

But it had a direct bearing on the motion. I saw a trotting race down there, and I can honestly say I never witnessed more deliberate roping in my life. Surely this has a bearing on the motion. Because even the man betting in the street and thus breaking the law has a right to be protected, and if he bets in the street on those horses I saw racing at Bicton he has no possible chance of winning. In conclusion I challenge the Government to refuse to bring in the legislation asked for. I claim that the support of Parliament is due to the committee, and unless we get that full and unqualified support, I for one will certainly resign from the committee.

Question—put and passed.

House adjourned at 5 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 23rd September, 1915.

	PAGE
Paper presented	1077
Question: Esperance Northwards Railway ...	1077
Standing Orders Suspension	1077
Bills: Control of Trade in War Time Act Continuance 2s., Com., 3s.	1078
Government Electric Works Act Amendment, returned	1039
Roads Act Amendment and Continuation, returned	1093

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands (for the Acting Premier): Audit of Trading Concerns under the Trading Concerns Act, 1912, as on the 18th September, 1915.

QUESTION — ESPERANCE-NORTHWARDS RAILWAY.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Minister for Works: What tonnage of material for the construction of the Esperance-North-

wards Railway has been sent to Esperance—(a.) sleepers; (b.) rails and fastenings? 2, What is the name of the firm which has been given the charter? 3, What amount per ton has been paid, or is to be paid, for freight on same? 4, Were tenders called in the usual way? 5, How many miles of line will such material construct?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, (a.) About 688 loads; (b.) about 166 tons, also 6 jetty wagons and sundries. 2, No charter has been made. 3, Rails, fastenings, and sundries, £1 7s. 6d. per ton; 6 jetty trucks, £31 8s. the lot; sleepers, £2 per load. 4, It is not the usual business method of calling tenders when booking freight. 5, Two miles of rails and fastenings; 11 miles of sleepers.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

Control of Trade in War Time Act Continuance Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [4.33]: Before the Orders of the Day are called I desire to ask the House to agree to the suspension of the Standing Orders for the sole purpose of enabling the passing of Item 3 through all its stages to-day. This is rendered necessary because, unless we get the Bill to the Legislative Council to-day, we shall be unable to re-enact it before the expiration of the Bill on the 30th September. I will explain the details of the Bill later.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You only wish to suspend the Standing Orders for the purpose of dealing with this one Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as to permit the passing of the Control of Trade in War Time Act Continuance Bill through its remaining stages on this day.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is an absolute majority of the House present and I declare the motion carried.

BILL—CONTROL OF TRADE IN WAR TIME ACT CONTINU- ANCE.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: The introduction of this Bill is rendered necessary because another place in its wisdom limited the operations of the measure, which was introduced last session, until the 30th September of this year. When the Bill was originally introduced it was proposed to allow it to continue during the currency of the war, and while that was the general idea of the Bill the limitation renders it necessary to introduce it again this year. I would like to point out that the Commission, which was appointed under the Bill, was appointed under the Foodstuffs Commission Act, which was also introduced last session, but that Act continues in force during the currency of the war and can be proclaimed from time to time. The Commission which was appointed under the Foodstuffs Commission was given power to get all information in regard to stocks held by different merchants and generally investigate matters in regard to the supply of foodstuffs, and continues, and the Control of Trade in War Time Act, on which the limitation has been placed, enables the Commission to fix prices and generally regulate them so that an injustice will not be done to the general consumer.

Mr. George: What is the personnel of the Commission?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Simpson is the chairman, and Mr. Rae and the Hon. T. H. Bath comprise the remaining members of the Commission.

Mr. Thomson: And what salary are they receiving?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think they are receiving £750 a year each. In regard to the work of the Commission, I think that, while there may have been at the outset some little misunderstanding with regard to the work, I can say now that the Commission is working smoothly with the general business community and, at the same time, is see-

ing that trade is so regulated that the consumer is not unduly penalised. Most of the work of the Commission has been done by private conference with the various tradespeople and business people, and by arriving at an understanding as to what the maximum prices should be without going to the trouble of fixing maximum prices. Then again, in certain commodities it has been rendered necessary for the Commission to fix the maximum prices. I think it is to be said to the credit of the Commission that the members of it have been able to arrive at an understanding with the producers in a large majority of cases without fixing the prices. I do not think that I need take up any more time than to quote what was said by the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, speaking at the annual meeting of that body on the 24th August, in reference to emergency legislation passed by the Government, he said—

As regards the control of trade, in some of the States many prices which were fixed had been rescinded, but the moral effect of the Commission in Western Australia had been enormous and most of the work had been done by private conference with those interested, and in his opinion the Commission had justified its existence.

That is a tribute from the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and speaks volumes and demonstrates, so far as the business people are concerned, that everything is working smoothly. From the consumer's point of view I think the prices in Western Australia compare favourably with those in other parts of Australia. We have the figures quoted regularly by Mr. Knibbs, the Commonwealth statistician, in regard to the increased prices in the cost of living since the outbreak of the war, and this demonstrates the fact that in Western Australia we do get through remarkably well. A great deal of the credit for this State of things is due to the Commission, and I do not think that there can be any objection to continue the operations of that Commission, either from the point of view of present necessities, or from the point of view of the personnel of the Commission. From the State's point of

view I think it will be recognised that it is essential that the Commission should be continued because the war is still with us, and the difficulties that we were in the midst of when the Bill was introduced still continue, and it is necessary that we should show that the consumers are protected, and that no undue advantage is taken of the difficulties that are besetting the communities of Western Australia and the world generally at the present time.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have they no work to do at the present time?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are constantly arranging prices with the general merchants. For instance, quite recently they came to an understanding in regard to the price of sugar. That was particularly as a result of the attitude of the Commonwealth Government. Since that, arrangements have been made in regard to butter. Then, members of the Commission go through the goldfields districts. Mr. Rae, I think, leaves to-night for the Murchison and Meekatharra for the purpose of investigating complaints which have been received from that centre. Again, they have been on the goldfields, and while there have had conferences and arrived at understandings with the general retailers as to prices. Generally speaking, the Commission is kept very busy indeed. It is taking up a lot of Mr. Simpson's time and, in my opinion, the Commission has justified its existence because its members are restricting any undue increase of prices and they are doing it in such a manner that they are not causing any serious complaint from the business people.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Do you think they are justified in spending over £2,000 in 12 months?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Commission can go out of existence if we can get over the difficulties which beset us at the present time.

