

result of the victory they have won for us. No member of this Assembly, I am sure, will ever forget those who have fought on our behalf. We must endeavour to the best of our ability to repay them a portion—we cannot hope to repay the whole—of what they are justly entitled to.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [5.16]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next.

I have consulted with the leader of the Opposition, and he agrees with me that during this outstanding week in the history of Australia members will scarcely feel that they can settle down to their work in the way they should do. I hope that when we meet again we shall be able to move along rapidly with the business of the session.

Question put and passed.

[At the call of the Premier members sang "God save the King" and "Rule Britannia."]

House adjourned at 5.18 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 19th November, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

THE WAR—MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The PRESIDENT [4.31]: I have received the following communication from His Excellency the Governor—

In the name and on behalf of His Majesty the King, I thank you for the resolution passed unanimously by the Legislative Council of Western Australia on the 12th November last, which I shall have the honour of forwarding for submission to His Majesty the King. (Signed) William Ellison-Macartney, Governor.

BILL—INTERPRETATION.

Assembly's Message.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that the Council's amendments had been agreed to.

BILL—PRISONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that the Council's amendment No. 2 had been agreed to, but that amendment No. 1 had been disagreed with.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—FRENCH MISSION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35]: With your permission, Sir, I desire to make a statement regarding the business of the House for the remainder of the week. As hon. members are aware, to-morrow has been declared a public holiday in honour of the visit of the French Mission, and it is not intended that Parliament shall sit on that day. As the probabilities are that we shall have to wait at some stage of our proceedings for business from another place, it has occurred to me that it would suit the convenience of hon. members if, at the conclusion of to-day's business, we adjourned until Tuesday next. I have also been asked by the Premier to intimate that members' passes will pass them through the guards at the railway station to-morrow. It is hoped that as many members as possible will there assemble to meet the French Mission. It is also desired by the Premier that all members of both Houses of Parliament shall attend the luncheon at Parliament House at one o'clock to-morrow, to meet the visiting delegates.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Select Committee's Report.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Bill.

Report received and read.

MOTION—ELECTORAL ACT, TO AMEND.

Hon. H. CARSON (Central) [4.51]: I move—

That in opinion of this House the Government should bring in a Bill to amend the Electoral Act to more clearly define the definition of "Householder."

I have no desire to reduce the franchise for this Chamber. I should not like to see it the same as that for another place. While we have the bi-cameral constitution, it is essential that there should be some more restricted franchise for this House than for another place. Those who have the greater burden of taxation to bear, and those who have wives and families here, should have a greater say in the government of the country than those who might be able to flit at any stage of their sojourn in Western Australia. The reason I have brought forward the motion is that during the last two elections of members for this Chamber there has been considerable trouble and also a great

deal of heart-burning over the qualification of a householder. In 1916 my former colleague, Mr. Patrick, was defeated; and he attributed his defeat very largely to the fact that many were on the roll who under the general acceptance of our franchise were not entitled to be on the roll. Indeed, many of the names on the roll for the Central Province were those of men living in humpies actually camped on Mr. Patrick's own land adjoining the Baddera mine; and these men voted. They were called on to make affidavits that they were entitled to vote; but nevertheless they exercised the franchise. The matter was brought under the notice of the Electoral Department, who were asked to take action against these men. However, no action was taken. I understand the Minister then in charge of the Electoral Department, who was a member of a Labour Government, gave it as his opinion that if the men in question considered the places they inhabited were of an annual value of £17 to them, action could not be taken. At the last election for this Chamber there was considerable trouble on the goldfields.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: And in the West Province.

Hon. H. CARSON: The Electoral Department eventually were approached with regard to people who had had their names put on the roll in respect of properties not considered to be of the annual value of £17. A great many prosecutions followed. The Minister then in charge of the Electoral Department was a member of the Nationalist Government. Those hon. members who have read the discussion which occurred on a motion initiated by the leader of the Opposition in another place for papers connected with those prosecutions, will recognise the extreme need for having something definite regarding the qualification placed on the statute-book. I hope something will be done in this direction so that we may know where we stand in the matter. Another thing I would like the Government to take in hand as regards the Electoral Act is the re-establishment of the old revision court. The registrars for the districts might be appointed sub-registrars for the provinces, and then we would obtain much purer rolls than those which result from the present system; because nearly all the district registrars are conversant with the qualifications of practically every resident of their district. I will not detain the House on the subject. I hope hon. members will support the motion, and I trust the Government will give it their consideration.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West) [4.56]: I second the motion, and congratulate Mr. Carson on having brought it forward. I shall not to-day discuss the question of the franchise for this House—whether it should be raised or lowered. But my desire, since the motion has been moved, is to say a few words relating to one of the most farcical elections which ever took place in this State—the last West Province election. There we had hundreds of claim cards filled in and witnessed, as the police court evidence revealed, by Mr. Baglin, who was contesting the election. Mr.

