trol the company, owning as they do all the shares in it. May I say that in this company no one except actual wheat growers are at present permitted to take shares. Those who are not wheat growers are not permitted at the present stage to become shareholders in the company. It will be seen, therefore, that this is in reality, as it is in name, a grain growers co-operative elevators company. In regard to the consumers, the company will be precluded, by its agreement with the Commonwealth Government, from dealing in grain. There is, therefore, no fear whatever of the elevators or silos being used to further the interests of any private party in any manner contrary to the public good, or of any monopoly in grain arising from the operations of this company. As showing the purely co-operative nature of the company, I point out that all profits above 8 per cent. made by the company will be divided amongst all the wheat growers who put their wheat into the elevators on the basis of grain that they have delivered. It will thus be seen that the company will be a good thing for the wheat growers, but those who are not shareholders in the company have their interests fully protected under an agreement made with Mr. Hughes, equally with the interests of those wheat growers who are shareholders. I support the second reading of the Bill and congratulate the Government on their action in having introduced it.

On motion by Mr. Chesson, debate adjourned.

MOTION—DISCHARGE OF ORDERS.

On motion by the Premier the following Orders of the day were discharged from the Notice Paper:—

State Trading Concerns Act Amendment Bill, Second reading.

University of Western Australia Act Amendment Bill, Second reading.

Fisheries Act Amendment Bill, Second reading.

Stallions Registration Bill, Committee progress.

Architects Bill, Second reading.

Rottnest Island Bill, Second reading.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 15th December, 1920.

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

QUESTION—MINING, EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT PLANT.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Minister for Education: 1, What is the cause of the delay in erecting the experimental treatment plant at the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie? 2, Is it a fact that the building additions for the plant were completed last July? 3, Will the plant be ready for use when the school resumes after the New Year?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, The matter has been expedited as much as possible. 2, The building was completed on the 17th August. 3, Every effort is being made in this direction and it is hoped and anticipated that it will be in readiness when the school re-opens.

STANDING ORDER SUSPENSION.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H P. Colebatch—East) [3.3]: I move—

That Standing Order 62 be suspended for the remainder of the session.

This is the Standing Order which precludes the taking of fresh business after 10 o'clock. It has always been customary in the past to suspend this Standing Order on approaching the end of the session. It is not my desire that we should have late sittings, but when we come towards the close of the session it may be necessary to sit to a late hour. It never seems possible to reach finality without at least one late sitting.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [3.5]: It will be within the recollection of hon. members that about 10 days ago this same notice of motion appeared on the Notice Paper, and I took it upon myself to represent to the leader of the House that there were several members who found it disadvantageous to stay late at night, and I asked him to forego making use of the privilege under this Standing Order. He agreed

with me, and withdrew the motion. Hon. members told the leader of the House at that time, and since as well, that we are quite prepared to sit from Tuesday to Friday inclusive, starting at three o'clock, and to work until 11 o'clock. I must enter a protest, however, against working, unless it cannot possibly be avoided, after 11 o'clock at night, and I do so on two grounds. The first is, that a number of members—I do not say all—are exceedingly tired when that hour arrives. Having commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon, we have put in six and a half hours of concentrated work, and I need not tell hon. members that to do the work properly in this House, and to watch the Bills carefully, requires close and careful attention. As I said on a previous occasion, all the work is not done while the House is sitting; a great deal of work is done in a preparatory way. There is a fund of work that the public never give members credit for. They think that the work of hon. members is done while the House is sitting. When members are tired at a late hour of the night, they cannot give the necessary and proper attention to Bills that those Bills should have. A lot of the measures which are submitted are complicated and require a great deal of attention, and to begin at that time of the night to consider them would mean that we could not do justice to the work. Another objection is that there are several members who, unless they get away at 11 o'clock, cannot reach their homes that night. Is it fair, therefore, to ask them to make that sacrifice? If they leave, there is then a thin House, and what is the result? If the Minister desires to put through a particular Bill that is the time to do it. That is another objection that I have, but I do not suggest that the leader of the House would resort to such a practice. The opportunity however is there. The leader of the House might argue that hon. members should be in their places. Take as an example what happened last night. We worked until 10.35. Had the leader of the House not stated that he wished to give members an opportunity to put in an amendment to the Meekatharra-Horseshoe Bill—and it was considerate of him—we could have gone on with the Committee stage of that Bill. Suppose, then, he introduced the Land Tax and Income Tax Bill at 11.30, or say the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, what position would we have been in to deal with such intricate legislation at that hour of the night? The point I wish to make is, why should we be hurried into passing all this legislation? If we sit from three o'clock until 11 at night we are doing a fair day's work, and if we cannot get through the work, let us sit here until we do get through it comfortably. There is some idea of adjourning before Christmas. If we cannot give Bills proper consideration before Christmas, let us sit after Christmas, or else reduce the number of Bills.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Why should we be hurried on? Take a Bill like the Meekatharra-Horseshoe Railway. Why did we not have that weeks ago? If the Government are anxious to close before Christmas, why did they not send us the work at an earlier stage, so that we could deal with it fairly? I want to help the leader of the House, but I object to taking new business after 11 o'clock at night. Many of us have other work to do besides our Parliamentary duties. If the leader of the House will not reconsider the matter I shall be constrained to vote against the motion.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South-West) [3.11]: The very wording of the Standing Order proposed to be suspended presupposes that business which is not already before the House shall not be introduced after 10 o'clock. If there had not been valid reasons for framing it, it would not have been amongst our Standing Orders. My eight years' experience in this House teaches me that this Standing Order has always been honoured in the breach and not the observance. Invariably at the tail-end of the session, not to meet the exigencies of the position, but to meet the delay and want of action on the part of another place, a motion is tabled to suspend this Standing Order. The time has arrived when we should consider whether such a Standing Order should remain. Is there not enough new business already on the Notice Paper that could keep us going until two o'clock in the morning? If the leader of the House is anxious to bring the Notice Paper into conformity with the Standing Orders, he can arrange the Notice Paper accordingly. He can briefly introduce measures by moving the second reading, and secure the adjournment of the debate until the following day. This Standing Order will not preclude him from doing that.

The Minister for Education: If the President rules in that direction I will withdraw the motion at once.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have raised a point which I think would bring the matter into conformity with the Standing Orders. Assuming that the leader of the House moved the second reading of any measure, and it was adjourned until the next day, the Standing Order he proposes to suspend would not apply.

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It would apply?

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Hon. J. CORNELL: What is new business and what is not new business?

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Any fresh Bill considered after 10 o'clock.

The PRESIDENT: Any business on the Notice Paper which would come under consideration at 10 o'clock cannot be undertaken, adjourned debates, Committee progress, or otherwise.

Hon. J. CORNELL. That being so, the Standing Order has an interpretation I never thought it had.

The Minister for Education: It makes it awkward.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It makes it absolutely cast iron. I have no objection to going from one measure to another after 10 o'clock, but would have a decided objection to the Minister introducing something after that hour which had not previously been before the Council. I suggest we should meet earlier. If the leader of the House would give an assurance that he would deal only with business on the Notice Paper, a good deal of the trouble would be overcome.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.18]: I do not intend to protest against this motion, but hope to support Sir Edward Wittenoom in a division later on. It is time this Chamber indicated to the Government that the treatment we receive at the end of every session has to stop. Such an indication would strengthen the hands of the leader of the House. After all, he has to endeavour to serve two masters, his colleagues and this Council. If the Council intimated by refusing to pass this motion, that we are not going to tolerate a continuance of this method, it would then remain for the Minister's colleagues to see that we are not treated in this way. It is true we have to consider the interests of the public. I do not think, however, the interests of the public will be considered by starting these Bills as it is proposed to do. We may look upon ourselves as directors of a company. I cannot believe that the shareholders would do anything else than support us in saying that we will not have this method of business. I am going to refer to two matters, one of which is in connection with the schemes of the Honorary Minister. He says that agreements will be placed before Parliament so as to give hon. members every opportunity of dealing with them. I will not elaborate that point but leave it at that. We shall have no opportunity of considering the measures he intends to put before us. I turn to the State trading concerns, and merely desire to refer hon. members to this matter also. We passed an Act and in it we have said that the reports and balance sheets shall be laid upon the Table of the House during the year before the 30th September. I have kept a careful eye on the Table. It is only this week that the report and balance sheet of the State Sawmills was placed there. We are supposed to follow these things, but have no opportunity of doing so under present conditions I also desire to refer to the leader of the House. It is wonderful what he does. It cannot fairly be expected of him to do anything else in connection with this motion than he has done. I do not see how the government of the country could be carried on if he did not openly support his colleagues. He can, however, go into this matter with his colleagues in Cabinet. If we refuse to give this power to the leader of the House, and negative this motion, he will be able to take a message back to his colleagues to the effect that the Legislative Council will not go on with this system. The Government will then have to find some other method of placing business before the Legislature.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [3.23]: This matter is entirely in the hands of the House. When I withdrew the motion previously I could not possibly have made any suggestion that at this late hour of the session it would not be necessary to take new business after 10 o'clock. At the end of a session it is almost always necessary to do that. Sir Edward Wittenoom had continually stated that he does not feel inclined to take on business after 11 o'clock. Our Standing Order provides that it shall not be taken after 10 o'clock. Last night was a case in point. I was obliged either to go on with the business in hand, although there was no opportunity of placing the amendment in question on the Notice Paper, or else suspend the sitting. We might still have continued for, say, three-quarters of an hour with the next business on the Notice Paper. If new business applied in the way indicated by Mr. Cornell, I should certainly not have bothered about moving this motion. I have no idea of introducing new business, for I could not do so without suspending a number of other Standing Orders. I do not intend to go in for all night sittings or anything of the kind, and I desire to get the business done in an orderly fashion. As Mr. Sanderson suggests, if hon. members refuse to take business after 10 o'clock, it would compel the Government to consider other methods of getting through the business. That might mean sitting after Christmas, or something of the kind.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Could we not start earlier?

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

Ayes	.. .. ..	13
Noes	.. .. ..	13
A tie	.. .. ..	0

AYES.

Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. R. J. Lynn	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. C. McKenzie	*(Teller.)*

NOES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. J. Duffell
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	*(Teller.)*

The PRESIDENT: As an officer of the House, on a question of extending the hours

of sitting, I deem it my duty to vote for the Ayes.

Question thus passed.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1. Guardianship of Infants.
2. Prices Regulation Act Amendment and Continuation.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—MEEKATHARRA-HORSESHOE RAILWAY.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day.

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

Clause 2—Definition of owners:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Can the Minister give any information regarding the directors of the company, the capital of the company, and the amount paid up?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I informed the House yesterday that the names of the directors are Mr. David Dick, Mr. F. W. Teesdale, Mr. G. Lambert, and Mr. Hannah. The capital of the company is £5,000. How much is paid up I do not know.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Do I understand that the leader of the House does not know what the capital of the company is?

The Minister for Education: Five thousand pounds.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Nominal, or paid up?

The Minister for Education: I do not know.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Authority to construct, maintain, and work railway:

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the clause:—"the said railway to be of 3ft. 6in. gauge."

From experience of matters comparable to this in various States, I am confident that, having regard to the magnitude of the company's mineral asset and the class of work they will have to do, it will be to their own interest if we impose the condition I suggest. In the interview from which I quoted yesterday the managing director is reported as saying that it is proposed to handle from 30,000 to 70,000 tons per annum. That is a small quantity for a deposit of that size; and according to the report of the State Mining Engineer there should be no difficulty, a short time after starting, in turning out about 1,000 tons per day. I instanced yesterday how in difficult country on the west coast of Tasmania a railway had been built on the 3ft. 6in. gauge, which was a condition of the Mt. Lyell Company's Act. That condition necessitated the adoption of the rack railway system. The traffic in that case was not large as compared with the traffic likely to be handled in this instance. The working of the deposit here in question on an adequate scale would mean the creation of a large township, the needs of which could hardly be met by a 2ft. 6in. line, especially considering the length of line to be constructed and worked. The Minister said that the company probably intended to build on the 3ft. 6in. gauge. In view of the conditions, I am quite certain of my ground in moving this amendment.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: At first I was inclined to support the 3ft. 6in. gauge in this case, but as the result of considerable inquiry I am led to the conclusion that the amendment asks too much of the company. The present proposal is to build the line for the purposes of the mineral lease. In the event of a township springing up, there is nothing in the measure to prevent the Government from constructing a State railway right alongside the company's line. In this respect the conditions are quite different from those applying to the Midland Railway Company. Again, the railway which is advocated by Mr. Miles might be constructed. There is a risk, therefore, of the company turning down this proposition altogether. I am out to assist anything that will develop the natural resources of the State. I fear that if I supported Mr. Stewart's amendment I should not be acting in accordance with the views I expressed on the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Stewart has suggested that the carrying of his amendment will be in the interests of the company, that it will be best in the company's own interests that they should build a 3ft. 6in. line. I do not propose to argue that matter with the hon. member, but I consider that the company's experts will be in a better position to judge as to the most economical method of handling the product than we are. The matter should be left to them. I do not think that we are called upon to ask the company to do anything for the general development of the State merely because we give them the right to transport their own product. The Government are not prepared to build this railway, and we should not hamper the company by telling them the exact kind of line they are to build. The company's present idea, I will not say intention, is to build a 3ft. 6in. line; but if the company find it more advantageous to build a line of narrower gauge, involving the cost of trans-shipment at Meekatharra, they should not be prevented from doing so.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That would be a sound argument if this were a private Bill and we were simply giving the company permission to go on. We have refused a select committee to inquire into the Bill. The company have £5,000 of capital, as to which the Minister does not know whether it is paid up or not. I give the assurance to any persons interested in the company, that, so far from entertaining any hostility to them, I take no interest in them at all excepting in so far as they will help to develop this country. I wish them every success, and I wish every such company every success. But on this particular point, whether for good or evil, the name, whether it is good or bad, of the Government of Western Australia and of the Parliament of Western Australia is now, whether we like it or not, associated very closely with this affair. In the circumstances we are, I think, not only entitled but compelled to see that some aspect of the public welfare is put into this Bill. That comes to the 3ft. 6in. gauge, the standard gauge of Western Australia. I support the amendment.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I am quite unable to follow some of the arguments which have been used in support of the amendment. Like Mr. Sanderson, I do not know anything about the company, but I do know that our State to-day is hungry for such companies as this. If these people are sufficiently fortunate to secure the necessary capital, we need have no concern as to how they expend the money. If it is in the interests of the venture that a 3ft. 6in. railway should be laid down, we can rest assured that the people in the old country who find the capital will, with the aid of their experts, decide upon that course. I do not agree with Mr. Sanderson's remarks, because Mr. Teesdale, one of the directors, when in the old country recently, met me there, but never discussed with me anything connected with this project. I knew nothing about the project until I saw the Bill in this House. Mr. Teesdale while in England, however, did interest himself to further the development of Western Australia. Even if the company have only sufficient capital to send Mr. Teesdale home for the purpose of putting something before investors there, that would be to the interest of the State.