Mr. James Gardiner: Why not have one Commission instead of three?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Commission is composed of Mr. Simpson,

the Chairman, Mr. Rae, and Mr. Bath, and that is the only Commission.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.46]: I think we are all in accord with the intention of the Act to regulate prices so that no one shall make undue profits out of the community in times of stress such as we are going through to-day, but I would like to see Section 4 of the Act amended. I think we are paying too much money for the amount of benefit which the community are receiving. It is costing over £2,000 in salaries, and I think we can still get the same effect by having members of the civil service appointed to the Commission. As a matter of fact the Chairman is a civil servant and I think the work of the Commission would be effected much more economically than is being done at the present time if my suggestion were adopted. We are faced with a falling revenue and we are looking out for various means of economising. In my opinion this is one of the places where we can effect an economy of at least over £2,000. We can still have the Commission, and the intention of the Act can still be put into force. I propose, when the Bill is in Committee, to move an amendment to the effect that the Royal Commission shall be composed entirely of members of the service. There are many civil servants at the present time who are not overtaxed with work and if we appointed them we would be able to get the work done at considerably less cost to the country.

Mr. WILLMOTT (Nelson) [4.49]: I do not consider it is necessary that this Commission should continue to hold office.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Not such a big Commission.

Mr. WILLMOTT: We have three commissioners each drawing a salary of £750 and a low estimate of the cost of the Commission is £4,000 per annum. Economy is the prevailing note at the present time or it should be; then why throw this extra burden on an already over-burdened community? In my opinion Mr. Rae, one of the members of the Commission, has absolutely upset the whole State in the past by usurping the rights and functions of the Czar.

The Minister for Works: He is one of the best men who ever sat on a Commission.

Mr. WILLMOTT: That may be the hon. member's opinion but it is not mine.

The Minister for Works: He is a really good man.

Mr. WILLMOTT: Have the members of the Commission justified the retention of their services? In my opinion they have not. In the past we had a scarcity of commodities. We were short of wheat for seed and for gristing. The poultrymen wanted feed and there was a scarcity all round. But what are we looking forward to in the future? A superfluity of the very things that these people had to deal with. There is another point. As we are going to have a superfluity, I would point out that the Commissioners do not fix the minimum, they only fix the maximum and it is going to be the minimum that will trouble us in the future. I am afraid we shall not get enough for what we are growing this year to make it a payable proposition. I think that the laws of supply and demand will settle the prices most effectually. The evidence which has come to my knowledge has not shown me that the retail trade have made any violent attempt to unduly derange prices. Therefore, the Commission have nothing to plume themselves on in this respect. The Government have power to deal with any matter which may be likely to crop up and I think they can do that equally as well as the board, and in saying that I am not paying the Government any great compliment. The expense of the board will be saved and on the score of economy therefore the board should go. If, in the opinion of the House, it is necessary to still have a Commission, then I think one Commissioner should be sufficient, and Mr. Simpson could carry out the duties effectively. I cannot support the measure, which will re-create a board which, in my opinion, is at the present time quite unnecessary.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [4.54]: I would have been better pleased if the Minister had given us a more de-

tailed account of the work this Commission has done during the period of its existence.

The Minister for Lands: They publish their reports regularly.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Has not the Minister an official document to present to the House? I must confess that I have not been able to follow the details of the work of the Commission. I know they have been particularly busy. The personnel of the Commission should not come into the question. We are asked to consider whether the measure in existence is to be re-enacted.

Mr. Taylor: Whether there is really a necessity for it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes. We thought last session that, owing to the war, it was necessary that the Government should have extreme powers and Parliament gave the Government extreme powers in many directions, powers which they might or might not be called upon to exercise in the interests of the people generally. This is one instance. When gentlemen under the law are empowered to interfere with the ordinary channels of trade and to fix prices for the necessities of life, and when everything by proclamation can be made a necessity of life, that must cause a certain amount of friction, and it did at the inception. I have not heard of many complaints of late; therefore I must come to the conclusion, either that there is no work being done by the board, that they have finished their usefulness, or else the work is being done in such a manner that it meets with the approval of the public generally. That is how it appeals to me. I want to deprecate any attack on an individual member of the board.

Mr. Willmott: Perhaps you have not suffered under the board.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member has no right to single out any one individual and attack him in this Chamber. He can attack the Commission as a body. Mr. Rae, to whom he referred, was appointed on my recommendation.

The Minister for Works: And he is a really good man.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Mr. Rae was appointed because of his life-long experience in connection with necessities of life.

Mr. Willmott: Wheat?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Flour and all the products of wheat. At that time, and I still think so, Mr. Rae had every qualification for the position. He was the one man that I could select in Western Australia who had the most varied experience, who was at liberty, and who had no personal interest in any avenue of trade in the State. He may have made mistakes but if he has done so, then they are the mistakes of the Commission as a whole, because they have endorsed that gentleman's actions. It is not right that hon. members should attack gentlemen who are giving their services to the State, even though they are receiving emoluments. These emoluments, however, are nothing in comparison to what gentlemen like Mr. Rae could earn in private life. Let us discuss whether this Commission has finished its work and whether the times are such now that we can do without them, and allow the Act to expire. I do not know that we can say that such a time has arrived. We passed the measure when war broke out, feeling that there were many difficult matters which would have to receive attention. The war is still with us and is likely to be with us for the next two years, in my opinion, possibly longer. To-day I believe we are as nearly normal as we can be so far as prices of supplies are concerned. It is marvellous what little dislocation there has been since the war broke out in connection with finance and trade generally. Is that likely to continue? Can we satisfy ourselves that we shall not require the operation of this Act any longer? I for one would be rather chary about coming to a definite conclusion.