Baglin was fined the sum of £1. According to his evidence, he had had such a tremendous number of claim cards to supervise that it was only reasonable to assume some errors must creep in.

Hon. H. Millington: Did you ever make a mistake?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I never witnessed one claim card for the West Province. I have never, since I have been a member of this House, witnessed a single card.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Hear, hear!

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I would not do it. Let me tell the House that these claim cards were exhibited in the West Province not by the dozen but by the hundred. Numbers of electors had these claim cards, and it was proved in court that all the elector had to do was simply to sign his name, when someone else would fill in the rest of the card. During the election it came under my notice that numerous electors were enrolled without having the proper qualification. On reference to the file laid on the Table of another place hon. members will find letters from my secretary giving lists of some hundreds of duplications—not dozens, but hundreds of duplications; in addition to which hundreds of names were on the roll without any qualification whatever. It came to my knowledge that even boarders residing in certain boarding houses had signed claim cards. I immediately protested to the Electoral Department against such irregularities. History tells us that a fool is born every minute, and it has been said that all these poor simple-minded folk came along and were asked to sign a claim card and signed it without asking too many questions. Thereupon the card was duly witnessed, and in many instances the claimant was enrolled. It appears to me that from an electoral point of view—whether it be the department that is at fault or the Act—it is high time that some action was taken by the Government to define the qualification of an elector. In one house in a street one may find eight or ten persons residing in furnished rooms for which they pay 10s. or 7s. 6d. per week, and such persons are enrolled because that qualification is considered all that is necessary. I do not think it was ever intended by the Legislature that there should be a number of people enrolled as electors for this Chamber because the rooms of a house were sub-let. I was not here when the legislation in question was passed, but I do not think for a moment it was intended that such a thing should be done. In addition we have the question of the £17 clear annual rental value. Take the West Province, and suppose we have a man paying 9s. per week rent in one of the roads boards districts, where the rateable value is perhaps one penny or twopence in the pound on the unimproved value. His rates are practically nothing. Another man is paying 10s. a week in Fremantle which, with the rates he has to pay there, will not allow him a margin of £17 clear annual rateable value. I think we should have an Act passed to define and make simple the clear annual rateable value so that there can be no

misunderstanding. The Electoral Department should accept the responsibility for the state of the rolls and not the candidates when the elections are on. We find in Fremantle and Perth—I cannot speak for other parts of the State because my experience does not reach farther—that tables are placed in the thoroughfares and people are asked to enrol. In Fremantle at the corners of streets there were tables with claim cards laid out, and when it is known that one candidate could enrol 1,300 people one can only say that the rolls are in a shocking and deplorable state, or the names had no right to be there. There is something lacking, and to my mind it is serious indeed. I extremely regret that when an opportunity was given to the present Government, for some reason or other, they refused to go on with certain prosecutions. Whether it be friend or enemy, from an election point of view, whoever is responsible for the administration of the Act had no right to stop a number of prosecutions that should have been gone on with. I understand, although I do not know, that in one instance in Fremantle a fine was inflicted on a person for having signed claim cards that had been filled in improperly, and 50 per cent. of the fine was refunded. In one instance a fine of £1 was inflicted on one of the candidates for the West Province for having failed to properly witness the signature on a claim card, the signature on the card being made some miles away from where the witness was, and the cards were taken to him and he witnessed the lot. What is a £1 fine for an action like that? One might just as well give a man a warning and tell him not to do it again. Unless the Government make an example of glaring cases the offences will continue as in the past. I am quite certain that unless the Government are prepared to amend the Act and clearly define the franchise for this House, and have it defined so that there can be no misunderstanding, also making the penalties so heavy that in the future, I do not like to say, the rolls will not be stuffed, offences will continue. Heavy penalties should be imposed, not a few shillings, which really is an encouragement for action to be taken again. It simply means that the individual will wink his eye and take no further notice. I would like to see some committee appointed in connection with this motion because I am satisfied that the evidence brought forward would disclose a state of affairs that members know very little about. The Electoral Department should be in a position to see that the rolls for the Legislative Council are compiled in a manner that reflects credit on them. Is it the fault of the chief of that department or maladministration or want of capacity on the part of the Minister? I have just returned from a campaign in which some hundreds of names were duplicated; I do not say they were duplicated by any false methods. Take this instance; a man lives in Ellen-street; he removes from that street but his name still remains on the roll for that street. A canvasser comes along and says, "Are you on the roll?" He replies, "I do not know." The canvasser says "Fill in this card." The man is now living in Mary-street and he fills in the card for Mary-street, and is