Hon. J. Cornell: And to the interest of the directors.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Of course. These people are not in the venture merely for the sake of doing a good turn to the State and none to themselves.

The CHAIRMAN: I may remind the hon. member that we are discussing the question of the gauge of the proposed railway.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: We should not attempt to impose upon the company an obligation to spend their money in the development of our State, since we are really giving them nothing by the Bill. I do not regard what this measure proposes in the light of a concession at all. I do, however, welcome the expenditure of money by small companies if such expenditure will mean the bringing of larger amounts into this State, thus assisting that development which is so essential to Western Australia.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I trust the Committee will support Mr. Stewart's amendment. In this matter we ought to be influenced not by what is best for the company but by what is best in the interests of the State. A railway such as Mr. Stewart recommends would be a valuable asset in the event of a large town arising, as suggested by Mr. Duffell, to be served by this line. I do not suppose the Government would propose to build a parallel railway. I imagine what they would do. If we provide that the railway is to be one of 3ft. 6in. gauge, it would be a useful asset to the State. If a railway of smaller gauge were constructed, it would not be so valuable if the Government had to take it over, in which case the State would be put to the expense of constructing a larger gauge line. The railway is to provide for the carrying of goods and passengers and a gauge of 3ft. 6in. is quite small enough, bearing in mind the necessity for safety.

Hon. H. STEWART: It is a very serious thing to allow a break of gauge in any country. If we grant the right to construct a smaller gauge, it will mean the introduction of a new class of rolling stock. Anyone recognising the difficulties and dangers of such a proposition, from the standpoint of Australia's interest, would be wrong in not drawing the attention of the Committee to that aspect. Under Clause 8 power is given to the Government to purchase the line at a price to be determined by the Engineer-in-Chief which will not exceed the cost of construction, less depreciation. If the gauge were less than 3ft. 6in. and the Government purchased it at the price as suggested, it would mean a loss to the country, seeing that they would have to increase the width of the line or else lay down a new track altogether. The whole question relating to railway gauge should have been brought forcibly before the people of Australia by now seeing that the Commonwealth is faced with the necessity for a huge expenditure to rectify the errors of the past.

Hon. J. Duffell: You want to force the company to do what the Government cannot do.

Hon. H. STEWART: When members realise what rights the Bill gives to the company, and the valuable nature of the deposits, and when it is considered that the managing director of the company estimates that the ore can be landed in London at £5 per ton, and the State Mining Engineer values the ore at £11 on the London market, thus leaving a clear profit of £6 per ton, or six million sterling in all, then, in view of all these considerations, I contend we are quite justified in laying down a condition that the line should be one of 3ft. 6in. gauge. Such

a provision will not militate against the successful flotation or extension of the company.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Mr. Stewart has very good grounds for moving his amendment, and I will support him principally because of the proviso at the end of Clause 11. Therein it is set out that should the company fail to carry out its obligations regarding the construction of the railway, unless the rails and material are removed from the siding within six months, such rails and materials shall become the property of the Crown, subject to the payment to the company of the value of such rails and material, at a figure to be determined by the Engineer-in-Chief. Therein is the sting of the proviso.

Hon. T. Moore: We can amend that proviso if necessary.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We should welcome anything which will assist in the development of the resources of the State, but if 3ft. 6in. gauge is the recognised gauge throughout our railway system, and the Bill does not provide for a railway of that gauge, the Government will be compelled, in the event of the company failing to carry out its part of the bargain, to take over the whole of the material and rails at a price to be fixed.

Hon. T. Moore: It will be at the Government's own valuation.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not consider it would be at the Government's own valuation, because in the past when railway resumption has taken place it has been done by the Engineer-in-Chief as an independent party.

The Honorary Minister: He is representative of the Government.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: He is supposed to be an independent valuer. If the company put down a 2ft. 6in. line, the material would be useless. It would be scrap iron to all intents and purposes, but should it be taken over by the Government, it would not be valued on a scrap iron basis. In view of the clause I have referred to, it is essential that we should provide for a 3ft. 6in. gauge so that should the Government take it over they will become possessed of a valuable asset.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The eagerness with which Parliament has acted in passing this measure so far is astounding to me. Having departed from the established railway policy of the country and having recognised our own bankruptcy, let us have some vestige of honesty of purpose left. Let us say that we cannot construct the railway, despite the fabulous wealth—I believe a lot of it is fabulous—and that we will let someone else do it. Let us be honest and insist on the company conforming to the railway policy of the State and constructing the line on a 3ft. 6in. gauge. The leader of the House contends that we should allow these people to put down what sort of a line they desire. Surely it is the duty of Parliament to say that having departed from the recognised policy of railway construction, the standard gauge must be insisted on. The question of whether or not the company can construct it on the 3ft. 6in. gauge is not for this Committee to consider. The railway and defence policies of the Commonwealth rise paramount above the interests of a lot of jerrymanderers and speculators, and we should not permit, to use a vulgarism, the prostitution of our railway policy. In insisting upon the standard gauge of 3ft. 6in. we will confer a boon on those who will assume the responsibility of constructing this railway. The people interested in this project said that all they require is sufficient of a railway to carry their product to the head of the existing line. We should insist upon the 3ft. 6in. gauge.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I do not believe the State should be asked to do the whole of its development when we have a company prepared to do a little. At the same time, we have to consider the interests of the whole State. I should like to know whether, if the company build a 3ft. 6in. railway, they can obtain from the Government the right to run their trucks and engines over the Government line from Meekatharra to the seaboard.

Hon. J. Cornell: They would not need to.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I think they would. The whole of the Government rolling stock is obsolete. So heavy is it that we carry only two tons of burden to one ton of truck. If this company have any common sense, they will not drag an eight ton truck up to the mine to carry down 16 tons of ore, but will instead build a four ton truck capable of carrying 16 tons. Our railway engineers are behind the times. Consider the progress made by motor and bicycle engineers. To-day a 16-stone man rides a 16lb. bicycle at a faster pace than our trains attain. Our obsolete rolling stock is one of the most effective reasons why our railways do not pay. If the company can get permission to run their trucks over the State system they will probably build a 3ft. 6in. railway; if they cannot get permission, they will build a 2ft. 6in. line and put their ore into Government trucks at Meekatharra. I am prepared to leave the question of gauge to the company.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: It is useless labouring this question of gauge. We are continually being told of the magnificent value of this deposit of manganese ore. Will it ever be worth a penny to us unless we grant facilities for its exploitation? Here we have a company prepared to lend a value to this deposit; yet we want to hedge them about with conditions that will make it as difficult as possible. I understand the 3ft. 6in. railway will cost £4,000 per mile, which for 85 miles represents a very large sum of money. Let the company build anything they like and if later on, the Government want to build a better line, let them build it and scrap the old one.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I look upon this proposed railway as more of a prospecting venture. I know something of the Horseshoe and of Peak Hill. It is not only the manganese deposit at the Horseshoe, for to my knowledge there are several gold mining shows in the district which require only a railway to render their working profitable. There are several half-ounce shows at Peak Hill which for want of machinery and railway facilities cannot be made to pay. The railway will open up big possibilities for the prospector. A 2ft. 6in. gauge may be all that is required for the manganese deposit, but if my hopes are fulfilled the Government, later, will have to take over and standardise the line.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I oppose the amendment, although I firmly believe that within a short time all our railways will have to be altered to conform with an Australian standard of 4ft. 8½in. This railway will serve the copper deposits further north and also the show at the Ophthalmia Range, which has been described as a mountain of copper. If we insist upon the 3ft. 6in. gauge, the line will cost £300,000 or £400,000 to construct, which may prevent the company from going ahead. On the other hand, if we leave it at 2ft. 6in., we require to amend the proviso and not have it compulsory for the Government to take over the line in the event of the failure of the company. This will not be the only 2ft. 6in. line in the State, for the Government own several in the North, including that from Point Sampson to Roebourne.

Hon. A. Sanderson: That is only a tramline.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: And this will be a tram-line. We should do all we can to further the development of the country, and help these people to demonstrate that we have in the North valuable assets, the existence of which is unsuspected by people of the South.

Hon. H. STEWART: If we are to have this break of gauge, it will mean the building of rolling stock of a size and pattern entirely different from that in use on the State system. Is this desirable when a comparatively small extra expense would enable us to have uniformity?

The Honorary Minister: Do you call £250,000 a small extra expense?

Hon. H. STEWART: It would not cost that, or anything like it. The managing director of the company, Mr. Lambert, in a letter to the "West Australian" said—

> During the recent visit of Mr. Teesdale to England for health reasons, Mr. Teesdale got into touch with Lord Morris, chairman of the Overseas Mineral Research Committee, who stated that no difficulty would be experienced in finding the necessary capital to build the proposed railway if such a vast reserve of ore was available.

Realising the vastness of the deposit, and feeling that we should conserve a valuable principle which will nor prejudice the company in any way, I ask members to support the amendment.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: No one realises the necessity for a uniform gauge more than I do, but the question involved is quite apart from that. The company have very little money and evidently wish to make a good deal out of the deposits. They want to get the deposits developed at a minimum of cost. Yet some members would ask them to go to the extreme expense of putting down a line of 3ft. 6in. gauge. The company intend to develop these deposits, but without a railway they cannot carry the ore away. What Western Australia has suffered from for years has been her undeveloped resources. As a West Australian, I welcome any company coming here to develop such deposits. The company wish to lay down the line at a minimum of cost and we should assist them. The amendment might be sufficient to turn them away. We should look a little ahead. If the project proves a failure, the rails will become the property of the Government. As an old settler, I wish to see the State go ahead. In many instances its progress has been retarded by the policy that, though we cannot use a thing ourselves, we should not permit others to use it. Who built the first railway in Western Australia? Not the Government. We want capital and brainy men to come here to develop our resources. I shall support the Bill.

Hon. T. MOORE: The company have not yet decided which would be the cheaper means of transport, namely rail or motor. We ought to bear this in mind. If members would sooner see motor traffic than a railway serving this part of the country, I do not agree with them. We cannot prevent the company from laying down a motor track; they could do that now. As to the actual cost, the 3ft. 6in. gauge would necessitate the use of heavier rails and this is where the additional cost would come in. If I had anything to do with the company I know where I should look for some light rails and engines. During the war thousands of miles of light lines of 2ft. gauge were laid in France, and I believe the necessary material for this line could be obtained cheaply there.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Government have adopted the policy that the ownership of railways by private enterprise must cease, and yet we seem to be fast drifting back to the bad old times. Some kind of fuel would be required for light locomotives. I recollect those on the Golden Mile, which, to pull a certain weight, required a corresponding quantity of fuel.

Hon. T. Moore: In France they hauled up very heavy guns.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I grant that, but on a light narow gauge railway one-half of the load would be fuel.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	16
Majority against ..	6

AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. E. H. Harris	*(Teller.)*
Hon. J. W. Kirwin	

NOES.

Hon. W. A. Baglin	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. Sir E.H.Wittenoom
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. R. J. Lynn	*(Teller.)*
Hon. C. McKenzie	

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Land may be reserved and acquired:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I direct the attention of members to the fact that I have given notice of a new clause which will apply to Clauses 4 and 6. The new clause appears on the Notice Paper.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6, 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—On completion the Minister to lease railway on terms:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: This clause is rather vague. The railway may be purchased at a sum to be determined by the Engineer-in-Chief, but when purchased it might be worn out.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: The price is not to exceed the cost of construction, less depreciation.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It occurred to me that the line might be taken over without allowance for depreciation.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I do not know enough about railways to be able to say what is considered a fair percentage for depreciation each year.

Hon. H. Stewart: It depends upon the way in which it has been maintained.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I suppose it would not be ten per cent. If it were ten per cent., in ten years the Government would get the line for nothing.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The purpose of putting in these words is to make it quite clear that in no circumstances will the Government be called upon to pay anything for goodwill. In any case the taking over of the line is permissive, but if the Government choose to do so it shall be at the value assessed by the Engineer-in-Chief, and it must not exceed the cost of construction less depreciation.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

> The the following paragraph be added to stand as paragraph (e): "Such stipulations and provisions as the Minister for Lands may require."

It will be noted in the clause that the Minister for Lands has power to lease the railway for a term of 99 years, and that such lease shall, inter alia, contain provisions which are then set out in the various paragraphs.

The Minister for Education: Your amendment is covered by the words "inter alia."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No.

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

Clauses 9, 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Time limit for construction of railway:

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

> That paragraph (a) be struck out and the following inserted in lieu: "The owner shall begin the construction of the railway within one year of the passing of this Act and continue to work to the satisfaction of the Engineer-in-Chief; that the Engineer-in-Chief shall have power to extend the time to two years if he be satisfied that the owner is finding the necessary capital for carrying out the work; the railway to be completed within three years after the work is commenced or such extension as the Engineer-in-Chief may deem necessary."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The amendment will not make any difference. In normal conditions I should say one year would be ample time in which to allow the company to make a start, but we must recognise that the present conditions are not normal, and that there is difficulty in getting material, and in fact difficulty in connection with everything.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I am prepared to extend the time to two years, but I think three years sufficient in which to complete the railway.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is provided for.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The clause gives five years in which to complete the line—two years in which to start the work, and three years after that to complete it. If the company intend to go on with the job three years will be sufficient.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: Is it feasible to think that the company are going to hang up these deposits for five years if it is possible to get them on the market earlier. I am given to understand that negotiations are being made for 4,000 tons of rails. Our duty, therefore, is to facilitate and not to obstruct.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Our desire is that the deposits shall not lie idle any longer than is necessary. The more the period of construction is limited the sooner will the company be likely to get the necessary capital and start work.