The Minister for Lands: The very fact that one member of the Commission has to go to Meekatharra to-night is evidence that the existence of the Commission is still necessary.

Mr. Taylor: There has been an application from Meekatharra for a visit from the Commission for the past six or seven months.

The Minister for Lands: They claim that the prices charged are too high.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That shows that the inhabitants of this portion of the State feel there is work for the Commission to do on their behalf. I would be very chary of agreeing to this measure being removed from our statute-book. I think it would be wise to pass the Bill, and then if the Government find that the Commission can be dispensed with, surely in the interests of economy it will be their duty to see that it is suspended for the time being. I take it there is no reason why the Commission should not be disbanded, provided the Government are satisfied they can do without their advice. Then, if an occasion does arise between this and next September when Parliament is in session again, they should be called together. They could be re-appointed. I think the Bill should be passed. Whether it should be amended rests with the judgment of members of the House. Some have suggested that we should have one commissioner and that he should be a civil servant, Mr. G. W. Simpson, I presume. I do not agree with this. If the Commission are to exercise these powers, we should have some outside advice. We should have men who have been accustomed to trade and commerce generally and who could take a wider view than a man who has spent all his life in the public service.

Mr. Thomson: Would not the Chamber of Commerce give him advice? They have in the past.

Mr. Foley: And given good advice.

Mr. Thomson: According to the Minister they have at any rate.

Mr. Foley: That is what they are there for.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I would remind the leader of the Country Party, who is evidently opposed to the Bill in its entirety—

Mr. Willmott: Not in its entirety. I said if it is necessary to have one com-

missioner, have one, but I pointed out that one member of the Commission would be better off that body.

The Minister for Lands: If there is one commissioner who should be there, he is the one.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. gentleman did not bring any direct charge against that commissioner or show that he had failed in his duty. He made a general statement to the effect that he himself was not satisfied with that commissioner's actions, but I deprecate an attack being made on one commissioner. The Commission as a whole are to blame, if there be any blame.

Mr. Willmott: If I had had time, I could have quoted a column about it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Again I would point out that the hon. member must blame the Commission and not an individual member of it. The chairman, equally with the other members, must carry the responsibility. The farmers welcomed the original Act.

The Minister for Lands: It will be a bad day for them if it is not continued.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And why did the farmers welcome it? Because, on the showing of the hon. member, there was a shortage of wheat, and they did not desire to lack seed wheat. Therefore, they said: "Certainly let us have this legislation. Let us have a commission appointed." I think I suggested a commission in order that we might be sure of getting seed wheat supplies, and, further, that farmers might not have to pay too much for them. The commission have got through that troublesome time, and, though there may have been some individual injustice here and there and some errors made, I repeat what I said when the Bill was introduced originally, that I would be sorry to take on the work which had to be carried out at that time. The Commission may have reached calmer waters now, but they had a very rough passage at first. It was a very difficult task, but the farmers have got through the seed wheat difficulty which was the main incentive for passing the original Act, and now I suppose everything is wrong with the personnel of the Commission and

with the Act itself. I cannot agree with that; I do not think it is a fair view to take. We should endeavour to view the matter from a broader standpoint than that of complaint against an individual commissioner. If there is a complaint to be made against any individual commissioner, there is a proper way to make it. If an hon. member cannot get satisfaction from the Government, he can introduce a motion and have it discussed in the House on its merits. But that should not influence us in regard to the legislation we are asked to consider. Someone interjected that the Commission could not fix a minimum price. Of course not; they can only fix a maximum price, especially with wheat, which is a commodity in world-wide demand. It would be impossible to fix a minimum price for wheat.

Mr. Willmott: Who wanted them to?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I said someone interjected to that effect.

Mr. Willmott: I said they could not. It would be very nice for us if they could.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, it would not, because farmers would not sell their wheat. It would be on their hands.

Mr. Willmott: Then you would starve.

Mr. Foley: They were very careful about a maximum price when the Bill was introduced.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course it is the maximum price that must be fixed and that must be decided by the law of supply and demand at all times.

Mr. Willmott: You are supporting my argument.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am glad of that. I do not intend to oppose the second reading because I admit there was justification for this measure twelve months ago. The war is still continuing and, if it is not necessary to-day, it might be necessary at any time during the continuance of the war. Let us have the legislation on the statute-book and, if the Government can see their way to economise, certainly let them do it. They should not expend £4,000 a year if there is no work to be done. I have advocated that, in any Government department, men should not be kept in idleness. If there is no work for the Commission to do,

their services should be dispensed with. This £4,000 should not be expended unless the country is getting a fair return for it, but for that the Government are responsible and must exercise their judgment.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think that either Mr. Rae or Mr. Bath would continue to sit there and collect their fees if the work did not justify it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am sure Mr. Rae would not; in fact, I do not think either of these gentlemen would. I think they would be only too ready to report to the Government if their work had finished for the time being, and suggest that they should be relieved of their office and that the Commission should be suspended. I hope the second reading will be carried and if, in Committee, any hon. member suggests any amendment, it will receive due consideration.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [5.9]: There can be no question that this is a proper time for any member to raise any question on the Bill. The Bill was introduced last year, dealing with a tentative proposition, due to the State and the whole British Empire being in the throes of a great war which is not yet a thing of the past, and precautions were suggested which seemed to be wise in order to meet any situation which might arise. We have had a year's trial of those precautions and during the trial the gentlemen who have taken the responsibility on their shoulders have been the subject of various complaints and, in many instances, I have no doubt, justifiable complaints, though probably some were not justifiable. Surely, therefore, it is competent for any member, if he chooses, to question the proposition either as to an individual or the whole of the members of the Commission. That is a matter of taste. Whatever we may think in connection with the individual members, or the Commission as a whole, we cannot be blind to the fact that there has been during the last 12 months any number of complaints from people who considered themselves aggrieved in connection with the dealings of the Commission. While I think it is necessary to continue the op-