enrolled for that street, but he is not taken off Ellen-street and remains on the roll for the two streets. In the West Province there are 600 duplications on a roll containing 6,000 names—10 per cent. duplication. It may be said that unless a man signs a claim card he is merely changing his address, and if he fails to notify the department he is put on the roll for another street and as far as the department are concerned they do not know if it is the same man or not. But I think the department should be asked to find out. I do not know what it costs to keep this department going, but I suppose it is a few thousand pounds. However, the money is wasted. I think there should be some sort of affidavit signed and a man allowed to vote on the affidavit, considering the muddle the rolls are in to-day. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion and I hope it will have some good effect in the very near future.

On motion by Hon. H. Millington, debate adjourned.

BILL—VERMIN.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—FORESTS.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.10] in moving the second reading said: The Bill which I now have to submit for the second reading is certainly one of the most important that Parliament will be asked to consider during the present session. The industry with which it deals was responsible prior to the war for the exportation of products valued at upwards of a million sterling, and even during the war period it has been of minor importance only to the agricultural, pastoral, and mining industries. I think there can be little doubt that the termination of the war unquestionably opens up enormous possibilities for the timber industry of Western Australia in the exploitation of this industry, and in the making of provision for the renewal of our forests so that great scope will be afforded for the lucrative employment of our returned soldiers. The existing position regarding the industry is very clearly set out on the first page of the memorandum attached to the Bill. The conditions under which forest areas are at present held for timber cutting are recited in detail in that memorandum, which, as members will observe, goes on to explain the provisions of the Bill. Briefly, those provisions repeal that portion of the Land Act of 1898 relating to forest products and the whole of the amending Land Act of 1904. But whilst the whole of one Act and a portion of another is repealed, it preserves existing rights and enables the terms of current leases and sawmilling permits to be extended so far as the operations have been temporarily discontinued during the war. The chief feature of the Bill is the constitution of a Forests Department, controlled by a responsible Minister of the Crown with a Conservator of

Forests as permanent head. This department is to be given exclusive control of all matters of forest policy, of all State forests and timber reserves, of forest products over all Crown lands, the granting of permits, licenses and forest leases and the administration of the Act generally. Some measure of security of tenure is given to the Conservator of Forests and the officers of the department are otherwise to be subject to the provisions of the Public Service Act. The classification of forest lands, the permanent dedication of State forests, and the temporary reservation of other timber lands, are provided for in the Bill, and it is further provided that the dedication of land as a State forest will be revokable wholly or in part only by resolution of both Houses of Parliament. A provision in the Bill, which excited a great deal of debate in the Legislative Assembly, is that contained in Clause 24 relating to the hewing of timber for sleepers within the boundaries of a State forest. By a proviso added in the Legislative Assembly such hewing is allowed to continue on the areas of concessions, leases and permits after all timber suitable for sawmilling has been felled, and also in localities from which it is impracticable to remove timber for sawmilling purposes. An interesting proviso is added to this clause whereby no person is entitled to hew who has not, prior to the passing of this Act, followed the occupation of a hewer in this State.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: A close corporation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. I think the inclusion of this proviso is rather significant. It suggests that the people who made this proviso are not of the opinion that this hewing of sleepers is in the best interests of the timber industry of the State. Had they held that it was in the best interests of the timber industry or of the State, unquestionably they would not have confined the operation of the proviso to those persons who had been following this life prior to the passing of the Act. I am inclined to think that the motive for permitting the hewing of timber for sleepers was rather the fact that a number of sleeper hewers left this State in order to serve their country at the war, and there was a strong feeling that it would not be the proper thing for the State during their absence to remove their particular method of livelihood, no matter what substitute might be provided. Consequently, a proviso was added to the clause, which originally prohibited the hewing of timbers for sleepers, limiting this privilege to those who had previously carried on that avocation. The result will be, as Sir Ed. Wittenoom has suggested, a close corporation, and that after a time none but old men will be engaged in it. Their position will be analogous to that of the South Australian barmaid.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It would not be a bad thing to marry them off.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Another important provision in the Bill is that which enacts that one half of the revenue of the