Hon. H. STEWART: The amendment provides for the commencement of the work and it seems to me that there is plenty that can be gone on with in the event of a delay in the delivery of the rails. I agree with Mr. Greig's view, that the clause provides for five years within which the line must be completed, and unless there is some specific reason why an extension beyond three years should be granted, I think three years is sufficient. However, as there does not seem to be any support for my amendment, I ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of paragraph (a) the words "work is commenced" be deleted.

If the amendment is agreed to, I propose to move that the words "passing of this Act" be inserted in lieu.

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

Ayes	.. .. ..	18
Noes	.. .. ..	7
Majority for	..	11

AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. W. Kirwin	Hon. J. Nicholson (*Teller.*)
Hon. A. Lovekin	
Hon. R. J. Lynn	

NOES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. J. Duffell
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. Cunningham	(*Teller.*)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I move an amendment—

That the words "passing of this Act" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not object to the insertion of the words and I agree that the total period provided in the Bill was too long. I shall be quite satisfied with the insertion of the words proposed so long as some provision is made to meet any case of emergency. Unless that is done the company may start work in a bona fide manner and may be prevented from completing it within three years. In such an event the provisions of the Bill will apply, for no one will be able to protect them. I suggest that the difficulty will be overcome if an addition be made to provide that the Governor may grant an extension of such time as the Engineer-in-Chief recommends.

Hon J. Cornell: In that case we would get back to where we were before the division.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not at all, for it would be subject to a recommendation by the Engineer-in-Chief.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We could amend the Act.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the position indicated by the Minister arose, which would prevent the railway being completed within three years, no Parliament, recognising the disabilities which existed, would object to amending the Act.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The wording of Subclause 2 appears to be ambiguous. The clause reads that if the owner shall make default in the performance and observance of the provisions of this section or any of them, the Governor may declare the rights of the owner forfeited, and so on. I suppose the phrase "or any of them" refers to the whole of the sections of the Act?

The Minister for Education: It is not intended to, by any means.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: What does it mean?

Hon. A. Sanderson: It simply means the provisions of Clause 11.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is no other section in the Bill a breach of which by the company would result in the extreme step of forfeiture of their rights. If the words suggested were put into the clause it would mean that, in the event of their neglecting to make by-laws, for instance, they would be liable to forfeit their rights.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why the necessity for the words "or any of them"?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That means any of the provisions contained in Clause 11. Without that phrase, the company might make default in regard to the whole of the provisions instead of merely a default regarding those contained in the clause.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I ask the hon. member not to press the matter because it is really no use endeavouring to put these small amendments into the Bill. I hope to bring forward an amendment to provide for a deposit of £10,000. That is a somewhat important matter. It is hardly necessary to make alterations in clauses merely for the sake of redrafting them. I regard the Bill with extreme regret. The whole matter should have been referred to the most skilled legal advice we could secure, but it is being pushed through.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

That in line one of the proviso, after "that," the words "if the owner is not indebted to the Government in any moneys" be inserted.

This is a peculiar clause. It provides that the owner shall do certain things but if he defaults he shall forfeit, but in the proviso it is said that, notwithstanding what he has to do, and default is made, he shall be able to take away the rails and material which constitute the only available asset on the property.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Not if we get a deposit.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: We have not come to that yet. The owner may owe the Government money and why should he be allowed to take away the only asset?

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 and 5 the words "shall become the property of" be struck out and "may be acquired by" be inserted in lieu.

This will bring the clause into conformity with Clause 8 and will make the purchase purely permissive.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The amendment goes hardly far enough. If the company made failure and left the old material lying about, the Government might be put to the expense of removing it.

Hon. J. A. Greig: Would not the Government consider that when putting their valuation on it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Not necessarily. If the Government did not want the material, who would remove it? I suggest that if the company failed to remove it within a certain lengthy period, it should become the property of the Crown. The same principle applies to slimes and tailings on the mines.

Amendment put and passed.

New clauses:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 7:—"Notwithstanding anything contained in Sections (4) and (6) of this Act the Minister shall, before issuing any notice to acquire lands under the Public Works Act, 1902, or before undertaking any survey, obtain from the owner a sum sufficient to meet the award in respect to any such resumption, and to defray the cost of any such survey."

The effect is that if the Government have to resume land or make surveys for the company, the Government must have the money in hand before commencing the work.

The Minister for Education: I have no objection to the proposed new clause.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I intend to move a new clause to require a deposit of £10,000—it ought to be £20,000—to be paid to the Colonial Treasurer before this measure becomes operative.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That will not interfere with this new clause.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I think the two are intimately connected.

New clause put and passed.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 12:—"A deposit of £10,000 shall be paid to the Colonial Treasurer by the company before this Act becomes operative."

No apology is needed for not having put the proposed new clause on the Notice Paper; it may be easily grasped. Before anything whatever is done under the Act, a deposit of £10,000 should be put up by the company.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Why not make it £100,000?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Surely the hon. member himself has answered that question. The explanation of one half of our difficulties lies in the fact that the chairman of directors in another place says this is to be a tramway and the Premier says it is to be a railway. I am not permitted to read from the current "Hansard" reports, but I can refer members to pages 1638 and 1936, where they will find speeches of the Premier and of the managing director. One says this is a magnificent railway which should cost a quarter of a million, and the other says it is a tramway. Personally, I am in agreement with both, because if it is worked as a concession the difference of opinion is very easily explained. If it were all private property the tramway could be laid without reference to us. The Premier has backed the Bill of the company so to speak, a most important departure, and has turned this tramway into a railway. Is it not reasonable, therefore, that before the company begin—a company of whom we know nothing—they should put up a deposit of £10,000? I do not desire to injure the company in any way; I merely wish to protect the public interests. The paragraph in the "West Australian" states—

Lord Morris, chairman of the Overseas Mineral Research Committee, stated that no difficulty would be experienced in finding the necessary capital to build the proposed railway if such a vast reserve of ore was available.

If this is a genuine affair, there will be no difficulty. The Government are directly involved, and is it too much to ask that before anything is done this deposit should be put up? Do members think that £10,000 is too large a sum to ask in connection with the proposal described by the Colonial Treasurer of the State on page 1,638 of "Hansard"?

Hon. T. Moore: It will be a lot of money to lie idle.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It can go into the Trust Fund at five per cent. If this new clause is accepted the company may draft their own clause to stipulate when the money shall be handed back to them. If they do not intend to go on with the building of the line for two years, they need not make the deposit until they are ready to start.

Hon. V. Hamersley: The new clause is only in keeping with the provision requiring deposits from insurance companies.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is in keeping with ordinary business precautions. I have no wish to harass or embarrass the company. The company can be floated, but when they wish to put into operation this measure, they should lodge the deposit.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We have already made provision that before the Government spend any money, the company shall put up a sufficient deposit to cover it. This clause simply means that the Act shall not become operative until the company put up £10,000. As the Bill stands the company must get to work and raise their money, and they must have the money to hand to the Government to meet the cost of land resumption and surveys, and to be able to start the construction of the line within two years. If the amendment suggested is inserted, it will mean that all the company will have to do will be to withhold the lodging of the £10,000 deposit, and they may negotiate for the raising of capital for the next five years and the Act will not be in operation against them. Instead of having to float the company and get money within two years, they can do their flotation business, withhold the putting up of the £10,000 for a period, and still have another two years in which to build the railway.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am assuming that this is a genuine affair and that the company are anxious to get to work as soon as possible. If they put up £10,000 it will be some evidence that they intend to go on with the work. The leader of the House says that that would give the company an opportunity of hanging up the business.

The Minister for Education: So it would.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not understand the attitude of the Government. I have here an extract from the "Times" written by that newspaper's correspondent, who was travelling in this State with the Prince of Wales. On the 10th December he is reported as saying, "The politicians are thought of and talked of everywhere with a disconcerting contempt." I am not surprised after the attitude of the Government on this Bill, and the attitude of the Minister for Education when he refused to accept a reasonable proposition, that people continue to talk about us both here and at the other end of the world in this way. The House refused to refer this Bill to a select committee and so enable us to get the information we required. I now ask members to insist upon a substantial deposit being put up by this company as a bona fide of their intentions to go on with the work.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Before the work is commenced?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Yes. If members think it is necessary for this clause, to stand criticism inside and outside the Chamber and in a court of law, then we should be supplied with first class draftsmen at our beck and call, so that the ordinary member of the Chamber may be on terms of equality with the leader of the House, who can call upon the Crown Law Department to assist them.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The Minister for Education assured us there was no objection on the part of the company to put up a substantial sum of money as a bona fide of their intentions. If this mineral deposit is worth 13 million pounds a sum of £10,000 is not too much to ask them to put up. I am prepared to allow this company freedom to develop their manganese ore, but before the Government make surveys and incur any expense, their outlay should be covered by a sum of money put up by the company. I have had a private talk with the managing director of this company, who told me he had no objection to the company putting up a substantial amount before they asked the Government to incur any expense. That being so, members should not object to such provision being made here. Perhaps the sum of £5,000 would in the circumstances be sufficient. I move an amendment—

> That in the proposed new clause "Ten thousand pounds" be struck out and five thousand pounds" inserted in lieu.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: I want the words "before this Act becomes operative" struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can move that later on.

Amendment on the new clause put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I suggest that the words "before this Act becomes operative" should be struck out. It is not a question of my not accepting Mr. Sanderson's amendment, but it is my duty to tell the Committee what it will mean. I would suggest the inclusion of some such words as these, "Before the Government shall be called upon to incur expenditure under Sections 4 and 6." The remainder of the Bill would then stand as it is, and the company would still be tied down to two years before getting to work.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We have been defeated and we accept our defeat without reservation. I will accept any amendment the Minister likes, but it would be foolish on our part to definitely decide on the actual wording of the clause it is proposed to put in. That should be left to the advisers of the Government to put into proper form. If the Minister objects to the words he referred to, I am quite prepared to withdraw them. I will offer no opposition to the drafting of the new clause, because I assume it will be so drafted as to carry out the wishes of the Committee.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

> That in the proposed new clause the words "this Act becomes operative" be

struck out and the words "any land is set apart or survey made as provided for in Sections 4 and 6 respectively" be inserted.

By this means the desire of the hon. member will be met.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I hope the Minister will give us an opportunity of considering that amendment; or does it represent a final decision? To ask me to give my assent to an amendment drafted offhand is to ask something I cannot and will not do.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: If the amendment is carried, the Bill will go before another place again, and in the meantime the amendment can be submitted to the Crown Law Department and, if necessary, re-drafted.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We cannot pass the amendment and send it on to the Crown Law Department, and let that department transmit it to another Chamber. We must take the responsibility of what we put into the Bill. But if the amendment is now submitted to the Crown Law Department, it can be further considered here.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: My idea was merely to save time. If the clause is adopted in this form and is found not to be suitable, it can be amended on recommittal.

Hon. H. STEWART: The leader of the House proposes that the deposit shall be put up before anything is done by the Government. I have another proposal to submit, namely that the deposit shall be made within six months of the passing of the Bill. Otherwise nothing might be done until nearly two years after the passing of the Bill.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It might be wise to add words to provide that such deposit shall be forfeited to the Crown in the event of the owner making default in the performance or observance of any of the provisions in Clause 11.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I hope the Committee will not accept Mr. Nicholson's suggestion. Already we have provided ample penalties in case of the owner failing to carry out the provisions of Clause 11. I do not see why we should keep piling penalties one on top of another.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I thank Mr. Stewart for the suggestion about the six months. That is a matter that ought to be considered, and will be considered in the proper place. I have heard eminent conveyancing counsel in my day, but I do not think I have ever heard one, however eminent, attempt to draft a clause on a matter of this importance while on his feet.

Mr. Nicholson: Thank you.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I reserve to myself the full right to go outside and draft this particular clause if I wish to do so, but I hope the leader of the House will endeavour to get into the Bill a really substantial deposit as desired by the Committee.

Hon. H. STEWART: I would like your ruling, Mr. Chairman, as to whether this House would be in order in passing a clause requiring the putting down of a certain sum of money?

The CHAIRMAN: It would be quite in order. I think it would be better if Mr Nicholson wrote out the amendment he has suggested.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I will do so later. The mere provision for payment of a deposit would not in itself carry the penalty of forfeiture unless words are inserted to cover that. In the absence of such words the company, if they failed to carry out their obligations, would simply at the end of the period demand a repayment of the deposit. I hardly think that was in Mr. Sanderson's mind; I think he wanted the deposit of £5,000 to be forfeited in such circumstances.

Hon. A. Sanderson: I want to forfeit their Act, not their money.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In reply to the leader of the House, there is no penalty imposed on the company as suggested by him.

The Minister for Education: Yes, forfeiture of the lease.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: How would forfeiture of the lease be a penalty on the company if they had expended no money at all? There is nothing being given to the Government in return for the granting of this important railway concession. I think the manganese deposit is the milk in the cocoanut. There is little chance of disposing of that property unless a concession of this nature is granted. The Government are granting to the company something that is of the greatest value.

Hon. A. Sanderson: And we have been defeated on that.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes. The hon. member has moved that a deposit should be required. Once the deposit is paid to prove *bona fides*, then, surely, if the company failed to carry out their obligations, they should suffer the usual penalty of forfeiture of the deposit. I shall be glad to move at a later stage the amendment I have suggested.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: On consideration I wish to add further words to my amendment on the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: That cannot be done unless it is proposed to insert the further words at the end of the clause.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I ask leave to add to my amendment on the amendment the following words:—

> Such deposit to be forfeited if railway construction work be not commenced before two years from the passing of this Act.

Leave given.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: When is the deposit to be made, though?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: We ask that the deposit shall be made before the Government start operations.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I ask Mr. Greig to withdraw his amendment on the amendment, because the leader of the House has told us that we are to have an opportunity of further considering the measure. The

hon. gentleman is not going to rush the Bill through, but will allow ample time to those who are opposed to it. Mr Nicholson talks about the enormous value of the concession and the milk in the cocoanut. All of us have had plenty of time to consider that aspect of the matter, and the majority have come to the conclusion that they will put the Bill through. I do not see how those who are opposed to the measure can do anything further in the matter. They must simply accept their defeat. I think the Committee as a whole are agreeable to putting in this £5,000 deposit, with certain conditions.

