguments used against the previous amendment might be used against this one. In the previous case the Minister said "No," and the Council's amendment was rejected. Now the Minister says "Yes" to a parallel proposal. What sort of legislation are we passing? I want the Committee to be consistent. One set of people can go back only to 1910 to have their land repriced, while another set are permitted to go back to 1905. Why? We get no satisfaction from Ministers. I do not object to this date being 1905; in fact, I think it ought to be even earlier. Does the Minister propose to go back no further than 1905 in this connection for the purpose of rectifying anomalies? The Minister is silent. If it is not



his intention to go back beyond 1905, we must amend the amendment. I regret that the Ministers do not do things in the proper way. We ought to reduce the price of all poison lands sold during the past 20 years. Some of this land was selected at 10s. an acre. The poison has been costly to eradicate, and it would be profitable to the State if the land were given away to anyone who would clear it of poison. I move an amendment—

*That the words "1905" be struck out, and "1895" be inserted in lieu.*

The CHAIRMAN: The principal Act goes back to only 1898; therefore the amendment is not in order.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

*That "1905" be struck out and "1899" be inserted in lieu.*

Mr. WILLMOTT: I cannot support the amendment, because I was one of those who voiced the opinion that 1905 was an equitable period to insert in the Bill. That is the year in which the price of poison land was raised. The Council's amendment will be acceptable to the people occupying poison land.

Mr. THOMSON: On a previous amendment the Minister gave us an assurance that if any anomalies were discovered in the pricing of land taken up prior to the year named in the Bill he would see about removing them. We have not had that assurance from him on this particular question. There is considerable poison country in my electorate, and also in that of the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) who, when asking me to look after the interests of his electorate during his absence on sick leave, stressed the point that I should spare no pains to see the people in the poison areas got justice. I wish the Minister would give us an assurance that, failing the acceptance of the amendment of the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), he will himself rectify any anomalies in respect of poison lands alienated before the date specified in the clause.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will give that assurance. I will be fair to all concerned.

Amendment (Hon. J. Mitchell's) put and negatived.

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

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

*[Mr. McDowall took the Chair.]*

No. 3—Insert a new clause:—"In respect of any land held under conditional purchase lease, which is more than twelve miles from any station or siding on an existing railway, the Minister may exempt the lessee of such land from payment of rent for any period up to five years, and may extend the term of the lease, subject to the conditions set out in the last preceding section":

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This will impose a very great financial loss on the State. The board appointed by Mr. Bath brought in a recommendation that the exemption from payment of the first five years rent should be considered, but they did not approve of a reduction in the price of land.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Only to £1 per acre.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Mr. Bath would not agree to the recommendation of the board, but thought the price of land should be reduced and that there should be no exemption. The Government adopted this policy. The loss by the repricing represents £30,000, and now we are asked to grant the exemption in addition.

Mr. James Gardiner: Does that mean the average annual loss?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Part of the loss is due to the reduction in the annual payments.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Owing to the extension of time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. but in addition there is a direct loss owing to the reduction in the price of land.

Mr. James Gardiner: An ultimate loss.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The Council's proposal means writing off part of the capital cost, not deferring rent.

Mr. Heitmann: It must be paid at the end of the term.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The amendment does not say so. One could understand the proposal if it referred to land ultimately to be served by railway communication. True, it includes such land, but it includes land which, so far as I can see, will permanently be more than 12 miles from a railway. The land north of Baandee through the Yorkkrakine district is 18 miles from a railway, and it will be many years before the State can build a line between the Eastern goldfields and the Dowerin-Merredin lines. Therefore, this would apply to all land permanently outside the 12 miles radius of a railway.

Mr. Griffiths: Is not that more reason why those people should be assisted?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are being assisted by the reduction in the price of their land. The hon. member might ask why not give them the land for nothing. An hon. member for popularity should not advocate giving away the land, for he has an obligation to the State to see that the people's heritage is not altogether sacrificed. The amendment asks too great a sacrifice. It does not limit the exemption to land newly selected, but applies to all land, whereas the Bill applies to only a portion of the State. Further, farmers around Northam more than 12 miles from a railway, having paid, say, 15 years rent, would be entitled to claim five years exemption. I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

The PREMIER: It is due to the country and to myself, as Treasurer, to know how this will affect the finances, and I am not in a position to give the information. The repricing will mean a loss of £30,000 to the revenue, and if there is to be a further imposition we should know

what it will amount to before accepting the amendment. Therefore, I suggest that progress be reported.

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 7.47 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 23rd November, 1915.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

The PRESIDENT: I have to report the receipt of the following letter from the Audit Department under date 23rd November, 1915:—

In pursuance of Section 53 of the Audit Act, 1904, and following the procedure adopted last year, I have the honour to transmit, for presentation to the Legislative Council, a copy of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer's statement of the public accounts of the State of Western Australia for the financial year ended 30th June, 1915, together with Part I. of my report thereon. Part II. is in course of preparation, and will be transmitted to you at an early date. I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant. (Signed) C. S. Toppin, Auditor General.