department will be payable to the consolidated revenue whilst, following the provisions of the New South Wales Act, the remaining half will be payable to the credit of a special account at the Treasury as a fund for the improvement and re-forestation of our State forests. General administrative expenses will be subject to annual appropriation by Parliament. Other clauses of the Bill are chiefly machinery clauses containing the provisions for the carrying out of the forestry policy, and I think they can be more conveniently dealt with when we reach the Committee stage. The Bill, generally speaking, represents an effort to place the timber industry of this State on a more permanent footing. Ever since the foundation of Western Australia the forests of the State have been exploited without much regard to the future. In fact, I would go so far as to say, practically without any regard whatever to the future. This may have been excusable, and circumstances may have justified it, but we cannot now close our eyes to the fact that we have reached a position which, unless there is an improvement, means the extinction within a comparatively short period of our export trade. Members will realise readily that in matters of this kind and in making statements of this kind I must necessarily be guided by the opinions of others, this being a matter upon which I have no personal knowledge. I am informed that unless a fixed and wise policy such as that intended by this Bill is adopted or unless we take the very stringent action taken already by Victoria some seven or eight years ago in prohibiting exportation altogether, at the end of about 10 years the possibility of exportation would be very seriously affected. We would have to reduce our product very considerably, and at the end of 25 years the industry would become practically extinct. That is the opinion which was given to me, and it comes from authorities which the Government cannot ignore. If it is a truthful statement of the facts of the case, I think it must force upon the minds of hon. members the necessity for doing something to protect this great industry, so that generations to come may have some part in the blessings of it. The first Conservator of Forests in this State was Mr. Ednie Brown. He seems to have grasped the situation before he had been here many weeks. During his regretably short period of office he made many endeavours to bring about a better state of affairs. At that time there was a general belief, as I suppose there is in some quarters of Western Australia to-day, that the forests of Western Australia were practically inexhaustible and consequently the warning of the then Conservator received very little consideration. Mr. Ednie Brown had not time to start a Forestry Department in Western Australia. He did, however, bring with him to this State two men whose work has left a permanent mark on forest affairs in this State. The first of these was Mr. Macfarlane, who may be said to have left his name in trees all through the South-West of this State. He occupied the position of man-

ager of the State nursery at Hamel for 23 years, and no one has done more to cultivate a love of trees among the people of the State than this zealous officer, who having reached an advanced age has now been retired. Another man brought here by Mr. Ednie Brown was Mr. Howitt, who has carried out some of the finest carving work which has ever been executed in connection with our native timbers. He was attached to the Forestry Department until Mr. Ednie Brown's death, and his work can still be seen in the public museum, in the offices of the Forestry Department and many private dwellings in Perth. I had the privilege with another member of this Chamber of visiting Mrs. Hardy's home in Mount Lawley a few months ago, and I think I have never seen anything more exquisite than the carvings carried out by Mr. Howitt. Had Mr. Ednie Brown lived, I have no doubt Mr. Howitt would still have been attached to the Forestry Department. During the past 24 years he would have executed such works with our timbers as would have taught not merely the public of Western Australia, but would have shown the world over to what uses these timbers of ours could be put, and further—this is the most pitiable part of it—had the best use been made of this man there would to-day have been others following in his footsteps, men to whom he would have taught his craft. Now, unhappily, although still hale and hearty, he is far advanced in years and I am afraid there is reason to fear that his art will die with him. This is regrettable from the point of view not only of the timber industry but of the State generally.

Hon. J. Ewing: Why were his services not retained?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Western Australia in its conduct towards our forests has pursued a course very similar to that pursued by the other States, but recently in the Eastern States the people and Parliaments have awakened to the necessity for adopting sounder lines. In several of the States laws have been called into existence to prevent further waste of timbers, and to convert the forests of the State into what they undoubtedly ought to be, namely, national assets existing for all time and renewed at least as quickly as they are depleted. With the exception of our own State and Tasmania, all the States of the Commonwealth have placed forests laws upon their statute-books. In the preparation of this Bill attention has been paid to the legislation of all the other states, and an attempt made to take what was best in the other Acts, adapting it to the conditions of Western Australia. Not only in Australia was a disastrous policy pursued in regard to forests before the people woke up to the fact of what they were doing. Canada did the same thing but to-day each of the provinces of Canada, as well as the Dominion, have made laws to preserve what remains of the timber heritage. Of the United States the same story is told. The forestry laws of Canada, and the United States particularly, lay down restrictive clauses, sanctioned by public opinion as