Hon. J. A. Greig: I am making this one of the conditions.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: But I can submit two or three others which certainly ought to be put in, if only we are given an opportunity for framing carefully considered provisions. Without any hostility to the amendment, I therefore ask the hon. member to withdraw it until to-morrow.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: What I said was that if the clause is passed, the Bill will be reported to the House and the motion for the adoption of the report will not come on until to-morrow. Then, if any hon. member thinks the clause is not what he requires, he can move to recommit the Bill.

Further amendment on the new clause as amended put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	.. ..	8
Noes	.. ..	14
Majority against	..	6

AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. W. Kirwin
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. A. Sanderson *(Teller.)*

NOES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. A. H. Panton *(Teller.)*
Hon. R. J. Lynn	
Hon. C. McKenzie	

Further amendment on the new clause thus negatived.

New clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Schedule, title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act Amendment.

2, Land Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

Assembly's Amendments.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to the Bill, subject to three amendments in which it desired the concurrence of the Council.

BILL—RAILWAYS CLASSIFICATION BOARD.

In Committee.

Resumed from 1st December; Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the definition of "accredited representative" the words "of any claimant or" be struck out.

There are only two parties interested, namely, the Commissioner and the Railway and Tramway Officers' Industrial Union of Workers. Therefore these words are unnecessary.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know that the hon. member has given good reason for striking out the words. It is intended that any claimant should be allowed to have an accredited representative.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: But, as I have said, there are only two parties to be recognised. Therefore, surely the accredited representative should be a representative either of the organisation or of the Commissioner. Why should we provide for other accredited representatives?

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That after the interpretation of Commissioner the following interpretation be inserted:—"'Head of branch' means an officer in control of one of the recognised divisions of the staff who receives his instructions from and communicates with the Commissioner directly."

It is necessary that there should be an interpretation of "head of branch." This interpretation has been mutually agreed upon between the Commissioner and the union.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That after the interpretation of regulations the following interpretation be inserted:—"'Sub-head of branch' means an officer in control of some recognised section of a division of the staff who receives his instructions from and communicates with the head of the branch directly."

This also is an interpretation which has been mutually agreed upon between the Commissioner and the union.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I have an amendment of a similar description to that moved by the Minister. I did propose to move it in connection with Clause 15, but if the Minister's amendment is carried, that will be the end of mine. May I move an amendment on the Minister's amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "means" in line 2 of the amendment be struck out and the following be inserted in lieu:—"Superintendent of Transportation, Interlocking Engineer, Electrical Engineers, Works Manager, District Traffic Superintendent, District Engineer, District Loco. Foreman, or such other sub-head who may hereinafter be appointed.

The organisation of the officers is composed of the salaried staff of the Government railways. The position that the railways officers found themselves in was that they were able to go to the Arbitration Court, but it was found that that court had no jurisdiction to classify the salaried officers. I understand the Government considered that it would be advisable to amend the Arbitration Act to give the court the jurisdiction to classify those officers. It would have been better to have done that rather than to introduce legislation to set up a new board altogether. The interpretation placed on sub-heads by the Minister will mean that there will be five or six sub-heads in every branch of the railway service, and that will mean that there will be 45 or 50 members of this organisation who will be debarred from classification because sub-heads will not be eligible for classification by this board.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The importance of this clause lies in its relation to Clause 15, paragraph (a) of which gives the board jurisdiction to classify all officers except heads and sub-heads of branches. The policy is that the heads and sub-heads shall be classified by the Commissioner. I am advised by the Commissioner that the amendment Mr. Panton has moved is not in accord with the agreement between the Commissioner and the officers of the union. The Commissioner points out that to specify the position in the Act is inadvisable and further, that the list suggested by Mr. Panton does not include certain officers who undoubtedly are sub-heads.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is somewhat peculiar that after the Bill has run the gauntlet of another place, we should now be asked to make this amendment. Why was it not done by the Minister in another place who controls the railways?

Amendment on amendment put and negatived.

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

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I have given notice of another amendment but it does not appear on the Notice Paper.

Hon. J. CORNELL: With regard to Subclause 3 of Clause 3, I would like to bring this into line with the public service appeal board. Why not appoint a judge of the Supreme Court?

Hon. A. H. Panton: We have not enough judges.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Let us have more. I move an amendment—

That Subclause 3 be amended to read "One member shall be a judge of the Supreme Court who shall be the chairman of the board."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We have not enough judges to go round, and to insert the provision suggested will mean the hanging up of the operations of the board. The clause as it stands represents the result of an agreement between the two parties and it is quite satisfactory.

Hon. J. E. DODD: It is an entirely wrong procedure that we should force one section of the workers to go before a Supreme Court judge and another section to go before anyone else who might be appointed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Minister's reply is not satisfactory. I have thought in years gone by, and I still hold the opinion, that a judge is not always the proper person, nor has he the necessary qualifications, to fill a position such as this.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am not prepared to agree to the amendment, because the Bill provides for something which I think should be encouraged. The clause under discussion provides for a chairman to be approved by both parties. There is no analogy between the position of the board and that relating to the Arbitration Court. The judge is appointed permanently to the Arbitration Court and neither side has any voice in deciding who is to be the chairman. In the case under the Bill the representatives of the two parties agree upon a chairman, who is thereupon appointed. The clause provides for a magistrate or some other person and that some other person may be a judge or a commercial man. This provision embodies the principle I have fought for for many years and in the circumstances I cannot support the amendment.

[Hon. J. Ewing resumed the Chair.]

Hon. J. CORNELL: It has been said that there is no person other than a judge competent to act in the position of President of the Arbitration Court, seeing that he is elected for life and as such, would be above suspicion, and any decision that he, as chairman, would give, would not be influenced by any considerations which could lead

to his removal from that position. If the clause provides that the chairman is to be a magistrate only, that would perpetuate the principle which the leader of the House in days gone by has said was beyond contradiction. We are progressing with the times however. It has been said that the delays in connection with the Arbitration Court have occurred owing to judges having to do work in another capacity. Despite that, however, the Government can find further work for judges to do in presiding over the Public Service Appeal Board, which is analogous to the Board set up under the Bill. However, I have made my protest. I know that some Ministers favour a wages board on the lines appointed under the Victorian Act. I do not know why they have not gone the whole hog, but have only gone some of the way for some of the work.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Tenure of office:

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Subclause 1 provides that subject to the Act, all members of the board shall be appointed for a term of three years and shall continue to hold office until their successors are appointed. That includes the chairman of the board. Under this provision all the members of the board may retire at the same time, in which case there can be no continuity of the work of the board. I have heard no suggestion from the organisation this Bill seeks to assist on this point, but I think it might well be altered. I will not propose any amendment, but will content myself by drawing attention to this point. An alteration could be made in the direction of allowing at least one member of the board to continue in office for a greater period than the other two, so that continuity of work might be maintained.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The next provision which sets out that any member of the board shall be eligible for reappointment, will meet the objection the hon. member has raised.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is a marked difference in the appointment of the board under the Bill and the Arbitration Court. I cannot find anything in the Arbitration Act which says that the members shall continue to hold office until their successors are appointed Under the Bill the members of the Arbitration Court are appointed for three years on the recommendation of the parties to whom they are responsible. Before the expiration of three years, steps are taken to ascertain the desires of the parties I have referred to, and in the event of no alteration being desired by either party, they continue their membership. I fail to see the necessity for the provision in the Bill that members shall hold office until their successors are appointed. It should be ascertained within three years whether those appointed are to continue in that position and if they are to continue as members of the Board, they can automatically remain in that office. If a change is to be made, the other members will join the board. There is a danger in this clause and there is no necessity for the provision I have drawn attention to.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 5 be struck out.

The subclause provides that any member of the board may at any time be removed by the Governor and his office shall thereupon become vacant. The constitution of the board provides that one member shall be a magistrate or such other person as may be agreed upon by both parties concerned. The union have the right to elect one member and the Commissioner of Railways has the right to appoint the other member. In Subclauses 2, 3, and 4, it is set out how these seats shall become vacant. I do not think any Government should have the power to break up the board simply because, at some time or other, a decision may have been given which does not meet with the desires of the Government of the day. The Commissioner and the union have the right to remove their representatives, and the persons appointed in their places can please themselves about the chairman.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I support the amendment moved by Mr. Panton. I look upon this as a dangerous provision in the Bill. I am not prepared to say that any Government, in the event of a decision being given by the board being regarded unfavourably, should take it upon themselves to remove the chairman from office. As the clause stands, the provision is there and it can be used. It is a provision that might intimidate certain members of the board in connection with their decisions.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The purpose of the clause is to permit the removal of any member of the board in extreme circumstances, and not otherwise.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What would be extreme circumstances?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The circumstances set out in Subclause 4. Mr. Panton said that if either party did not like its representative they could remove him at the end of three years. Would they have to put up with him for three years? I do not see how either the Commissioner or the industrial union of workers could remove a representative.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I support the amendment. Why has a departure been made from the principle laid down in the Arbitration Act, seeing that the railway employees who accept this board place themselves outside the Arbitration Act? There is no provision in the Arbitration Act so wide as this one. Under that Act the Governor may remove any member of the court, but the specific grounds are set out. Those provisions should be adapted and embodied in this Bill.

Hon. J. E. DODD: The subclause is dangerous. In the past criticism of magistrates has not been absent and certain magistrates have been removed for a purpose. If a Labour Government came into power the same criticism might be directed, and they might remove the magistrate and appoint another. The same, of course, applies to a Liberal Government coming into power. Provision should be made in the direction indicated by Mr. Cornell.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: As I indicated in moving the second reading, the Bill has been founded on the Victorian Act, and this subclause is taken from that Act. Apparently it escaped discussion in another place, and I confess that there is something in the remarks made by Mr. Dodd. The clause should undoubtedly provide for comprehensive disqualification. There is certainly some objection to the removal of a member of the board without any reason.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am anxious that this board should be successful and it will rest with the chairman to make a success of it. Therefore we must have a chairman above suspicion by either side. I can imagine a chairman being appointed and then finding out that he could be removed notwithstanding that he does not come within the disqualification set down. No man would place himself in such a position, and it would not be in the interests of the service to keep on chopping and changing about. It would be easy to provide the necessary disqualifications so that the chairman and members of the board would know what they had accepted.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If conviction for crime or misdemeanour is a disqualification for a board of this kind, it should apply even more so to the Arbitration Court, but that is not a disqualification for a representative in the Arbitration Court, and I do not think it should be for this board. A railway officer might be convicted of striking, and that would be a disqualification for appointment to the board.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: This subclause has doubtless been inserted in all good faith to give the Government discretionary power in case of a member of the board being unsuitable. Of course the position might be strained, as has been pointed out. Whether it would be used for political or other purposes, I cannot imagine, but as the possibility has been suggested we would do well to insert an amendment to prevent it.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Will the Minister provide a comprehensive disqualification such as is provided in the Arbitration Act?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Having read the disqualification in the Arbitration Act, I think it is unnecessary. The disqualification here set out appears to be sufficient.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6, 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Right to vote:

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I move an amendment—

That "officer" be struck out and the words "member of the union" inserted in lieu.

This Bill deals with a union and members of the union should be the people to control the representative. I understand that 92 to 95 per cent. of the officers belong to the union. If they are to have control of the representative they should have the right to elect him.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not see that any good purpose would be served by the amendment. Why should the membership of the union be dragged into every clause. The Bill itself undoubtedly recognises the union. The people who are intended to vote are the officers, and their right to vote is given by virtue of their being officers.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It is possible that another organisation might be started and that there would be some sort of a breakaway. If my amendment is carried there will be no argument as to who is to elect the representative.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I see no necessity for the clause at all. There is no such thing in the Public Service Appeal Board Bill. Anyway, Clause 3 completely covers Clause 9.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed

Clauses 9 to 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Jurisdiction of board:

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The board is to be given jurisdiction to do certain things and in another part of the clause may determine certain things. What will be the meaning of these words?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Undoubtedly the clause gives power to the board to determine.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 16 to 25—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and a Message accordingly forwarded to the Assembly requesting them to make the amendments, leave being given to sit again on receipt of a Message from the Assembly.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [8.11]: I wish to make a personal explanation. During the debate on the second reading of the Bill Mr. Hamersley asked by way of interjection whether any interest was allowed to creditors. On the spur of the moment I replied in the negative. As

a fact, what guided me was that I myself had money owing for a period of about five years. That money was paid me less interest, so I had good reason for saying no. It was entirely wrong. Creditors are allowed eight per cent.