erations of the Act, if a member like the leader of the Country party holds any strong views that the administration of the Act has not been in the best interests of the people affected, he is quite within his rights in bringing the matter before the notice of Parliament. Whatever the personnel of the Commission may have been, the introduction of an Act of Parliament, the operations of which the people had only the scantiest idea, must necessarily at the outset have led to some confusion and probably to some injustice though unintentional, and some pecuniary loss, but the lessons of the last 12 months should cause us to conclude that, if it is by reason of instructions which were not as distinctly given at the time as they would be to-day with the experience we have had, it should be for the Minister to take notice of the complaints and endeavour to put the matter on a proper footing. I take it this is what the member for Nelson desired and I think he was quite within his rights in directing attention to the matter.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [5.12]: I do not intend to oppose the Bill because I think Parliament is quite justified in passing the measure. The Commission have done very good work indeed and, seeing that the Act was passed at the beginning of the war, it is necessary, on account of the war still prevailing that this statute should be re-enacted. I regret that the Minister did not give us some information in regard to the work of the Commission. It is apparent to even an outsider that, in the early existence of the Commission, they did an enormous amount of work and on the whole, so far as one can judge, they did very good work. We are told they made some very grave mistakes, and perhaps this is correct. I can scarcely imagine a board appointed for such a purpose not making mistakes. If they did not make mistakes, they would probably not be a good board, because they would have attempted nothing at all. The Commission had to act promptly, and it was work for which there was probably no precedent, and it would not

be surprising if they made mistakes. I do not intend to criticise the commissioners individually. I may have my own opinions on that question, but it would be unfair for me to take advantage of my place in this House to criticise them individually, because I have no accurate personal knowledge of the work they have done. Therefore it is all the more regrettable that the Minister did not give us some information as to whether the Commission is necessary in the future. There is no question that the Act is necessary. If it was necessary at the beginning of the war, it is necessary during the continuance of the war. But, while the Act is necessary, I do not know whether it is necessary to retain this expensive Commission, which we are told costs about £4,000 a year, to administer the Act in future. Surely the great bulk of the work, if not the whole of it, must have been already performed, and it is probably only a matter of seeing that the regulations and prices fixed are observed in future. No doubt, there will be a certain amount of detail to attend to, but, as has been suggested by the member for Katanning, one commissioner might probably be well able to carry out that duty. It is a time for economy, and the Government should not lose any opportunity of practising it. I should say that the whole of the work could be carried out in future by one commissioner and in that way we should be able to save a third of the expense. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, but when in Committee I will support an amendment in the direction indicated.

Mr. Male: Just as necessary as in the past.

Mr. NAIRN (Swan) [5.15]: I take very largely the same view as that just expressed, with this exception, that we agree that this Commission has done very useful and essential work.

The Minister for Lands: The expenditure of £2,000 or £3,000 is a very small amount compared with the value of the work done.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Is it necessary in the future?

Mr. NAIRN: I am quite convinced that the greater responsibility and the greater burden of the work have already been completed. I want to say emphatically that I do not believe there is employment for three commissioners for one day in the week at the present time at £750 a year each. I am not going to express any opinions as to what has happened in the past or as to what services have been rendered by this Commission. Most of us have already formed our own opinion on the subject. I am convinced, at all events, that this work to-day is not work which requires a great amount of expert knowledge. I honestly believe that any reliable costing clerk in any reputable warehouse in the City would be capable of laying down a reasonable basis at which the commodities were to be sold. It is purely a matter of arriving at the cost in order to see that these goods are not sold at an exorbitant price, and at a price at which it has been found necessary to place them in the warehouses. In regard to the larger issues, such as bran, wheat, and pollard, which run into many hundreds of thousands of pounds, the question of price has already been determined, so that most of the work still to be done will be in connection with foodstuffs. In dealing with foodstuffs all that is required is a good knowledge of costing work. To pay three commissioners to do this for something like £2,000 a year is—

Mr. Taylor: Absurd.

Mr. NAIRN: It is absurd; that is the only word which can describe it. To say the least of it, it is also extravagant. I would not go as far as the hon. member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) and say that there should be only one Commissioner. I do not think one Commissioner could do the work, or would possess the necessary amount of expert knowledge. I think the three Commissioners might be called together when necessary, and that such necessity would not arise except in extraordinary circumstances. Every one

who has any knowledge of business affairs, has by this time arrived at a pretty good idea of what the landing cost of any article is that comes to the State to-day. Why, therefore, pay three Commissioners something in the nature of £2,000 a year in order to arrive at what we can ascertain for ourselves by looking at our books for a matter of three minutes. If the Minister desires to have my vote on the Bill I hope he will make it clear that he does not intend permanently to pay these three members of the Commission at the rate of £2,000 a year.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [5.17]: In supporting the measure I must say I am sorry to hear the leader of the Country party bringing the personal element into the debate. When the measure was previously before this Chamber we were told decidedly by the Premier that this was a question which he wished the House to debate on non-party lines, and from the point of view of having the interests of the State at heart. He backed this up by asking members of the House not of the same political belief as himself to recommend men. A man was recommended, and we have heard the expression of opinion of the Minister to-day that it was not possible to get a better man. That being so, I think his argument in support of the action of the Government in that regard was a good one, and refutes the statement of the leader of the Country party. In my opinion the arguments used by several hon. members this afternoon, that £750 a year for each of the Commissioners is too much, are untenable.

Mr. Thomson: It is three times that.