well as by the legislatures, which would be quite impossible in any State in Australia under the present condition of public opinion in regard to forest matters. The forest service of the United States has promulgated regulations which aim at the restriction of the amount of timber which may be cut annually from a given area of forests, and in the timber States laws have been promulgated which not only restrict the cutting of timber on public leases but also restrict the cutting of timber on private leases. These laws follow in the footsteps of the French Code Forestier legislation which provides that any private forest of a larger area than 11 hectares cannot be cut down without the consent of the Inspector General of Forests. Also, in America, Week's law provides for the taxation of land, both forest and private, in the timber States with a view to providing a fund to pay for the cost of fire prevention. In Canada, with a view to protecting the forests from fire, the slash permit system has been introduced in British Columbia and other forest provinces. This system provides for the issuing of permits to private individuals to burn on their farms. Without such a permit no farmer can burn his slash. The Forestry Department superintends the burning, and the result has been that the fire risk has been reduced considerably. In Western Australia we had a Royal Commission, I think it was in 1903. After investigation this Commission, recognising the seriousness of the position, made certain recommendations. The introduction of this Bill is really the first step towards carrying into effect the recommendations of that commission. About 10 years ago, that was some five years after the commission sat, an advisory board was appointed. This board did some excellent work. The chief feature of the work done was that it introduced the system of sawmilling permits instead of leases and concessions. About three years ago the Government of this State called in as their adviser in forestry matters Mr. D. E. Hutchins. Mr. Hutchins' report has been published, and practically deals with the whole of the subject. It is full of valuable suggestions, advice and instructions, and one thing he strongly urged was the immediate passing of a Forest Act to preserve what remained of our national wealth in this particular. The Bill now before Parliament embodies most of Mr. Hutchins' suggestions. His report, after dealing with the disastrous position which existed, pointed out that while in the past the object of the exploiter seemed to have been to find out in how short a time the forests could be destroyed, the real object of forestry was to so treat the forests as to find out what they were capable of yielding and to take from them only that quantity. No doubt in the earlier days of the State when capital was scarce it was possible to make use of our timber industry only in the manner in which it was made use of. I do not know that any good purpose is to be served by suggesting that a wrong course was taken in the past. I think it is wiser rather to try to prevent a continuance of those acts for the future. It was found convenient at that time to grant concessions and special leases for a long period of years. These concessions cover an area of

378,139 acres. At no time has the Forestry Department had anything like effective control over these concessions, and the concessionaire had liberty practically to do what he liked. The special leases covering an area of 253,951 acres are under a little more control. The cutting of piles and poles is forbidden except under permit, and royalty is paid for any such undersized timber cut. The area of concessions and special leases still in existence, amounts to 632,098 acres, and over that enormous tract of country it is doubtful whether the department can control the exploitation of virgin bush by a method more wasteful than that of milling, such as sleeper cutting. Under saw-milling tenure there was originally held, in round figures, 816,000 acres of country. At the present time the area has been increased to 1,696,000 acres. The effect of that increase is seen in the export figures. In 1903 there was exported 154,000 loads of timber valued at £600,000. Ten years later, in 1913, the year before the war, the export had increased to 272,000 loads, valued at a little over a million sterling. This increase in the export, if it applied to most of our industries, would be considered entirely satisfactory, a subject purely for congratulation. For instance, with our wheat yield the increase has been at a rapid rate and we regard it as something to be proud of. Our wool export also has increased and we look at that also from the same point of view. In connection with timber, however, we have to ask ourselves the question whether this increased exportation means the sending away of something we are producing and continuing to produce, year after year, so that the export may grow, or whether it means the taking away of something which has not been replaced. If it means the latter, then in the course of a few years we must see the exportation gradually decline and find ourselves without a means of renewing it except by a long period of years. In the course of cutting out these enormous quantities of timber, there has been a tremendous waste, and that is another serious aspect of the case. Nothing could be done by the department to control this. Government after Government and Parliament after Parliament by inaction, tacitly approved of this wastage and permitted it to go on. We all remember well a few years ago, when we thought it the duty of the Government to press as much as possible the merits of West Australian timbers for sleepers and for paving blocks. It may have been considered wise at the time, but I think that the consensus of educated opinion on this question at the present time is that these timbers of ours are too good to use for sleepers and paving blocks. There are other purposes for which they may be used, purposes for which they will bring in a much bigger revenue to those who handle them, and incidentally a much larger return to the State. Up to the year 1859 jarrah was known as mahogany, and I think there is something to be said for the contention that it was an unfortunate thing that this timber was not allowed to retain the name of mahogany. There was considerable correspondence in the newspapers in 1860 in connection with