Hon. J. MILLS (Central) [8.12]: The few remarks I have to make will be in support of the Bill, as it has for its object the continuance of the Industries Assistance Act for a further period of 12 months. It is only an emergency Act begotten of necessity in 1915. Hon. members will recollect the disastrous year of 1914 when this State was struck by a drought. Hundreds, almost thousands, of men on the land, who were just about to make their homes and their livelihood, were brought perilously near to starvation. The Labour Government rose to the occasion and gave instructions that provisions should be supplied to those who were in real distress. This continued until 1915 when the present Industries Assistance Act came into operation. After that time the Government found that the supplying of stores was unsatisfactory to the farmer and to all concerned, and decided to send out a cheque monthly for sums which varied from £3 to £12; according to whether the settler was married, the number of his family and those dependent upon him. This continued until about 1916 or 1917. During that period there was grave dissatisfaction amongst the farmers. Numerous letters appeared in the Press expressing dissatisfaction wtih everything; indeed, many men left the land in consequence of their being unable to get satisfaction. About that time the Wilson Government came into power and with it the present Premier, the Hon. J. Mitchell. That hon. gentleman at once saw the unsatisfactory nature of the position and set to work to remedy it. He did so by arranging that every farmer, no matter whether married or single, should have what was considered at the time a living wage, namely 9s. per day. This was to be given monthly to the farmers by inspectors. He appointed a great number of inspectors and cut up the agricultural portion of the State into different districts, appointing a district inspector in charge of each. The inspectors made regular visits to men on the farms and the payments were made by them. Until these inspectors were appointed some £30,000 or £40,000 per month was being sent out by way of cheques to the farmers, and the Government did not know whether they were getting any return for the money or whether their securities were being maintained. I have no desire to cast any reflection upon the farming community. I hold the farmers in the highest esteem, and have no desire to reflect upon them in any way. If those men who received these payments had liked to neglect their work, the Government would not have been any the wiser. The inspectors who were appointed were experienced men. They thoroughly understood the business of the farm and arranged the work for the ensuing month. There was a scale set out showing the work which had to be done, and if it was not carried out without a satisfactory explanation for the default, after a certain period had elapsed the payments were debited against future payments. At first the farmers were annoyed at this supervision. I suppose it savoured something of serfdom. This opposition, however, did not last long, because they found the inspectors were there to assist and advise them and that they were practical men. The result is that to-day the farmers do not want to leave the board, even those who are clear and have paid their liabilities. They realise that it represents a bank to them. If they leave it they cannot go back, whereas if hard times come on again they would probably go to the board for further assistance. I know many men who have hundreds of pounds to their credit but who do not desire to leave the board. The board is a protection for farmers who are continually being pestered by agents of all kinds and by pedlars of all kinds. If these persons go to an Industries Assistance Board farmer they know that any order they may take will be of no use unless it is passed by the inspector and has been endorsed by the district inspector. The farmer, therefore, prefers to remain on the board, because it is sufficient for him to get these fellows away to tell them that he is a client of the board, and that it is no use asking him for orders because they will not be entertained at head office. Moreover, the inspector is really a director of agriculture to these men, who are not experienced; and they realise what he is, and appreciate him. The Premier said a few weeks ago in another place that at present there are 500 soldiers who have availed themselves of the Industries Assistance Board. These soldiers had a limit of £2,000 for the purchase of property. Many of them have purchased to that limit, purchasing a farm and machinery, with land cleared and wells sunk and so forth. Where would those soldiers be for the ensuing season but for the Industries Assistance Board? They want seed, super, sustenance, wages, and endless other things. But for the board the soldiers would have been better without the farms. That is another strong reason why the Act should be continued. Only recently one of the leading newspapers in this State invited the Government to send out an excursion to show those who cared to go what a magnificent asset we have in our agricultural lands. I think the idea was an excellent one, because many people do not realise the facts in this respect. However, had it not been for the establishment of the Industries Assistance Board five years ago, those smiling fields would not have been there to-day, because 90 per cent. of the settlers would have had to abandon their holdings in order to save their lives. As it was, the Government protected the farmer. It was necessary to do so, because if a man is harassed by creditors it deprives him of energy. A man cannot settle down to work if every time a dog barks he thinks a policeman or a bailiff is coming along. Accordingly the farmers

were protected by the Postponement of Debts Act, and they settled down to work. They were told to settle down and go to work and retrieve themselves. They were told that a living wage would be given them, and that they would be helped. Recently 750 clients of the Industries Assistance Board got their clearances, and others could have done so had they chosen. The drought of 1914 was a very bad thing for the farmer and for the Government and for the storekeeper, but I really think the Government of the day did the very best thing possible in the circumstances by protecting the farmer, because, in consequence, the farmer has stayed upon his land. Moreover, a sum of £250,000 has already been paid to the storekeepers and merchants by farmers on the Industries Assistance Board. There is a great deal more to pay, but with the magnificent harvest and the good prices in prospect I dare say a large part of that liability will be met at an early date. I think the Industries Assistance Act has served a most useful purpose. In my opinion it deserves to be permanently on the statute-book of the country. If any Act has ever justified its existence, it is the Industries Assistance Act; and I therefore have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill.

Hon. J. A. GREIG (South-East) [8.20]: I rise to support the Bill. Last year, when we were debating a similar continuance Bill, I had arrived at the conclusion that in the interests of the State and in those of the farmers themselves and also in those of the storekeepers and merchants we should endeavour to wind up the Industries Assistance Board as soon as possible. I have, however, altered my opinion during the last 12 months. That business trip which the Premier arranged last year to go through the wheat belt was to me an eye-opener, as I believe it was to many other members of Parliament. I had then the opportunity to learn the opinions of various settlers on the wheat belt who had not yet made good. I had previously met civil servants who had been settled on the land but had come back to Perth. They told me that Mr. Mitchell's scheme of land settlement for civil servants was an utter failure. Some of the wharf lumpers who had settled on the land during the period of a strike came to me and said that the land was no good and that the Minister's policy was rotten. Those civil servants and those lumpers were like the men who came back from Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie in the early days and said there was no gold there. Every one of the settlers that came back as I have stated condemned the Government, the land policy, and the land, and also the Industries Assistance Board for not giving them more money to go on with. In 1911 Mr. Mitchell took 50 married men with families and put them on the land, and 35 of those settlers made good, thanks chiefly to the Industries Assistance Board. The Agricultural Bank carried them on a certain way, but even then they would have failed but for the Industries Assistance Board. Of the 100 civil servants placed upon the land in the Kunnunoppin district, about 70 are doing well to-day. The returns of the quantity of wheat grown by clients of the Industries Assistance Board go to prove what the value of that board has been to the State. I am pleased that the Honorary Minister to-day corrected the statement which he made on a recent evening, that no interest had been paid to merchants and storekeepers in respect of the debts owing to them. Mr. Baxter's explanation of to-night put quite a different aspect on the Bill. The merchants to whom I have spoken are quite satisfied, and admit that but for the Industries Assistance Board they would in a large number of cases have got nothing at all of what was owing to them. To-day they are getting eight per cent. interest on the money outstanding. In most cases the merchants have been paid in full. As regards the other cases, it looks as if very few of them would turn out bad debts. I am satisfied that the Act should be made a permanent one, because to-day we have the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board and the Repatriation Committee all working in together, and because we have settled such a large number of soldiers on the land and many of them are inexperienced. I spoke to several ex civil servants settled on the land around Kunnunoppin, and one man said to me that he had nearly starved until the Industries Assistance Board was established, and that thanks to the instructions given him by the board's inspector each month, he had made good. That settler added, "This year"—I am speaking of a period 12 months ago—"when I get my harvest in I expect to have a couple of thousand pounds in the bank." I said to him that I supposed he would be very pleased to get off the Industries Assistance Board, but he replied, "No; I will not go off the board if the Government will keep me on it." I looked at him in astonishment and asked, "Why do not you want to go off the board?" He replied, "It is just this way. I knew nothing about farming at all, but when the inspector came round once a month to pay me 9s. for every day that I had worked he instructed me what to do. He instructed me in wheat growing. Now my land is getting dirty, and next year I shall go in for sheep. I know nothing about sheep, but if the inspector will act the managing director for me once a month as regards sheep in the same way as he did in regard to wheat, I shall make good." That started me thinking. I went round among various other clients of the Industries Assistance Board, and found that a large number of them would not have made a success had it not been for the board's inspectors insisting upon having their instructions carried out. In talking

with those inspectors, I found that they had really become professors of agriculture and of farming in each district. Twenty years' experience has taught me that a man may become familiar with one wheat-growing district in Western Australia and know exactly how to handle the land in that district, but that if he is taken 50 miles away he will probably do the wrong thing. These inspectors, however, by being on every farm in a district—say 20 or 30 different farms——

Hon. J. Mills: It may be 60 or 70 farms.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Possibly. Say that an inspector spends half a day per month on each farm in his district. Thus he gets to know exactly how to handle the farm, the best way of ringbarking, and the best means of managing the whole thing. Accordingly he is in a position to recommend the settler what to do in order to make good. I am satisfied that the Industries Assistance Board represents a real practical system of settling our soldiers on the land, and it is because we have so many soldier settlers—some of them with not too much experience—that I advocate making the Industries Assistance Board a permanent institution.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What is the percentage of failures?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I think it is very slight. However, things look particularly good. Even if the Government lost the whole of the doubtful debts now on the books of the Industries Assistance Board, that board would still be a real good thing for this State. Considering the indirect benefit to the State from the number of men placed or kept on the land through the agency of the Industries Assistance Board, that board must be regarded as one of the best institutions ever created by any Government of this State.

Hon. J. Cunningham: The Industries Assistance Board was created by the Labour Government.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Quite right. I like to give credit where credit is due. The Labour Government brought in the original Industries Assistance Act, but it must be said that they introduced it at the point of the bayonet. The members of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association went before the Labour Cabinet in 1915, and pointed out the serious position of the agricultural industry. At that time Mr. Scaddan said he could do nothing. However, a couple of members of the association formulated a scheme and put it before Mr. Scaddan, who said it was an impossible scheme.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The Country party had not been born then.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Mr. Gardiner, M.L.A., and Mr. Stanistreet found that they could not get consideration from the Labour Government for what they wanted, and so they called a meeting at the Town Hall in Perth. Many Labour members will no doubt recollect that public meeting, because one of the Labour Ministers, Mr. Underwood, said at that meeting that the farmers had no right to be speaking as they were and that it would be better for the country if they would go and get work. Many of the farmers have not yet forgotten that utterance.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: What happened before that meeting, though?

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The Labour Government gave consideration to the proposition put before them at the instance of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association, and I want to give the Labour Government credit for having the good sense to adopt the suggestion to establish an Industries Assistance Board when it was forced upon them.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: They had decided upon the board before then.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I know that the Labour party have gone out into the country and made misleading statements in regard to this matter. They have said that they introduced the Bill, and have given the Country party no credit in connection with the measure; but I want to give credit where credit is due. In the early days the working of the Industries Assistance Act was very faulty. The civil servants who were then placed at the head of the board's affairs proved rather unfortunate selections. However, I do not blame the Labour Government at all for that. I will say this for them, that when suggestions for improvements were put before them, they listened to those suggestions. To-day we have in the Industries Assistance Board an institution which is working most satisfactorily.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The board had to gain experience.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Certainly. Whenever an Act is passed by Parliament and put into practical operation, it is found that beneficial amendments can be made in it. However, I am quite satisfied with the working of the institution to-day, and I am satisfied that the Minister, when he said it was one of the best Acts ever before Parliament, was quite right. I ask hon. members to support the second reading, and to make this a permanent institution, so that it may work in conjunction with the Agricultural Bank and the Repatriation Board. It may be necessary at a later stage to amalgamate those three institutions once we have finished with the soldier settlement. Those three bodies could with advantage be amalgamated and the inspectors continue to act as managing directors to those settled on the land.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY (Central) [8.30]: The hon. member who has just sat down gave credit to the Labour Government for having initiated the Industries Assistance Board. But in the next breath the hon. member said the Labour Government had done so at the point of the bayonet. He referred to the public meeting held in Perth at which Mr. Underwood, then an Honorary

Minister, advised the farmers to get work. The hon. member was not quite correct. The Industries Assistance Board was initiated 12 months prior to that meeting. One of the first official acts of the Labour Government was to supply people in the drier areas with water from the Coolgardie scheme, and at a later date the Industries Assistance Board was initated.

Hon. J. A. Greig: You are quite wrong.

The PRESIDENT: At all events, the discussion has nothing to do with the Bill.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: I am sorry. Hon. members here seem to be able to pop up and make any statements they like.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has said all that need be said on that subject.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: Very well. I have an open mind on the Bill. In the first place this was an emergency measure, and it has served its purpose. The Labour party must be congratulated upon the result. But there is room for argument as to the continuance of the Industries Assistance Board. In this respect I have been impressed with the remarks of Mr. Mills, who for many years was an inspector in an important district. He favours the continuance of the measure. I have no very strong opinions against such continuance. I agree with Mr. Greig that the time has arrived when the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank should be amalgamated. Instead of bringing down the Bill for continuance year after year, the Government should seriously consider the amalgamation of those two bodies, which would be in the best interests not only of the farmer, but of the general community. I will not refer to many of the transactions of the Industries Assistance Board which have been entirely unsatisfactory, such as the superphosphate contract and other transactions which have been flogged to death in another place. I know pretty well what has happened in connection with these contracts, but I do not think it is necessary to dilate upon them here. At the same time we ought to seriously consider whether the Industries Assistance Board should be continued as at present constituted side by side with the Agricultural Bank. I hope the Government will consider the amalgamation of those two bodies. References were made by the Minister—I was not here at the time—to the interest paid on the outstanding accounts of certain storekeepers. In my own province something like £10,000 is still owing to merchants. I am pleased to have an assurance that some attempt has been made by the Government to improve the position. Last year I supported a protest against the apathy of the Government, and their unsympathetic attitude towards those merchants. Nothing has been done. I interviewed the authorities in order to get some compromise. On one occasion on behalf of a country merchant I offered to take 25 per cent. in order to get a settlement. I believe that eight per cent. has now been paid on those outstanding accounts. The Government say they have not the money to effect a settlement. But many thousands of pounds have been squandered in Fremantle and other places, some of which could have gone to alleviate the distress which has resulted from the non-payment of those accounts. Those small storekeepers who for so long assisted the farmers, have battled along and made good without any help from the Government. But the Government ought to take some steps over and above the payment of eight per cent. on outstanding accounts, and should arrive at some compromise in settlement, say, 75 per cent. I think the merchants would be satisfied to take 15s. in the pound. If the Government would do something in this direction it would suit all parties. I am not standing here solely in the interests of the merchants, but I know that in my province many hardships have been inflicted, and so I am making a plea for the merchants once more and asking the Government to do something for those men who stuck to the farmers in their time of need. I raise no serious objection to the continuance of the Industries Assistance Board, but I hope consideration will be given to its amalgamation with the Agricultural Bank if the board is to be continued. I agree with Mr. Ewing that it is entirely a wheat-growing proposition, whose ramifications do not extend to the South-West. It is claimed that it is an industries assistance board. That is a misnomer. If it is an industries assistance board, its ramifications should be extended to embrace all industries. It would then have my entire support. Under the amalgamation scheme the Agricultural Bank could scarcely extend to all industries; but certainly there are other industries requiring some assistance, and there is not at present any Government institution which can help them. As the Industries Assistance Board has been of such great assistance to the industry for whose benefit it was introduced, if it is to be continued it should be extended to cover other industries.

Hon. T. MOORE (Central) [8.40]: I want some information on the question of how we really stand. I am at a loss to understand how the Repatriation Board and the Industries Assistance Board work together. What I wish the Minister to tell me is exactly who finds the money or, if it is found by the Federal Government and given to the State Repatriation Department, whether we are responsible for it after it is spent, whether the State or the Commonwealth Department are liable for the expenditure.