Mr. FOLEY: My belief is that there is too much red-tapeism in the public service to pay a man who honestly does his work the amount which he really earns. We might possibly get men from the civil service to-day to do the work, and I do not say there are not men in the service who are capable of performing the necessary duties. Some hon. members have expressed the opinion that the members of the Commission are being overpaid for the work they do. It appears to me that few hon. members seem to have any real

knowledge of what the Commissioners accomplish.

Mr. Taylor: No one does.

Mr. FOLEY: They should have brought some argument before this Chamber to convince those who were supporting the measure that these Commissioners were being paid for something they did not do. I contend if these Commissioners get £750 a year each for their services that they have well earned it.

Mr. Thomson: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Nairn: No one disputes that.

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) says that no one disputes the fact that they have earned their money, but in the course of his speech he said that, as a business man, and as one having a knowledge of business affairs, there was not work for the Commission for one day in the week.

Mr. Nairn: And I repeat that.

Mr. FOLEY: If they had not earned their salaries—

Mr. Nairn: They have finished their work. Cannot you see that?

Mr. Griffiths: Past and present.

Mr. FOLEY: Why have not hon. members brought something forward to show that they have completed their labours? In my opinion the work of the Commission to-day is of equal, if not more, importance to the State than it was when the measure was first introduced. I certainly have criticised this Commission in this Chamber, but I know this, that were it left, at all events since the inception of the war to the present time, for the law of supply and demand to say what the people should pay for the commodities of life, the man earning a small rate of wage would not have much to spare to-day after he had paid for these commodities of life.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What commodities have they fixed the price for?

Mr. FOLEY: So far as general commodities are concerned—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Very few prices have been fixed; only about three.

Mr. Taylor: Give us the items they have reduced the cost of.

Mr. FOLEY: When the hon. member ceases interrupting I will endeavour to do so. I was going to say that if this Commission has only reduced the price of three articles the fact that it was in existence has prevented many business men from exploiting not only the wage earner—

Mr. Taylor: That is only a bald statement.

Mr. FOLEY: But every class of man who has to work for his living in this State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They are all wage-earners.

Mr. FOLEY: As a proof of that, I may say that in my own district recently the Commission did exceptionally good work in respect to the regulation of prices. There was a misunderstanding as to the price which was being paid for one commodity, meat. Although there were cattle grown in the district, they were being sent to outside centres, and the people in the Leonora district were paying a very high price for beef, certainly a higher price than was being paid in Kalgoorlie. The hon. member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) wants to know what commodities the Commission have reduced. They have, for instance, reduced the price of meat, not to the detriment of those people who were producing it, but the business acumen which the members of the Commission possess enabled them to so arrange it as to allow the man who grew the meat and sold it to the people to make a fair thing and still lose nothing from the business point of view. Again, this Commission have done excellent work regarding men who live in remote districts. Recently freights were raised on our railways. Every business man in outback centres accordingly raised the price of his commodities to a very great extent, and used as an argument that the rise in freights had caused him to raise the price of his articles to a very considerable extent.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Could we not get the Commission on to the railway freights?

Mr. FOLEY: The Commission went into that phase of the question. I know

for a solid fact that they took that matter into consideration with the result that the people who were charging these increased prices are not charging them today. I am not concerned with the methods they adopted to bring these prices down. I do say, however, that if this Commission has now cost the maximum amount of £4,000 it is money well spent, and I believe it can be said to have been responsible for the saving of quite £20,000 to the citizens of the State. There is another phase of the question which was discussed by the leader of the Country party. He said that he thought they ought to fix the minimum price for commodities. I want to remind him that when the question of the price of supplies was being discussed in this House on a previous occasion all that he and the members who thought politically with him were concerned about was as to how low a price they could buy everything for that was necessary for them to get their crops in. They were reminded on that occasion, and have since been reminded by the hon. member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) of this fact, that it was not so much a question of considering the man who had the stuff to sell, but of considering the man who was in the unfortunate position of wanting the commodity but having insufficient money with which to buy it. Let hon. members take these words to heart. I believe they were spoken in earnest by the hon. member for Pingelly, and it was the thought that permeated the mind of every member that we wished to protect those who were right down. Now, looking at it from the point of view of the farmers and for their benefit, because they have a valuable harvest coming to them they say, "Take the whole thing away and let us get as much as we can." The law of supply and demand—

Mr. Thomson: That is what they have got.

Mr. FOLEY: They will get in any case. I assure the hon. member, who represents the farming industry, that if the Commission for the control of trade in war time had not been in existence then those few men in the State who had con-

trol of the supplies would have been in a very much better position to-day than they actually are. The fact was that the Commission did its work well, and did not only consider the man who had the stuff to sell, but its first consideration was for the man who wanted the stuff and only had a little money with which to pay for it. When I hear my hon. friend speak of supply and demand, I sometimes think they have not studied the question too closely.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is a very sound law, nevertheless.

Mr. FOLEY: I grant that, but I am glad to think that this House—not the Government, but this House—passed such a Bill, resulting in greater advantage to the State. The position would have been much less advantageous if those holding supplies had not been controlled by the Commission under the principal Act. So far as the members of the Commission are concerned, although I have criticised them, I consider good work has been and is being done; and therefore I wish to see the measure re-enacted. The leader of the Country party in concluding said he would vote against the Bill because the appointment of a Commission at the present time is not necessary. When the leader of the Opposition asserted that the leader of the Country party had used those words, the former gentleman said that he did not want the Commission but only wanted a minimum fixed. I can assure the leader of the Country party that he did use those words. However, I have no intention of indulging in tedious repetition. My desire is that the Bill should be carried, and that the entire subject should be discussed without the introduction of any personal element whatever.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Greenough) [5.32]: I wish to say a few words in general support of the Bill. Upon the declaration of war it was urged that a measure of this kind was needed to regulate prices, and I personally agree with that contention. In the past the farmers, or at all events a section of them, have had to suffer as much as anyone else has suffered from the regulation of prices.