the name of this tree, and the reason for the change was that the people thought that the timber was of such excellent quality and of such a wonderful value, that it merited a distinctive name of its own. It was accordingly called jarrah. Had it retained the old name of mahogany, the chances are it would have been used for the purposes for which mahogany is used the world over, but the fact of altering the name seems to have been the first step towards bringing it to what may be described as base uses compared with those for which the timber is so well suited. In other parts of the world more inferior timbers are used for sleepers and for paving blocks. In France for instance, it is only timber derived from the limbs of oak that is used for sleepers, while creosoted pine of the very poorest quality forms the bulk of the sleeper timbers of Europe. In America it is the same thing. The creosoted pine sleeper gives the railway engineer the life that is necessary, and hardwood timbers are used for other purposes for which they are more fitted. It would also appear that the creosoted pine sleeper is rapidly finding its way into South Africa and India. The latest reports from India show that the war has taught the railway authorities there that they possess in their inferior softwoods valuable sleeper woods when creosoted. Here is the reply that the Forestry Department received the other day in connection with the further purchase of jarrah sleepers—

Railway Dept., Simla, 8th June, 1918.

Sir: I am directed to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter No. 154/17, dated 24th April, 1918, and to say that there is likely to be very little demand for Australian sleepers in India, owing to the increasing internal supplies and treatment of softwoods for sleeper purposes.

From this it will be seen that as years go on the creosoted pine sleeper will oust the jarrah sleeper from the market. I do not wish it to be thought that the jarrah sleeper is not greatly superior to the pine sleeper. It is all a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence and the life of a sleeper. If the railway men in India and America can get a sleeper to last eight years, that is quite sufficient for their purposes. With their heavy traffic they find that a sleeper fails from mechanical faults in that time, however good it is otherwise. So that, while jarrah is far more durable than any pine, the latter gives a long enough life and is much cheaper. Not content with cutting our magnificent jarrah forests into sleepers we have also actually prostituted a king of structural timbers by converting karri into sleepers. Here we have gone further, for we have paid up to 20s. a load to render this magnificent structural timber durable in the ground. I refer to the powellising process. Jarrah is far too good a timber to use for anything but the best purposes to which wood can be put, while karri should only be used for super-structural purposes where great strains are to be met with. Here are the prices of a few

of the recent contracts for jarrah sleepers entered into by milling people here with South Africa: 150,000 6ft. x 6in. x 9in. x 4½ in., f.o.b., price £5 1s. 3d. per load; 150,000 7ft. x 10in. x 5in., f.o.b., price £5 5s. 0d. per load; 150,000 7ft. x 10in. x 5in., f.o.b., price £4 4s. per load; 200,000 6ft. 6in. x 9in. x 4½ in., f.o.b., price £4 14s. 6d. per load. To sell jarrah for sleepers at 16s. or 17s. a hundred super., for that is what the above prices work out at, simply means that the State is getting the least possible value for the timber. It would be better to allow the timber to remain standing in the forest than to allow it to be sold for such a very small price, and in the doing of this to exhaust the industry in another generation.

Hon. J. Ewing: Is it proposed to close up the forests altogether?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Oh, no.

Hon. J. Ewing: It looks like it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Victoria some eight years ago decided that the export trade was one which should not be encouraged and the Government of that day prohibited the further export of timber. This Bill does not go to any such extremes as that. I am quoting that to show what we may be drifting to if we do not start a forest policy which will enable us to renew our forests as quickly as they are exhausted. The Forests Commissioners who sat in Western Australia in 1903 practically advised the same thing, but instead of the restriction of the export, successive Governments have done their best to encourage the growth of this export which, as I already said, has been increased by £600,000 per annum between 1903 and the beginning of the war. The great thing to impress upon the public mind is that a forester must have long views. His is not an annual crop. He has to look ahead and shape a policy for perhaps a century. That being the case, success depends entirely upon an unbroken continuity of that policy. This Bill has been designed to provide that continuity.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: We will never get it in this State.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We will try: In every country the forest has two kind of enemies, the reckless exploiter who thinks it is his business to cut down the last tree, and the farmer who considers that where big trees grow his particular crop will also flourish. Every country has suffered from these twin disasters. This Bill proposes to regulate the former by permitting him only to cut timber in an economical fashion and the object of the department also is to convince the farmer that the forester does not want to grow timber on land suitable for agricultural purposes, because he is convinced that there is plenty of land in Western Australia suitable for forest trees that will not grow a bushel of wheat to the acre. There is no reason why the forestry policy should in any way be antagonistic to the agricultural policy. There is no reason why the two should not go along practically side by side. I commend to the study of