Hon. A. Sanderson: We guarantee the principal and interest.

Hon. T. MOORE: That does not make me much wiser. Do the Federal authorities really lend the money to the Industries Assistance Board and if so, at what interest? If they do not do that, do they advance the money, and do the Industries Assistance Board merely handle the money for them?

Hon. H. Stewart: The State advances the money and reclaims it from the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. T. MOORE: But if the money is badly expended, as must occur in a few cases, who has to foot the bill?

Hon. A. Sanderson: Western Australia.

Hon. T. MOORE: I want the Minister to tell me that, to tell me whether Western Australia or the Commonwealth has to foot the bill. I want the Minister to put me clear on that point: whether the Commonwealth find the money and foot the bill or whether, if the money is badly spent, we have to foot the bill?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [8.43]: One advantage from having this Bill come up every year is that it affords us opportunity to say something about the operations of the Industries Assistance Board. The operations of that board are worthy of the attention of anyone who takes an interest in affairs of State, inasmuch as they involve huge expenditure. And, as Mr. Hickey and others have pointed out, although it is called the Industries Assistance Board, really the word "industries" in that sense is a misnomer, inasmuch as the only industry which is assisted is the agricultural industry.

Hon. T. Moore: And tin mining at Greenbushes.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: There are a few such cases, but very few. Perhaps the Minister will give particulars as to the other industries that have been assisted by the board. By reason of the fact that the operations of the board are limited, and furthermore because the whole State is responsible for the expenditure and for any loss that may be entailed, it is all the more incumbent upon a number of members of Parliament whose constituents are not directly benefited by the Industries Assistance Board, to study exactly the operations of that institution. As one whose consituents are not benefited by that board, at any rate not directly, I am disappointed at the report of the board, because much of the information that I expected to find in it is not there. One of the items of information I wished to discover was that very point raised by Mr. Moore; also a point that is of great concern is exactly the extent of the bad debts which have been incurred. The balance sheet seems to be anything but clear, but in the report there are certain references to bad debts which have been written off. I can remember in previous reports issued there were some very big figures given under the heading of bad and doubtful debts, and members would now like to know to what extent exactly those figures have been reduced. There are all sorts of references in the report to bad debts. For instance, there is one item of bad debts written off, amounting to £2,925. There is also another item "Reserve bad debts, £5,470." There is also a further reference to reserve bad debts of £11,150. But the particular paragraph in the report that is most interesting is the reference to insolvent securities, and it does not bear out the statement made that the losses have been small. The paragraph in the report to which I shall call attention reads—

> The properties on the board's hands as on the 30th June numbered 159 carrying advances aggregating £94,000, and £9,800 accumulated interest. The bulk of these holdings comprise light country which has failed to give profitable results. The proportion of losses to be faced will be heavy.

Then in explanation as to why further particulars are not given the board state—

> Owing to the insistent demands of the discharged soldiers' settlement scheme, the Agricultural Bank, and the Lands Department on our valuator's services, it has not been possible during the year to have these properties valued, so as to write off such debts as may be found to be not recoverable.

To my mind some further explanation than that is necessary to justify a matter that is of primary importance. The House is agreed that the board has done fairly good work, but we want to know what has been the cost of that good work to the State generally, what has been the real loss, and that is a most important thing from the point of view of the State generally. Mr. Hickey advocated the extension of the operations of the board. If anything of that sort is to be done, or if there is any proposal to make the institution a permanent one, Parliament should be fully seized as to the amount of the bad debts incurred and as to the total cost of the institution to the State. It seems to me that the proposal that has been suggested for the amalgamation of the three departments, the Industries Assistance Board, the Agricultural Bank, and the Repatriation Department, would prevent a lot of overlapping that now goes on.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. F. Baxter—in reply) [8.52]: I do not know that there is a great deal to be said at this juncture beyond supplying the information asked for by hon. members. Mr. Sanderson earnestly endeavoured to find out whether the Act was to be made permanent. The Government have no intention at the present time to make it permanent, but could not with safety close the business until such time as the advances have been made good; in other words, until they are able to realise on the assets without harassing the settlers.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Then they have no intention of making it permanent.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Not at the present time. There are 400 odd soldier settlers who have been materially assisted. There is no doubt that many people would be harassed if anything of a drastic nature were done. Just now fortunately the outlook is bright with the good prices which are offering for produce. It would be a serious thing to close down at the present time. We all know well that the state of the money market is such that if the Government closed down now

it would mean that many of the board's clients would not be able to realise, and they would simply have to walk off their properties. Mr. Ewing inquired about the total indebtedness of the board's clients. The amount is £885,000. That of course covers the advances made last year. I may add that super. has been ordered this year to sow 585,000 acres. This is an increase even on last year's acreage, which in itself was above that of the previous year. Last year's acreage was about 30,000 acres less than that of the present year. Hon. members have stressed the advisableness of amalgamating the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board. A great deal has been done in that direction during the past 12 months. As a matter of fact the three institutions, the bank, the board, and the Repatriation Department, have been very closely in touch, and have worked together for a considerable time, and I do not think we could do anything further by way of amalgamation. I do not see how we could effect economies in the manner suggested, because we would still require the same number of officers in each department to transact the business. There are 3,000 odd names on the books of the Industries Assistance Board, and we could not ask Mr. McLarty to control the Agricultural Bank, the board, and the Repatriation Department without giving him a number of officers to whom to delegate duties connected with those three departments. I am convinced that the present system is just about as sound and as economical as we can have it.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You could have a general manager over the three branches.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We have a general manager now, but to practise economy it would be necessary to put off a number of officers, and then we would reduce the efficiency of the department. Mr. Hickey suggested that the Government should pay off the merchants. I take it the hon. member means that we should pay them off out of Government funds. For the hon. member's information I may say that that was never intended by Parliament. If members turn to the Third Schedule of the parent Act they will find how payments are made out of the returns received on behalf of the clients. Mr. Kirwan asked about bad debts. I do not say that I can give him the exact figures, but roughly they total £150,000. In view of the large volume of business transacted, and the fact that these settlers who were in the worst positions, and were taken up by the board at a critical stage, the amount can be considered low.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does that include doubtful debts?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That total represents the bad debts. Doubtful debts, I take it would come in the return which has been laid on the Table. I think the amount is £94,000. There are, however, properties that are still in the hands of the board to be disposed of. I understand they are mostly in light country.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That is roughly £200,000.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, but it must be realised that all those properties can be turned to good account, though it may not be possible to dispose of them as others have been disposed of in the past. I do not think there is any other information that I can give to hon. members.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair, the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I take it that on this clause or the next clause we shall be permitted to cover the ground of the whole Bill, that is to say, we can get from the Minister any information we may require.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—Continuation of principal Act:

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is an error which occurred in typing the Bill for despatch to the printer, and this will have to be altered. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 "1915" be deleted and "1917" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Will the Minister give the Committee his assurance that the Industries Assistance Board will make a serious attempt to present to Parliament the report and balance sheet in connection with the board's operations at the proper date? The amending Act of 1915 provides that every year the Colonial Treasurer shall cause financial statements and a report on the board's operations to be presented to both Houses of Parliament. I have only had an opportunity of glancing through the report. It is exasperating to have the report presented at so late a date, when we are asked to pass a measure to continue the operations of the Industries Assistance Act.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I support the protest made by Mr. Sanderson. I perused the report yesterday and was disappointed to find that a great deal of information which I desire to have was not contained in the report. The Minister should endeavour to give members further information regarding the Industries Assistance Board. In response to some comments that I made earlier in the discussion, the Honorary Minister said that, roughly speaking, there was a loss of about £150,000 on the board's operations. There is another item of £94,000 which is given as representing the doubtful debts. Assuming that half of that money will be lost, this will represent a loss of something like £200,000. We should have full particulars in view of such a loss before being asked to continue the Bill.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I quite agree with hon. members regarding the lateness of the report. It should certainly have been presented before now. I will make representations in the proper quarter and see whether we cannot have the difficulty remedied in the future.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I accept the assurance of the Honorary Minister and trust that next year the report will be before us not later than the 1st September. There is another question which I would like to raise and that affects the clients of the board. The Honorary Minister has made an announcement which is of first importance and should be known throughout the State. I refer to his statement that it was not the present intention of the Government to make the Industries Assistance Board a permanent institution. I desire to get some information regarding the position of creditors who are unable to get their money from clients under the board. It is unreasonable that a special section of the community should be put under the board, and that thereby no one should be able to touch them. The creditors of the I.A.B. clients have good reason to complain. Merchants who are creditors of the farmers under the I.A.B. make their legitimate grievances to members in the country districts. The members representing those districts are supporters of the Country party and this reproach is nothing to them. Their reply would be "We put these men on the board." Mr. Mills has explained that one of the reasons for such an action is that when booksellers or men selling mowing machines or anything else, come along these poor farmers shall be protected by being put in the position of stating that they are under the Industries Assistance Board and therefore cannot pay for these things.

Hon. J. MILLS: On a point of order. I explained that the main reason the men continued under the board was that if they once left that institution they could not go back. There may be lean years ahead and at some future date they may require to seek the assistance of the board again. Hence their desire to stay on the board.

Hon. A. SANDERSON. At any rate, the chief reason is that this particular section has been given special protection, a protection which has not been extended to potato growers and others.

Hon. H. Stewart: There is nothing to prevent them coming under the Act in the South-West.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is not a point I desire to deal with at the present time. I regard this discussion as really a shareholders' annual meeting in connection with the Industries Assistance Board in which we have a million or two of money at stake. I have received to-night a paper which has been given to me without any reservation. In accordance with the ordinary decencies of debate I shall not mention names and I ask members to regard that aspect as confidential. This gentleman says—

> By Press reports, I notice that the Industries Assistance Board Continuance Bill has passed the Legislative Assembly and has gone to the Legislative Council. One or two alterations are urgently necessary in the interests of justice and commercial morality. One is that when men are clear of the board and have an equity to pay creditors, such creditors should be paid and the farmer given his clearance.

The writer gives three cases and, as denunciation in general terms is ineffective as compared with the quotation of individual cases, I will mention the cases he cites without giving the names. The first is the case of Blank—as I shall call him. The writer says Blank owes "A" £156 and has an equity of £700. The writer adds, "This man pays us 4s. 9d. in the pound." I will not make any great fuss and throw out my arms in denunciation of such a position for, at any rate, 4s. 9d. has been paid. In the case of the unfortunate merchant who is owed this money, despite the fact that the credit is there, the I.A.B. says, "We have to protect this person" and the creditor is left lamenting. The second case is this: "For three years Blank has neither sowed nor reaped. He holds a position as secretary at so much per annum and is only using the Industries Assistance Board to beat the old creditors. Either his land should be forfeited or the man should be discharged so that he might be sued." I do not associate myself with any of these charges, but I can imagine that they could be justified to the hilt, and they demand some redress. The only possible way to get redress is through the courts; yet the board are protecting these people. The third illustration is this: "Mr. and Mrs. Blank are drawing no sustenance. They have built a new house and they laughed at my requests for payment." I can readily understand that such a case might exist, and it is most unjust from the point of view of the creditor. I ask the Minister what reasonable chance is there of getting redress? If this individual went to the board and made his complaint, what assistance would he get? I am afraid that the board, the Minister, and the debtor would say, "We are under the protection of this Act." The Act should be so amended that, while it would protect the deserving settler, it would cease to protect a dishonest man to refusing to meet his creditors. From all we have heard this Act is being used to protect the dishonest man from his creditors, and if we could get the necessary amendment made, it would be of advantage to the State. I put it to the Minister, assuming that these people can justify the statements made, can they get any redress from the board?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The instances given by Mr. Sanderson are of great importance in considering the continuation of this

measure. The protection afforded by means of the Act is availed of by a large number of settlers to the detriment of their creditors. It provides a sort of sanctuary for them and it is a serious matter for the Government to decide whether that sanctuary should be continued. I do not think it should be. Though we are dependent on the efforts of the primary producer, it is our duty to protect the rights of the merchant. If the merchant is delayed in receiving his debts because of the protection afforded in times of stress, a continuance of the measure in these times when the farmer's position has been reversed is opposed to justice. It would be well for the Government to consider whether, in the interests of all sections of the community, we should not terminate the protection thus afforded. I expected to hear the Honorary Minister reply to Mr. Kirwan with regard to the number of people interested in various industries, giving a classification of those receiving benefits under the Act. A large section of the people receiving benefits are those settled on the land, and only a very few engaged in other industries have received any advantage at all from the Act. Is it fair that one section of the community should receive the advantage to the detriment of the other section? Clearly it is unjust. It has been stated that many settlers do not want to go off the board. This advantage is being received at the cost of every other taxpayer in the State. Who is paying the cost for all the inspectors? Is all the expense attendant on visiting and instructing these farmers being paid for by the farmers or by the general taxpayer? If it is being paid for by the men receiving the benefits, then they are entitled to it, but I understand that it comes out of the revenue of the country. We are paying a large staff of men to instruct a few people who are seeking a refuge——

Hon. J. Mills: What do you call a few?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: A few compared with the mass of the general community?

The Honorary Minister: The administration expenses are met out of the extra interest paid on the money.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not know that that is a proper method. The extra interest should go into general revenue.

The Honorary Minister: You want the Government to start money lending?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No; what rate do assisted settlers pay?

The Honorary Minister: One per cent. extra.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I doubt whether that covers the cost.

The Honorary Minister: It does.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Minister should give us fuller particulars. While many farmers honestly try to pay their way, there are some who use this institution to the detriment of the general body of creditors.

Hon. H. Stewart: Last year we were told they were being put off the board.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I was glad to hear that many were put off. If I could be sure of finding some method whereby men would be prevented from using this Act to evade their responsibilities to their creditors, I would agree to the fullest help being extended under this measure, but men are using the Act for what amounts to an unlawful purpose. Let us get that objection removed, and then we can continue the benefits in a fair and proper way. So long as the Act continues in its present form, some men will take advantage of it and seek to deprive creditors of their just dues. I hope the Honorary Minister will endeavour to amend the measure so as to exclude all but deserving cases.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Sanderson and Mr. Nicholson have dealt with one phase, namely, the amounts owing to merchants.