That is plain from the fact that the price of wheat was fixed at from 7s. to 7s. 4d. per bushel, whilst imported wheat cost 8s. to land here. The farmers have not complained on that score, because they recognise that, whilst a number of them had produce to sell, another large section were buyers; and the consumer was also to be considered. Taking an all-round view of the situation, therefore, we held that a measure of this kind was needed, and we now consider that its existence has been justified. With regard to the Commission, the appointment of that body was justified because the provisions of the measure could not be carried into effect in the absence of a body to regulate prices. I do not think the commissioners receive more remuneration than either their services or the duties of the position entitle them to receive. We all know that at the initiation of an undertaking or a scheme there is far more trouble and worry than after the affair has been got into working order. I give the members of the Commission credit for fearlessness in their efforts to do the best they could for the benefit of the people as a whole. The measure is still necessary, because abnormal conditions are still prevailing. However, the work of starting has now been done; and on the question of salaries I may point out that these were fixed when money was freer and the necessity for economy was not so acute. In view of the altered conditions in the two respects I have mentioned, I think the salaries might be somewhat reduced. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [5.35]: As regards the Commission I agree with the contention of the member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) respecting economy. The taunt was thrown out just now that we farmers should have a soul above wheat. In our turn, we might go on to taunt the pastoralists with having no soul above sheep; and the Minister from whom the taunt came might be advised to have a soul above his Parliamentary allowance. In any case, it must be admitted that it is very wise of the farmers to keep their minds on wheat.

When the harvest has been garnered, the Minister for Lands will no doubt have his mind very much on wheat, with a view to repayment of the indebtedness of settlers. I am not against the Commission as a Commission, nor do I deny the necessity for its existence. That necessity has at all events existed, although at the present time it is not so pressing as it was in earlier days. In the administration of the measure, however, I, as representative of a section to whom the greatest injustice has been done—

Mr. Thomson: What was that?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I represent a section of the community who have been more unjustly dealt with than anyone else has been, owing to the work of the Commission. The scandalous treatment meted out to Mr. Whitfield of Greenhills, who was at the time in a weak state of health, will be fresh in the recollection of hon. members. Mr. Whitfield was treated in a most arbitrary fashion by a member of the Commission. There is also the case of Mr. Marwick, a justice of the peace and a former member of our Upper House, who was treated with great indignity by the Commission. Apart from drawing attention to these two cases, I have little to say. I believe the measure is still necessary, but I agree with the member for Swan that considerations of economy should enter into the question of remuneration.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley) [5-37]: I have only a few words to say in supporting the passage of this Bill. A good deal of adverse criticism has been passed on the measure by members of this House; but it seems to me that a large proportion of that criticism has been directed against the personnel of the Commission rather than against the necessity for the Bill. When war broke out it was considered necessary that such a measure should be passed; and I think the same necessity as existed then exists to-day. Whilst it might be difficult for the Minister to show in detail the many works which have been carried out by the Commission, I think the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) rather struck the key to the

position when he said that the fact of the existence of the Commission had prevented considerable abuses throughout the State. Even if the Commission had not a great deal of actual work to do, there is not the slightest doubt that the fact of their having certain powers given them has prevented abuses and will continue to prevent abuses. The personnel of the Commission is not a matter, I think, which should be discussed under this Bill at all. I myself have come into contact with the members of the Commission on many occasions, and I will say for all the members that I found them most considerate in their work and that I think they have worked well and faithfully and to the best of their ability. I deplore the fact that the individuals composing the Commission should be the subjects of general charges here, made in such a manner that the commissioners are not even able to defend themselves. It is injudicious, in my opinion, that arguments of that nature should be used in the debate at all. As to the proposal to reduce the Commission in number, or to appoint civil servants to the Commission, I fail to see how civil servants can be better qualified to carry out the work than are men who have had experience of commercial life throughout the State. On the contrary, I consider that men of commercial experience are far better qualified for the work than civil servants can be. Possibly there are in the civil service men qualified for the work, provided they have had commercial experience previously to joining the service; but I think we should be better guided in forming the Commission of men from outside. On the question of salary, members were very emphatic in urging economy; but I desire to stress this point—if we put men in responsible positions, we must pay them such salaries as to put them absolutely above suspicion. They must be remunerated in accordance with the responsibility which they carry. In my opinion, it would be petty and unwise to endeavour to get a Commission on small salaries. I consider that £750 a year is not unreasonable for the work

and responsibility which the members of the Commission have to undertake.

Member: Can we afford it?

Mr. MALE: It is not a question of whether we can afford it. The question is whether there is necessity for the Commission, and, if so, whether we are going to pay adequately the men who are to carry out the duties of the Commission. Would it be wise to make appointments to the Commission at salaries of £100 a year? Could we expect men accepting such salaries to undertake the responsibilities which have been placed on the shoulders of the Commission in controlling the trade of the whole State? The saving of a few hundred pounds a year is a very small matter as compared with the importance of the work to be undertaken, and such a saving would not be economy in the right direction. I believe I am right in saying that the members of the Commission not only act as controllers of trade for the State, but also act as a kind of sub-Commission for the Commonwealth, undertaking duties connected with the Federal Control of Trade Commission as well.

Mr. Smith: Does the Commonwealth pay any of their salaries?

Mr. MALE: I presume not. Whether the Commonwealth ought to do so or not, I am unable to say. I shall have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, because I consider the measure necessary in the abnormal times in which we are living.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5-44]: I trust that the Minister, when replying to the remarks of hon. members on the second reading of this measure, will be able to give a more detailed account of the work done by the Commission since their appointment. One cannot but feel surprised when one hears members extol the capacities of those constituting the Commission. As a set off against that, the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) in no uncertain language voiced his belief that it was absolutely impossible to find civil servants competent to sit on the Commission. That was the opinion expressed by the member for Kimberley, and that hon. member

is considered by a large section of the commercial community of Western Australia to be a business man of no mean order. He tells us that we need to get men from outside to act as commissioners on this board. But it is indeed refreshing for me to remind that hon. member that one of those Commissioners, Mr. Simpson, has been a civil servant for many years and more than that, the other members of the board made him their chairman.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Government appointed the Chairman.