members the different maps on the lobby walls because a study of those maps is calculated to remove many false impressions. The proportion of afforested area to the total area in this State is less than that of any other State in the Commonwealth, excepting only South Australia, and the area of afforested country in the Commonwealth as a whole is much below that of every other nation in the world claiming to possess great natural forests. The fact that our population is small, the fact that there is a great portion of the total area, not only in Western Australia but in the whole of Australia, which is never likely to be densely populated probably makes it unnecessary that we should have so large an area of forest in proportion to our total area as is required in other countries more densely populated. But, any comparison with other countries points to the necessity for our conserving the forest resources which we have. I have already referred to the lengthy debate in the Assembly on Clause 24, and to the amendments. I think it is generally admitted that of all the methods of conducting forest operations, sleeper hewing is the most wasteful. The big mill recovers a very much larger percentage of the contents of a felled tree than does the hewer—40 per cent. more; while the small mill, known as the spot mill, recovers 16 per cent. more than does the big mill. In the opinion of the Conservator of Forests there is no such thing as inaccessible timber in this State, nor is there any timber belt in which a small mill cannot operate. For these reasons it will be seen that, with the proviso extending privileges to those who, prior to the passing of this measure, were engaged in the industry of hewing, the Legislature is quite justified in taking the preliminary steps towards abolishing that most wasteful method of dealing with the timbers of the State. I understand that when hewers cut jarrah into sleepers only one-quarter of the cubic contents of the log is recovered. Every board or commission of inquiry into forest management has condemned the wastefulness of sleeper-cutting by hand. This view is held in all countries that have valuable timber assets and recognise the importance of protecting them. One of the purposes of the Bill is to secure cultivation of the forests. It is a fact demonstrated beyond the possibility of dispute that virgin forest in its natural state produces only a fraction of the timber which would grow on an equal area of cultivated forest. Therefore, the suggestion made by one hon. member that the Bill is intended to close up the forests is quite beside the point altogether; it is intended to make the forests more reproductive, to vastly increase in the course of years our timber industry. At the present time classification is proceeding, and it is considered that it will take three or four years to complete that work. When it is finished the department will be able to say where it proposes to start cultivation, and to what extent. Without cultivation under skilled management the forest areas of this State will in a very short time be quite un-

able to supply the annual demand. I dare say some members will think that the provisions of the Bill are somewhat drastic; but I urge them to remember that the case is very little short of desperate. If it is true—and I have no reason to doubt it—that if we proceed on our present lines we shall in 25 years destroy this industry, surely the position is one that we cannot contemplate without anxiety; surely we must realise that it is necessary to take, perhaps, drastic steps to prevent this destruction. It is not only intended that the area in process of being cut out to-day shall be regenerated, but also that the cut-out areas which have been neglected in the past shall be cultivated; and it is estimated that there are one and a half million acres of cut-out forest crying out for silvicultural treatment. In the future the improvement of our great indigenous forests of hardwood will form the main work of the Forestry Department. But it is also intended to plant softwoods, so as to keep in the country at least a portion of the very considerable sum of money annually sent out of Western Australia for the purchase of softwoods. Softwood planting will be one of the main features of the forest policy. One other matter dealt with in the Bill is the protection of the forest from fire. This is one of the worst enemies the forest has to contend with. In every afforested country there is nothing which causes the management so much concern as the preservation from fire of the woodlands under their care. It is considered that the regulations in the Bill are sufficient for this purpose if properly carried out. It must be remembered that money spent for the purpose of protecting the forest from fire benefits not only the forest itself but also the settler in the neighbourhood of the forest. I do not know that it is necessary for me to add anything further, but I urge upon hon. members that the Bill before them is one which, if passed, is bound to have a good effect on the State, because it will be the means of protecting and expanding one of our principal industries. I trust that members will look at the matter from a broad point of view, recognising that it is a question not of what is wisest for to-day or for to-morrow, but of what is necessary for the permanent well-being of this country. It would be a deplorable thing if a State like Western Australia, starting with such a magnificent asset of forest wealth, should in a comparatively short period find itself dependent upon other countries for its supply, when, by the prosecution of a wise and careful policy it might be permanently an extensive exporter of those valuable timbers. Given a sane forest administration, consisting of a small number of professional foresters and a general staff, Western Australia need never again fear that the influences which have destroyed so much of our forest wealth during the past few years will operate in the future. The Government believe that in the present Conservator of Forests they have the right man at the head of this department. We believe, too, that if he is given the power which the Bill contemplates, the Forestry Department will justify its existence, and that in a very short

time. And, we repeat, under skilled management the forests will produce more than they have done in the past, they will continue to increase this production, and this increase will mean added revenue for the Government, added employment for the people, and increased prosperity for the State. There are one or two amendments which I propose to submit when we reach the Committee stage, chiefly amendments to rectify, I think, errors unintentionally made in another place, but I do not know that it would profit us to go through them now. I will have them placed on the Notice Paper directly the second reading is passed. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, debate adjourned.