Hon. A. Sanderson: To creditors, not to merchants.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member mentioned merchants. No one sympathises with the creditors more than I do. Had it not been for the assistance given under the Act the creditors would not have received 50 per cent. of the money they actually got, which will in a day or two be in the neighbourhood of £25,000. I take it that the first case mentioned by Mr. Sanderson is in regard to equity in the wheat pool. The money will not be made available to cover that equity until payments are made by the wheat pool. The second case put forward by the hon. member probably applies to a settler who has been struck off the board. Under these conditions there is very little chance of the creditor receiving payment of the amount owing to him.

Hon. A. Sanderson: It does not say so here. He is said to be using the Industries Assistance Board to beat a lot of creditors. Either the land should be forfeited or the man discharged so that he might be sued.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If a man is being assisted, that is the quickest way for the creditors to receive payments due to them. In what way could any amendment to this Act apply?

Hon. A. Sanderson: Strike out Clause 11.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The creditors would then come in and secure themselves by the plant, stock, and machinery belonging to the settlers. After the claims had been satisfied the Government would either have to make fresh purchases and start the settler off again at an increased cost to him, or let him go altogether and put someone else in his place. The present arrangement is the best that can be arrived at. During the past year a large amount has been paid off. There is a sum of £40,000 now in process of distribution. That will have to come out of the last wheat payments at 1s. 8½d. per bushel. Under the increased price for wheat the farmers would

very soon clear their position. Mr. Nicholson dealt with the case of solvent clients of the board. Those who are solvent have paid their creditors, and now desire not the protection of the board, but the assistance and guidance of the board. One hon. member said the Government were conceited because they claimed to have taught the farmers how to grow wheat. Under the supervision of the inspectors of the board they have been taught better methods of farming, and under the commercial section they are given a better understanding of the business side of their operations. In these directions alone the board has been of great assistance. If the solvent clients of the board do not desire to go off it they should not be compelled to do so.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I hope the people understand that the wheat farmers are picked out as the one section of the community that has all that the Government can give it, and that the fruitgrower is on a much more difficult wicket. With regard to the question raised by Mr. Moore as to who is finding the money, I give him my assurance that all this money for the soldier settlement scheme has been taken over by the Commonwealth as their liability. They took over the whole financial responsibility of settling these soldiers on the land.

Hon. H. Stewart: There is a limited sum for which they will be liable in each individual case.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Minister says the department could not do more than is being done with regard to bringing together the Industries Assistance Board, the Agricultural Bank, and the soldier settlement scheme. He says these three institutions are grouped together for the purposes of administration. I do not believe it. If it was decided to amalgamate these departments more closely it could readily be done, and on safe lines, by handing over to a board, with a managing director, a large sum of money as a capital account. It might involve 10 millions of money, but we should have all these people on the land under the direction of this board. The people who are on the Industries Assistance Board would be dealt with under the Industries Assistance Act, but everyone would be pushed off as quickly as possible and made an independent settler. We have been told that this is the policy of the Government.

The CHAIRMAN: I should be glad if the hon. member would not make a second reading speech.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I particularly stated, in order to escape any reproof, that I regarded this as a shareholders' meeting to deal with the Industries Assistance Board. I have no report and balance sheet for the year, and yet we are supposed to be dealing with this important matter. I had the report and balance sheet on my table. I do not blame the Minister for having taken them away.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I only got them after taking the Bill in hand.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is difficult in dealing with these matters to give the specific items on which I require information, because of the absence of these documents. It is due to the carelessness of the department in not supplying us, the directors of the company so to speak, with the documents necessary for us to discuss the whole business. The Minister has admitted that the Government are trying to amalgamate these three boards. They could be more closely amalgamated if the Government would give three men, who understand this question, three months to draw up a carefully considered scheme of amalgamating the Industries Assistance Board, the Agricultural Bank, and the soldier settlement scheme. The whole trouble with the Industries Assistance Board in 1914 was caused by a breakdown in the finances of the Agricultural Bank. That was the only institution in this State which in 1914 practically closed its doors and told its clients it could not do more than pay 10s. in the pound until it made special arrangements. I challenge a contradiction of that assertion. It was the Agricultural Bank which brought the Industries Assistance Board into existence. We ought to close the Industries Assistance Board as quickly as possible and give the Agricultural Bank, since we are determined to carry on the policy of having State farmers, the necessary capital to carry out the work. How much money has Western Australia had from the Commonwealth for the purpose of settling soldiers on the land?

The Honorary Minister: Has this any connection with the measure before us? This comes under repatriation.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The indication from that remark is that we are not to ask any more questions on the point.

The Honorary Minister: You are dealing with something that is foreign to the Bill.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Honorary Minister himself says that the three boards are amalgamated as closely as they can be.

The Honorary Minister: Not with repatriation. That is apart.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Honorary Minister says that these three boards are amalgamated as closely as they can be at present. The Minister now seeks to avoid answering the question by asking you, Mr. Chairman, to protect him from any further inquiries.

The Honorary Minister: I am not asking for any protection.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am not surprised that the information is not available.

Clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 3:—"A report and balance sheet, together with the Auditor General's report thereon, shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament on or before the 30th day

of September in each year, if then sitting, or in the next ensuing session thereof.''

I do not know whether this action will prove effective, because we have a similar section in another Act, and the report and balance sheet asked for thereby are not available; but the object of this clause is to try and get the report and balance sheet of the Industries Assistance Board on or before the 30th September in each year. I have taken this new clause verbatim out of the State Trading Concerns Act.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I support the clause, which, however, is only a clause of piety. The mover of it secured the insertion of a similar section in another Act of Parliallast year, and what has been the result? Nil. Ministers and departments apparently exist to ignore Parliament. The remedy for that ignoring would be to vote out this Bill without compunction. Does another branch of the Legislature take us for a joke, and does the Minister in charge of the Bill take us for a joke?

The Honorary Minister: Why do you say that?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Why has not the provision of other legislation in this respect been carried out? Why is not the report of the Industries Assistance Board on the Table?

The Honorary Minister: It is on the Table.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Only for the past two or three days. Of what utility is one typewritten report to 30 members?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Certainly the last thing either the leader of the House or myself would think of would be to treat this House as a joke. In providing that a copy of the report and balance sheet should be laid on the Table of the House, it was never intended that more than one copy should be laid on the Table. However, I must acknowledge that hon. members have good ground for complaint on the score of a copy of the report and balance sheet of the Industries Assistance Board not having been laid on the Table of this House simultaneously with a copy being laid on the Table of another House. I do not oppose the new clause, as the financial year closes on the 30th June.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not know whether the Minister is having a little joke at our expense in saying that the laying of a typewritten copy on the Table is a compliance with the Act. If it is a joke, it is a very poor joke. If the Minister is serious, I say the House has been treated shamefully. In 1915 Mr. Colebatch secured the carrying of a resolution—

That it be an instruction to the Printing Committee that all existing and future balance sheets of State trading concerns, with the reports of the Auditor General, shall be treated as Parliamentary papers.

The Honorary Minister: Is the Industries Assistance Board a State trading concern?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am greatly puzzled to know how to deal with this Minister. Does he think that is any reply to the resolution I have quoted? Is he going to take away to his headquarters to-morrow, when he reports on this debate, that the Legislative Council has done its best to insist that a printed copy of the report and balance sheet of the Industries Assistance Board, duly audited, shall be placed in the hands of members of this Chamber on or before the 30th September of next year? If he will do that, and honestly attempt to see that the instruction is carried out, we shall be very thankful to him. The proper way to deal with the reiterated insults to the Legislative Council in this connection is to vote out these Bills. However, we continue to trust Ministers, and they continue to trip us up.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment on the new clause—

That after the word ''A,'' line 1, there be inserted the word ''printed.''

One may reasonably assume that if the report is printed at all, more than one copy will be printed, and thus each member of this Chamber may be enabled to get a copy for himself. Even little associations like cricket clubs go to the expense of printing their annual reports and balance sheets and circulating them at the annual meeting amongst members, for the purpose of easy reference and of facilitating business.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not think hon. members should go so far as to force the Government to incur unnecessary expenditure. The typed report is here, and I think it is just as legible as a printed report would be. If it is convenient to the Government Printer, the report could be printed; but otherwise hon. members should be satisfied with a typed copy. I do not think it should be made mandatory to supply printed copies.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We shall see it printed in ''Hansard'' that owing to the expense of this matter—this is from the Honorary Minister—owing to the expense of providing a printed report and balance sheet, he objects to the mandatory attitude of the Committee in inserting the word ''printed'' in the new clause.

The Honorary Minister: I did not say I objected to the mandatory attitude of this Committee. I said I did not agree that the matter should be made mandatory.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Honorary Minister thinks it should be at the Minister's option whether a printed report is supplied or not. When moving the amendment, I took it to mean that a printed copy of the report and balance sheet must be supplied. I thank Mr. Cornell for moving his amendment on the new clause, and thus getting such an admission from the Honorary Minister. What is the cost of this printing? I have just had 200 copies printed of something less than the report here in question, and the cost was about £20. At a rough estimate, £5 would amply cover the cost of printing the report and balance sheet of the Industries Assistance Board.

The Honorary Minister: That amount would nothing like cover the cost.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Let us make the amount £25, then.

Hon J. Cornell: The cost of printing the report and balance sheet of the Government Savings Bank is £5.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Is the Honorary Minister misleading us and the country when he objects, on the score of expense, to the printing of the report and balance sheet of an institution dealing with a couple of millions of public money? The shareholders in a company would not tolerate such conduct for a moment. I have always regretted that my motion of want of confidence in the Honorary Minister as a managing director was not carried here two or three years ago.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not like to make this matter mandatory or directive. However, in the case of an undertaking of the magnitude of the Industries Assistance Board, which has enormous sums of money passing through its hands, is it not only reasonable to ask that the report and balance sheet should be available in printed form? Moreover, I think every member of the community should be able to learn something about this spending of loan money. The only way by which people can be informed is by the printing of the annual report.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I am disappointed at the attitude of the Honorary Minister in not agreeing to the insertion of this word "printed."

The Honorary Minister: If hon. members feel so keenly about it, I am ready to give way.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: On the question of expenditure, the first printed report I pick up is a report of about the same size as that of the Industries Assistance Board, and I see the cost of printing 450 copies is only £8. Surely, where millions are concerned, this is a very small expenditure. I hope the Minister will agree.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will withdraw my objection.

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

Bill reported with amendments, and a message accordingly forwarded to the Assembly requesting them to make the amendments, leave being given to sit again on receipt of a message from the Assembly.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 10th December.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [10.3]: It is a great pity that a Bill of this importance should be brought down at such a late hour. Quite a number of members would be glad to exchange opinions on the question of arbitration, and possibly that exchange of opinions would be for the good of the country and of some help to the Government. I could speak for quite a long time upon this question and, possibly, say something of interest, but it is futile to do so in the present state of the House. Everybody is tired and jaded, and we are all most desirous of getting away. The present Act, which was passed in 1912, has not had a fair trial. There were only 22 months of operations of the Act before the war occurred. In that time we had very little chance to give it a fair trial. During the war everything was abnormal, and the Act almost passed into disuse. Since the war, things have been still more involved and consequently arbitration has almost gone by the board. At the present time the Governments, State and Federal, are going a long way too far in the appointment of boards. It seems to me the country presently will be entirely run by Government servants and boards. There are boards everywhere, boards and commissions to deal with almost every aspect of our life. The Federal Parliament recently passed the Industrial Peace Bill. In that they provide for the establishment of very elaborate boards. I believe we shall get good results from that Bill, but I think it time to cry a halt in regard to the appointment of the numerous boards we are setting up. When the Act was passed in 1912 the Labour Government resolved that if they got anything like a decent Act they would give it a trial. With the exception of two points, everything the Government worked for was conceded, and the Labour Government decided that they would enforce the provisions of the Act and see that it got a fair trial. Only recently I made some reference to the question of penalties. I am sorry the Government have not included in the Bill the abolition of penalties in respect of strikes and lockouts, because I do not believe they do any good. I believe the result of the operation of Arbitration Acts has shown that penalties are absolutely useless. In this regard the Labour Government honestly tried to carry out the law. All cases of enforcement came before Cabinet, and Cabinet had to authorise any prosecution that took place. I want to set Mr. Hickey right. Mr. Hickey stated that the Light of Asia prosecution and the Youanmi prosecution were prosecutions under the Arbitration Act. Nothing of the kind. They were Supreme Court cases, heard in the Supreme Court at Perth. One was for intimidation and I think the other was owing to the abolition of contract on the Youanmi mine, and it was alleged that the unions were trying to prevent certain boarding-house keepers from carrying on. Coming back to the question of boards set up recently to deal with industrial disputes, we have the public service board; we have to-night passed a Bill for a railway officers' classification board; we have a board dealing with the tramway case, and a board