Mr. TAYLOR: Then the Government must have thought that Mr. Simpson, the civil servant, was a capable man for the position. When the Bill was brought down originally it was received by the House with open arms.

Hon. Frank Wilson: With grave concern.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was then considered that we were confronted with great difficulties arising out of the drought. There was a shortage in all agricultural areas of seed wheat, fodder, wheat for gristing purposes and all other commodities. The Bill was brought in because of this difficulty and because of the danger of an increase in the price of supplies. The measure is now narrowed down. It really only deals with foodstuffs.

The Minister for Lands: It deals with the food of the community.

Mr. TAYLOR: The larger items, such as soft goods and ironmongery, are not touched at all by the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, they are.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Minister then should have stated that in submitting the Bill. We have seen reports of the Commission published in the Press and we have seen published the comments of others side by side with those reports. Taking the bulk of the people, one must realise that the board has gone a long way towards justifying its existence, but there is hardly the same justification today for three commissioners to continue to regulate the prices of commodities which come within their purview. All the work can easily be done now by one man and if the work increased there

would still be the power to give assistance. One Commissioner would have just as much power as three.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Government have power to appoint one Commissioner if they like.

Mr. TAYLOR: According to what the Minister has stated he intends to continue the appointment of the three Commissioners and it is for Parliament to state whether the three are necessary. The country in its present financial condition cannot stand unnecessary expenditure. The functions of this Commission have been cut down so much because of the good season which is in view that they will have nothing to do except to deal with the food supply, and I am of opinion that one man could regulate the prices in the next 12 months. I hope the Minister when he replies will give us some details of the work the Commission has performed in the past.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth) [5.52]: While I agree that the measure was necessary in the past, because of the bad times we were passing through on account of both the drought and the war, I am much in doubt as to whether we are justified in continuing the operation of the Bill now that the drought is no longer with us, and because of the efforts we are making to exercise economy. There have been three Commissioners at work, each drawing £750 per annum, but that is only a portion of the expense to which the State has been subjected. The Minister when replying should give us some idea of the cost of the Commission. The heavier portion of the work of the Commission has been completed and now that a good season is assured, and we are practically self-contained so far as food supplies are concerned, there should not be quite so much work for the Commission to perform. We are urging the Government to economise in every direction and here is the opportunity to exercise what we have been advocating. I am satisfied that if it is necessary to continue the Commission, one gentleman can without any great difficulty carry out the duties.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford—in reply) [5.55]: I am rather inclined to think that some members have confused this Commission with a board which was appointed under another Act. The Grain and Foodstuff Board was appointed more particularly to look after the producers, to see that the farmers got seed wheat at a reasonable price and to generally regulate things. That work has been accomplished and a Bill is now before us to bring the operations of that board to an end. There were three members of that board and they were fully occupied until their work was completed. The measure now before the House is a totally different one. The Commission in question has been appointed principally to protect the interests of the consumer and I want to appeal to hon. members to recognise that. I was sorry to hear the narrow view taken by the leader of the Country Party, who thought that consideration should be extended to the producer and that we should fix the minimum price. Surely Parliament owes a duty to the man who has to buy. We are dealing now with a Commission which has been regulating the price of the daily bread of the general community, and because there has not been a great deal of fuss and wrangling lately, members have come to the conclusion that no work is being done. The members of the Commission are fully occupied. Day after day they are devoting all their attention to their work. It has been said that the work could be done by one man. That is totally impossible. We cannot regulate in Perth the prices for the whole State. Only to-day Mr. Rae left for the Murchison in order to see whether the storekeepers and business people are over-charging the consumers. Hon. members fail to realise the magnitude of the task they would set the members of the Commission by asking them to regulate the prices from Perth. How could they sit in Perth and regulate prices that would apply to Leonora and Lawlers? It is necessary for them to acquire local knowledge before they can fix prices. The members of the Com-

mission have lately been to Leonora and fixed the prices there, and generally speaking things are going along smoothly in all the centres they have visited. Lately there were complaints from the Murchison about the prices which were being charged in some of the towns. These complaints are now receiving attention, and while Mr. Rae is on the Murchison, Mr. Bath may be in some other part of the State, while the Chairman is remaining in Perth where his presence is always required. The Chairman must always be on the spot and he is constantly coming into contact with individual traders. For instance, a letter may be received complaining of the action of a trader in overcharging consumers. That trader is brought up and his affairs are investigated and he is then told what he might do. If that trader does not comply voluntarily with the request of the Commission, the Commission then has the power to fix the price and see that the consumer is adequately protected. Take the figures of the leader of the Country party, who over-estimated the expenditure at £4,000.

Mr. Willmott: I do not think I over-estimated it.

Mr. Allen: What has it cost?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot give the exact figures. I think they have only a secretary, who is shorthand writer and typist, and does all their correspondence.

Mr. Willmott: And a clerk in addition; I think £4,000 a very modest estimate.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: At all events, those points can be raised when on the Estimates, where provision is made for the cost of administration generally. But, take the £4,000. What is that compared with the value of the work done in regulating prices for 300,000 people? The Commission deals, not with any one section, but with the whole of the community, and with all the necessities of life. Assuredly, a cost of £4,000 for keeping down prices and allowing us as a community to get along as well as we have done, is very little indeed. The figures in *Knibbs* show that the conditions in