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clauses 7, 8, and 9. Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 7—Repeal of Section 188 and substitution of new provisions:

The CHAIRMAN: For the information of hon. members, I may say that in line three of proposed new Section 187 “sixteen” has been struck out and “seventeen” inserted in lieu thereof.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 the word “sixteen” be struck out, and “seventeen” inserted in lieu.

My object is to restore the provision to the form in which it originally passed this Chamber and another place. On entering the Chamber the other day, I found to my surprise that an amendment had been carried making the important alteration of raising the age of consent from 16 years to 17. Surely such an amendment ought to have appeared on the Notice Paper. The age of 16 is quite high enough in a country like Australia, where girls develop so quickly. The object of fixing an age of consent is to prevent innocent girls from getting into trouble. But here many girls look like women at the age of 16 years, and if the age of protection is raised to 17 years the danger of blackmail will be intensified. We must bear in mind that solicitation does not always proceed from the man, but sometimes from the other side. In one sense, the girl takes no risk, while the man is liable to very severe treatment. I hope my amendment will commend itself to the Chamber.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was ample opportunity for hon. members to take part in the discussion of this matter the other day. A petition was presented, and the question came up for debate at the proper time. Therefore, no hon. member should have been taken by surprise. Of course, there is no objection to members being given an opportunity of reconsideration. I personally voted for the

raising of the age to seventeen, and I propose to maintain that attitude.

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

Ayes	11
Noes	6

Majority for	..	5
--------------	----	---

AYES.

Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. H. J. Saunders
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. H. Millington	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. P. Allen	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. H. Carson
Hon. J. Duffell	(Teller.)
Hon. R. J. Lynn	

Amendment thus passed.

The CHAIRMAN: There is a consequential amendment in this clause.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I move a further amendment—

That proposed Subsection (3) be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—
“A prosecution under this section must be begun within three months after the offence has been committed.”

Here again my object is to restore the original provision, and to defeat an amendment brought in and passed by stealthy methods.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not quite in order in reflecting on the conduct of the Chamber.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: There was no division, the amendment being merely put and carried on the voices. No one, except members actually in the Chamber, knew that it was coming forward. The Colonial Secretary's contention, I understand, was that frequently young girls get into trouble and that their people do not find it out until five or six months have elapsed, thus rendering the period of three months for bringing a prosecution useless. I do not think such cases can occur frequently, and I do think it unwise to keep a term of six months hanging over the man's head in view of the possibility of blackmail being levied. In such cases as the Colonial Secretary referred to, there is the remedy of making the man pay afterwards. Three months is quite long enough.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think Sir Edward Wittenoom is entitled to blame anybody, unless it is himself, for the manner in which this provision was carried here. A petition was presented, and was read, and consideration of the petition was deferred until this proposed new section was reached in Committee.

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

Clause 8—Substitution of new section for Section 189:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: After the last division, I take it the amendment of para-

graph (i) Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 189 follows almost as a consequential amendment. I move an amendment:—

That in proposed new Section 189, Subsection (1), paragraph (i), the word “sixteen” be struck out, and “seventeen” inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move a further amendment—

That in proposed new Section 189, Subsection (1), paragraph (iii), after the word “guardian” there be inserted “employer.”

Mr. Kirwan previously gave notice of this amendment, which, however, became meaningless when the age of protection was raised to seventeen years. Now it is again necessary.

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

Clause 9—Amendment of Section 190:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I again move an amendment similar to one of which which Mr. Kirwan previously gave notice—

That in line 2, between the words “by” and “the,” there be inserted “inserting the word ‘employer’ after the word ‘guardian’ in line 1, and by.”

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

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Bill again reported with further amendments.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [6.18]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.19 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 19th November, 1918.

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

[For “Questions on Notice” and “Papers Presented” see “Votes and Proceedings.”]

QUESTION—KAISER'S ABDICATION.

Mr. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been called to the paragraph appearing in the “West Australian” of the 11th and 12th instant headed “The Kaiser's Abdication, Enthusiastic scenes on the Goldfields”? 2, Seeing that one