dealing with the Hospital for the Insane. To my mind it is a wrong principle that will give anybody who has any sort of pull any board they ask for, but will compel other bodies of workers, who, for economic reasons, cannot demand what the others demand, to go to arbitration. It will not lead to any good results. The Government are going in the right direction when they seek to do a little more by way of conciliation than has been done in the past. The first Arbitration Act provided for conciliation boards. They fell into disuse because litigants at the time preferred to go to the court. But experience has shown that conciliation is sometimes preferable to arbitration. The Government are on the right track in resolving to appoint a special commissioner to endeavour to bring about settlement by conciliation or mediation. One part of the Bill requires a lot of consideration, and it is a part which is not likely to get the consideration which it ought to have, namely that part relating to the basic wage. Here is something entirely altering our present principle of arbitration. None of the unions has yet pronounced on the basic wage question. I do not know that any of them has sought to have this principle included in the Arbitration Act. On account of matters over which I have no control, I am not so closely connected with unions as I used to be, and I do not always know what is going on amongst the unions; but I do not think the unions have asked that this principle of the basic wage should be included in the Arbitration Act. It seems to me we are on dangerous ground from a worker's point of view in regard to the principle which has been sent up to us in the Bill. It is provided that the court may find out the increase or decrease in the cost of living in order to determine what the wage shall be. That is a most dangerous principle from the worker's point of view. Let us examine it. Suppose the basic wage has been fixed at £5 per week and that, six months later, the cost of living comes down; then the court are to determine, on the increase or decrease of the cost of living, what the wages shall be. Does it necessarily follow that because the cost of living comes down, the employer is making less profit, or that the rate of wage should come down? That is what is implied in the basic wage clause in the Bill. It is implied that if the cost of living comes down, the rate of wages also must necessarily come down. It is a wrong assumption. It is quite possible that the employer of labour, that all the industries in the State, may make very much more profit owing to the cost of living dropping than they were doing previously. Surely that is no reason to advance for a reduction in the rate of wage. I shall listen very carefully to what is to be said in regard to this principle of the basic wage in the Bill, and I will endeavour to see whether or not there are any advantages to be gained from it, or whether the disadvantages would warrant me in voting against it. I do not think there is much else in the Bill to which I care to draw attention to-night. I am sorry the Bill should come up at such a late hour, when I feel we have not time in which to thoroughly discuss the matter and arrive at a proper decision. I will support the Bill as far as I can, but in regard to the basic wage I will reserve myself until I have heard what others have to say.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [10.15]: I desire to direct the attention of the House to several matters in the Bill which I think are not going to work out according to the sanguine expectations of the leader of the House. I congratulate the Government on introducing the measure, even though they have been a long while falling into line and introducing amendments to this legislation which have been advocated by Mr. Dodd, myself and others, amendments which at one time would not have met with the support of the present leader of the House. However, time works wonderful changes and it is nevertheless somewhat pleasing to see that the reform is now suggested even though it has been late in arriving. I join with Mr. Dodd on the question of boards of arbitration. As we knew them some few years ago they were not what they are to-day. There was only one court at that time and every registered body of unionists which registered under it, was supposed to appeal to it. That rule, however, was honoured more in the breach than in the observance. The tendency to-day is not to appeal to the recognised tribunal for the settlement of industrial disputes, or to say "away with it." The tendency is that the people concerned, as they are circumstanced, so they make their appeals. Personally I am of the opinion that the latest development for the settlement of industrial disputes is not an application to the Arbitration Court as we know it, but is almost a repudiation. By what process of reasoning do employers or workers to-day register under the Arbitration Act for the purpose of settling industrial disputes and then say that the machinery provided is not suitable? We want something else. I am at a loss to understand why they register unless it be for the purpose of keeping someone else from registering, and getting that portion of the benefit that the organisation that registers under it does get. So far as I am aware this is a new development in the metropolitan area. It has occurred in industries that are peculiarly circumstanced. I have yet to learn that it has occurred in the province that I and other members represent. There is some semblance not only of accepting the good that is in the court, but also to accept the bad that may come out of it. The Bill does not propose to do much that is new. There is nothing new in the proposal to arm the president of the court with power to refer a dispute over which he has convened a conference, to the court for settlement in full or in part, inasmuch as the framers of the Bill in 1912 held the definite opinion that the Bill was so drafted that the president of the

court should have that power. However, through a flaw, it was ruled otherwise, and it is needless to debate whether or not that course is wise, seeing that it has been on the statute-book of the Commonwealth for many years, and not only has been there, but has been put into application. I am not enamoured with the proposals set forth in Clause 4. The Bill proposes to extend the provisions set forth in the Federal Act that the president of the court shall convene a conference and refer the matter direct to the court for settlement in full or in part. It also proposes that there can be more than one Arbitration Court president. The four judges may be presidents of the court at the same time, just as it happens to-day in connection with the Federal court. Either the president, the deputy president, or the second deputy president, may convene a conference, and full power is given to refer the matter to the court direct, and either the president or any of the deputy presidents can preside over the court to which the dispute has been referred. Then the Bill proposes to set up a new court. It proposes to confer all the powers of the president or deputy president on a Special Commissioner. Is it wise to set up the two positions of arming a president of the court who must be a Supreme Court judge, with certain powers, and to arm with similar powers the person who by way of interjection the Minister told us need not necessarily be a judge? This will happen. In actual practice, if the Commissioner gives a better deal than any of the judges, the parties are going to insist on having him just as they would insist to-day on not going to the court of arbitration. If we are going to alter the principle of whether or not a judge should be president of the court of arbitration, we must not alter it in part, we must alter it in full. The parent Act should be amended to state that the president of the court may be a person whom we would propose should be a special commissioner. On the question of the basic wage, like Mr. Dodd, I may state that in recent years I have not been in close touch with many of the trades unions. I am, however, closely in touch with some, and I do take a lively and intelligent interest in them as I always have done. After all, though the procedure may change in trade union matters, the principle that surrounds trades unionism is the principle that was there at its inception, and so it will remain. If the court sits as a court to determine for every six months what shall be the basic wage, I am satisfied that they will be occupied in doing nothing else. I want to know what demand there has been for the court to do this work. Furthermore I want to know how it is intended to apply the basic wage clause. Assuming an award is given to-day in one industry, and the basic wage is fixed for that industry, say, for argument sake, at 12s., and a month after the court gives an award, as it has done on more than one occasion, and it fixes the minimum wage at a 1s. a day more. Is the minimum wage given in the first instance to stand for six months or is it to automatically increase? In discussing this question with one member of the court some time ago, he expressed the view that whenever they disturbed the basic wage in a given locality, by raising it, every industry in that locality should automatically go up when the award became operative. If that is to be the intention of the court, acting as a Basic Wage Commission, I can see little wrong with it. But there is the other side of the picture. If the court is going to fix the basic wage I take it it must apply also when they fix a lower wage. It is all very well to discuss the basic wage from the angle of the ever-increasing minimum, but we must face the inevitable day when there will be a downward tendency in the cost of living. Then the dance will start when the court fixes a minimum wage, which will be lower than the existing minimum wage. I am not particular whether I offend any or all of my constituents in that respect, whether it will mean later on casting me out of Parliament, but I am going to say that so long as the workers are prepared to have their labour assessed, as it is being assessed to-day, and if the terms of assessment are in accordance with the evidence put forward, that they are entitled to an increase, then I say the reverse is just as logical and must operate. When that day arrives and the other side can put forward just as good an argument as the opposing side has put up for an increase, by that process of reasoning if there is any semblance of honesty, they are bound to accept the position. I point that out because the day is coming when the position may be reversed. I have yet to learn that the procedure and mode that have been proposed in assessing the wages on the basis of what it costs a man and a woman and his family to live are right. If within six months' time they can live on less than they are getting to-day, what will be the position then? The other fellow has as much right to say that the workers shall extend to them the benefit of the decrease.

Hon. T. Moore: Are they not entitled to more than a living wage?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have had my own ideas on this matter for very many years past as to how the wages of workmen should be fixed, but I could never get anybody to agree with me. I do not think that the principle of having the wages assessed merely on what a man and his family can live, is a fair one. For years past, it has been stated that the increased cost of living was the factor of paramount importance in the argument for securing more wages. When the position is reversed and it is evident that the money workers get to-day will buy so much more in 12 months' time, I do not know where the argument will lead us to. My advice to the leaders of industrial unionism is that they should get ready to induce the men they

are leading, to alter their tactics as to the basis of fixing what is a living wage. It is just as easy for the employers to ask for a reduction as it is for the employees to ask for an increase.

Hon. T. Moore: Even if the boss gets as much for his commodities?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have heard the argument that in spite of the increased cost of living and the higher wages, the bosses are still getting as much as ever.

Hon. J. Nicholson: In profits.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, that is the argument. I point out that our procedure in assessing wages and conditions for years past has been wrong and, to use a vulgarism, rotten, from an economic standpoint. I point that out for the purpose of indicating where this basic wage will lead us.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Will not profit-sharing get us out of the difficulty?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I will not go into that aspect, because it is not in operation in this country. When the cost of living decreases and the employers bring forward their request for a reduction, then will come the deluge. There is one other aspect I desire to refer to and that is increased salaries to members of the court. The Minister has said that the reason for the increase in the salaries was because the court has had to do more work than when the salaries were originally fixed at £400. When the salaries were fixed at that figure, I did not think it was high enough and considered it should have been £500. Therefore I am not going to oppose an increase of salaries to members of the court; but I will contest the point that they are doing more work to-day than in years past. At the present time, workers refuse to go to the court and boards are being set up in all directions. To-day three or four boards are doing the work of the Arbitration Court. The Bill proposes to appoint an additional judge as deputy and a special commissioner, and I cannot accept the Minister's contention when he says that in future the work of the board will be greater than in the past, unless it be in dealing with the basic wage proposal. If they deal with that, as I anticipate they will have to, they will do little else. I will not agree that the members of the court do more work now than in 1914-15. I am very pleased that the salaries of the members of the court have been increased. If the working man who received £3 in 1914 contends to-day that he should receive £5, the same process of reasoning should be applied to the members of the Arbitration Court. If they received £400 in 1914 when the worker received £150, seeing that the worker now seeks for £250, the members of the Arbitration Court should receive increases proportionately, because it has to be remembered that the salary is based on the value of the services rendered.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY (Central) [10.37]: I desire to correct a remark made by Mr. Cornell regarding organisations which are registered under the Arbitration Act but do not take advantage of that measure. The inference from his remarks, I take it is, that these organisations choose their own method of settling their disputes outside the scope of the Arbitration Act and the Arbitration Court. The organisation I have in mind at the present time is the tramways union. As one of the disputes committee who dealt with the matter when the recent dispute arose, and as one who was instrumental in bringing that organisation before the tribunal which is sitting to-day, I would like to point out that if the organisation had waited in order that it might approach the Arbitration Court, it would not have reached the Court before March next. Another aspect which influenced the body, was that the court would be going into recess for some time during the holiday period. Members will realise, therefore, that it was largely in view of these circumstances that the organisation decided to take the job into its own hands. While people are quite prepared to accuse organisations of direct action, there are many instances where the employers have not adopted a conciliatory view of matters under dispute.

Hon. J. Cornell: I would say that both are at fault.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: I can relate instances regarding disputes within the last two months, which would not reflect very great credit on the employers. I would mention the recent Meckatharra dispute, but I will have something more to say regarding that later on. I regret with Mr. Dodd in particular, that legislation of this type has been brought down at this late period of the session. It is not possible to deal with the measures in the way we could wish. I have consulted some of the organisations in Western Australia who are crying out for legislation amending our present industrial laws. That cry is well known, yet we find when the Bill is brought before us that it is practically confined to the appointment of a deputy president of the court, a special commissioner, and an increase in the salaries of the lay members of the court. We can agree to the Bill to the extent it goes, but I protest against the Government not framing a Bill which would contain more comprehensive amendments to the Arbitration Act. Something of the sort is necessary. It is provided under Clause 2 that the Government are empowered to appoint a judge as deputy president of the Arbitration Court. I was once wedded to the idea that a layman would be a greater acquisition to the Arbitration Court than a judge. Years of experience, however, have taught me to alter my views a little and I am not now as keen as I was upon having a layman appointed to that position. I realise that it is necessary to have as chairman a man who is able to sift evidence and attach the true value

to the evidence which is brought before the court. At the same time, I do not think it is at all necessary to have a judge of the Supreme Court appointed to this position. I referred just now to the tramway case. In that particular instance we have one of our resident magistrates sitting as chairman. That gentleman has had the experience in several arbitration cases. That very fact is evidence that he has given satisfaction to both sides and that is rather a hard task. I do not see any reason why the Bill should be so framed as to prevent the appointment of such a gentleman as president of the Arbitration Court. I do not refer to that magistrate personally, but merely as a magistrate. He should not be precluded under the Bill from being appointed to that position. Many disputes have occurred and have been settled without any reference having been made to them in the Press. Many have been settled by the wardens and by the resident magistrates, and other responsible men, and I think the Government would be well advised if they amended this clause in order not to exclude a resident magistrate from appointment to the position of president of the court. The proposed appointment of a special commissioner is more or less a matter of conciliation. No great objection can be taken to this, because the system prevails in other parts of the world. Possibly we should welcome it. It should relieve the disputes committee of the trades hall of a lot of work. The disputes committee are occupied day after day acting as go-betweens in disputes between employers and employees, and in many cases they have succeeded in reaching satisfactory agreements. Something should be done in this direction, and the Bill at least attempts to do something. When we come to review the duties of the special commissioner we should bear in mind that he will have little power except to call a conference. If the clause is amended in Committee it might be made workable. While the appointment of a special commissioner is a step in the right direction, I am opposed to the special commissioner as provided in the Bill. I entirely agree with the proposed increase of salaries to members of the court. These men are called upon to give the whole of their time and attention to the work. Though they may not be actually sitting on the bench, they have a considerable amount of work to do in sifting and weighing the evidence, and I honestly believe they are entitled to the increase. I shall support that clause. There are other matters in the Bill which are not of great importance. I am sorry that power is not given the court to grant retrospective pay. When the Bill was before another place a clause to that effect was opposed by the Government, but I hope that this Chamber, which claims to be a House of review and revision, will revise this Bill in order to give the court power to do a fair thing between employer and employee. On many occasions it is not possible to get before the court for several months. The presence of the parties in the court is an evidence that they will accept the verdict of the court. If the court had power to grant retrospective pay where in their opinion the employees were entitled to it, no reasonable objection could be taken.

Hon. J. Cornell: It should date from the lodging of the citation.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: Yes, that is, provided employers and employees agree to go to the court.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: If there was a reduction, how would you get on?

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: The same thing would apply, perhaps. The court, however, should have this power. Having regard to the responsibilities of the court and to the confidence reposed in it, there is no reason why we should be afraid of the court using this power against the interests of any section of the community. I do not for one moment think they would do so. I hope reasonable and sympathetic consideration will be given to an amendment in this direction. I have discussed this proposition with several employers, and they agree that if we do not make it a cast-iron provision, but leave it to the discretion of the court, they will not oppose it. The basic wage has been mentioned, and after all that is a very debatable clause. It is an innovation, and one which is entitled to receive our best consideration. I hold certain opinions with regard to the clause, and in Committee I shall have something to say in it. Probably I shall move an amendment. I hope that the clause will be altered in such a way that it will meet with the approval of all parties concerned. I support the second reading, and I regret that the Bill does not provide for very many things for which the country has been asking for a very long time.

On motion by Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.