Western Australia are far better than in any other part of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Smith: It does not follow that the Commission is responsible for that.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Indeed, practically all the credit for this result is due to the Commission. If we have not the Commission to regulate the prices, how is it to be done? The Government could not do it, for it would be utterly impossible for Ministers to devote attention to the volume of detail inseparable from the work, in addition to which they would be lacking in the necessary experience. One hon. member asked, "why not get some civil servant to do the work?" I question whether we have any man in the service with the necessary experience; even the chairman of the Commission has not that experience which would enable him to regulate prices in such a manner as to prevent friction between the retailer and the consumer. As a matter of fact, the credit of almost all the work performed by the Commission is due to Mr. Rae, whose experience has been of vast importance. It is true that Mr. Rae has been subjected to some criticism, but that was chiefly in regard to fixing the price of wheat, which, possibly, was a little out of his line. Even supposing he did make a mistake in that respect, the difficulty was overcome immediately the other board was appointed, because they at once accepted that responsibility, and Mr. Rae was able to devote all his attention to the other matters coming within the scope of the Commission. I desire to pay a special tribute to Mr. Rae. We have had this Commission before Cabinet on numerous occasions, and the amount of detail supplied by Mr. Rae, and the masterly way he dealt with the questions under consideration, proved to us that we had in him a very valuable man indeed, and one who had rendered invaluable service to the consumers of the State. It has been asked, why I do not give full details? Repeatedly reports of the Commission have been published in the Press and, as everyone has had an opportunity of reading those reports, I did not think it necessary to

arm myself with the wealth of detail concerning the operations of the board.

Mr. Allen : Do you not think that Mr. Rae, as one Commissioner, would be sufficient ?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : I do not think so. We have a good Commission. The chairman has an intimate knowledge of Government methods and of the public service, which is necessary to the work of the Commission. Mr. Rae has a commanding knowledge of commerce, and Mr. Bath an excellent knowledge of industrial affairs, and a strong sympathy with the consumers' point of view. I do not think we could improve the Commission.

Mr. Allen : Is there no reduction of expenditure which you can suggest ?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : Even if it be £4,000 a year I think the expenditure is fully justified. It is a small matter when we consider the value of the result achieved and the enormous saving to the general consumer.

Mr. Thomson : Would it not be sufficient to have the Act without the Commission ?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : It would be of no use having the Act unless we had the Commission to attend to the details. It is owing to the able administration of the Act that we have achieved the results referred to. The Act has been copied in every State of Australia. It has served to prove conclusively that in consequence of the Commission's administration we in Western Australia have had far greater advantages than they have had in other parts of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Allen : Is there no room for economy in regard to this Commission ?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : I would not care to reduce the remuneration paid, nor do I think it would be wise to interfere with the personnel of the Commission. As the leader of the Opposition suggested, if it was found the work was falling off, Mr. Rae and Mr. Bath would be the two first men to draw attention to it. Only to-day, Mr. Rae emphasised to me the enormous amount of work in hand at present, and I am

prepared to trust those men to come along and tell us immediately the work falls off, so that the Government may dispense with their services. As long as they say their services are necessary to the protection of the consumer the Government will not care to interfere with them. We are getting excellent results and should be satisfied.

Mr. Allen : Did you ever know of a man declaring that his services were not required ?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : Yes, I have known a man report that the work in which he was engaged was completed, and I am satisfied that both Mr. Rae and Mr. Bath would immediately notify the Government if they thought their services should be dispensed with. The Bill asks only that the Act shall be continued another 12 months. If before that time the Commission is found to be unnecessary, the Government can dispense with it. Let me draw the attention of the leader of the Country party to what will happen after the Industries Assistance Board ceases to guarantee the farmers to the storekeepers. In the existing condition of affairs the board has an opportunity of reviewing prices and seeing that the storekeeper is not unduly penalising the farmers.

Mr. Willmott : You are not guaranteeing the country storekeepers.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : We are.

Mr. Willmott : They say you are not.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : We are paying the country storekeepers, and the hon. member should know it. Owing to the Government guaranteeing payment, the farmer can go to Boan Bros. or Foy & Gibson and get his commodities to-day. But when the Industries Assistance Board ceases to guarantee payment, the farmers will have to go to the country storekeepers, who will then—unless the Act is re-enacted—have a glorious chance of fleecing the farmer.

Mr. Heitmann : The country storekeepers have stood pretty well by the farmers thus far.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : From the farmers' point of view the necessity for this measure will be greater in the

ature than it has been in the past, for when the Industries Assistance Board ceases to guarantee the farmer, the farmer will have to deal with the country store-keeper, who will be able to charge what he likes, unless the Control of Trade Commissioners are there to protect him.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Continuance of Act until 30th September, 1916 :

Mr. WILLMOTT : The Bill is a re-enactment and therefore it is of no use our objecting to the appointment of three Commissioners. It is useless to argue.

Clause put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment ; the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2) RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

1, Government Electric Works Act Amendment (without amendment).

2, Roads Act Amendment and Continuation (with amendments).

House adjourned at 6-17 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 28th September, 1915.

	PAGE
Papers presented	1093
Assent to Bills	1093
Question : Powellising Agreement	1093
Bills : Weights and Measures, recom.	1094
Permanent Reserve, 3a.	1094
Grain and Foodstuff, 3a.	1094
Licensing Act Amendment Continuance, 2a.	1094
Control of Trade in War Time Continuance, 2a.	1101
Industries Assistance Act Amendment, 1a.	1121
Marriage Act Amendment, 1a.	1121
Cottesloe Beach Rates Validation, 2a., Com.	1121
Sale of Liquor Regulation, 2a.	1122

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Harbour and Light Department, report for year ended 30th June, 1915. 2, Water Supply and Sewerage Department, amendment of by-laws. 3, Resolutions adopting model by-laws by (a) South Perth municipal council, and (b) Broad Arrow, (c) Mullewa district, and (d) Dumbleyung roads boards.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read assenting to the following Bills:—

- 1, Enemy Contracts Annulment.
- 2, Bread Act Amendment.
- 3, Newcastle-Bolgart Railway Extension.

QUESTION — POWELLISING AGREEMENT.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, On what date did the agreement between the Minister for Works and the Powellising Company come into operation as regards the payment of royalty for the use of the company's process by the Government? 2, On what date was this agreement laid upon the Table of the Legislative Assembly? 3, What is the total amount of royalty paid under this agreement up to