

The Minister for Education: It will not affect that position at all.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am satisfied that in small cases, an official such as contemplated under the Bill, could discharge the duties very well, but I think where big estates are concerned it would be preferable for a person to be appointed as in the past. I am assured by the Minister, however, that it will be competent for such a person to be appointed and to act in the direction I have indicated. In these circumstances I have no objection to the Bill.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [8.30]: I do not agree with Mr. Nicholson, who expressed satisfaction because the Bill did not appoint a public trustee. The one official badly needed in this State is a public trustee, whose appointment should be on the lines existing in England. The Bill before us is good as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It simply limits the trustee to take charge of the estates of insane and incapable persons. With regard to the public trustee in England who, I think, was appointed under an Act passed in 1906, the department under that official has grown very rapidly. When that officer was originally appointed it had a staff of only five; now the number employed in the Public Trustee's office in London is more than 1,000. That growth is evidence of the satisfaction expressed by the public concerning the position of the public trustee. The assets that are controlled by that official amount in value to 150 millions sterling, and the department does not cost anything to control. The assets are managed so that they shall merely pay the expenses. The public trustee derives no profits. I know that in advocating the establishment of such an office in Western Australia, those interested in trustee and executor companies in Australia—there are many in Australia, and we have one in this State—will oppose the suggestion and declare that it is an interference with private enterprise. In my opinion, however, it is a departure which the Government are justified in adopting. Difficulties at times arise in procuring good executors, but if there were one who had behind him the security of the Government, the difficulty would be overcome. The appointment of a public trustee has been of great advantage in the British Isles, and although at the time there was some opposition to the establishment of the office, to-day I do not believe there is anyone who does not agree that the step was a wise one to take. There is a great sense of security about it on the part of those people who have made their wills, and appointed the public trustee as executor. I trust the Government will give this matter consideration and endeavour to ascertain exactly how the scheme is working in England. I am sure they will find that it is working satisfactorily there, and I hope that as a re-

sult of their inquiries they may see the wisdom of following a similar course in Western Australia.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [8.35]: I can readily give Mr. Holmes an assurance on the two points he raised. With regard to the question of expense, this merely forms part of the scheme of re-organisation and will mean a good deal of economy. The proposal will apply to moneys that are held by the court in trust, and to nothing else.

Hon. J. A. Greig: Does it apply to property?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, the property of those persons to whom I have already referred. The appointment of a public trustee to carry out the functions suggested by Mr. Kirwan is a matter entirely apart from the question of the appointment of an official trustee. The hon. member's proposal would mean the creation of a new department. Whether that would be wise or not, is a matter for consideration.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: There are big estates at the present time, and in connection with these the Supreme Court appoints trustees. Will this Bill affect those estates?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 8.40 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 20th September, 1921.

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

CONDOLENCE—QUEENSLAND COLLIERY DISASTER.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.32]: I move—

That the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia expresses its profound sorrow at the appalling loss of life that has attended the catastrophe at the Mount Mulligan coal mine and its deepest sympathy with the relatives of the deceased; and that the Speaker be asked to telegraph a copy of the above resolution to the Hon. the Premier of Queensland.

We have all read with great regret the announcement in this morning's paper of the terrible catastrophe which has occurred in North Queensland, and which has resulted in such great loss of life. These happenings have occurred from time to time in the mining industry, but this particular tragedy is especially disastrous in that it really means that practically all the men who were working in the mine have lost their lives. One's sympathy goes out to the relatives of the deceased and their friends. I am sure I am expressing the feelings of the whole House in extending my sympathy to them, and that the House will agree to the motion which I now submit.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.34]: I support the motion, and, with the Premier, deplore the terrible disaster which has occurred in Queensland. We have to go back, I think, to the middle eighties, at the time when the great Bulli disaster occurred, to find a catastrophe in the mining history of Australia equal to this. It should serve to bring home to the people of the country one phase of the tragedy of toil, namely, that men who go down into the earth as it were, to engage in mining operations, take their lives in their hands every day of the year. I am sure every member of the House will extend his sympathy to the relatives and friends of those unfortunate men who have lost their lives in such a sudden and dreadful manner.

Mr. WILSON (Collie) [4.35]: As a member representing the coal-mining industry in this Chamber, I am practically identified with a good many of the miners who have lost their lives in this terrible disaster. The underground manager of the Mt. Mulligan mine (Thomas Young Evans) was a lad from Collie and he got his ticket from that centre. There is, therefore, an affinity between Collie and this coal mine in Queensland. I know the distress which results from these terrible catastrophes, for I have been mixed up in them myself. We all extend our sympathy to those who are left in such appalling circumstances. I support the motion.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [4.36]: In the absence of my leader, the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison), I wish to express the sympathy of the Country Party for those who

have been affected by this great disaster. We deplore the sorrow which has so suddenly been brought upon the people concerned. I support the motion.

Question put and passed; members standing.

QUESTION—SPEAKER'S GALLERY.

Privileges to Women.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for West Perth (Mrs. Cowan) has given notice of a question to the Speaker, which will be answered without delay, and which will not appear on the Notice Paper. Her first question is—

With respect to the admission of strangers to the Speaker's gallery, is a member of this House entitled to extend this privilege to women as well as to men?

To that question I may answer that it has never been done, and I do not know that it has been done in any of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth.

Mr. McCallum: Yes, it has.

Mr. SPEAKER: If it has been done it has been done without my knowledge. The second part of the question says:—

If this does not apply to women, under which Standing Order is the position governed?

The standing orders do not control the Speaker's gallery. Tradition has handed down the Speaker's gallery to the Speaker and he allows members to take privileged guests to seats in the Speaker's gallery. The member for West Perth is on the same footing as any other hon. member. No member is privileged to ask a lady to take a seat in the Speaker's gallery. On the other hand, the member for West Perth has the right to take a gentleman to the Speaker's gallery.

Mrs. Cowan: Am I in order in moving that your ruling be disagreed with?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not given a ruling; I have simply told the hon. member what is the position. If the House decides otherwise I cannot help it. The Speaker's gallery has been handed down to the Speaker and is controlled by him, and I am only doing what previous Speakers have done.

Mr. Corboy: I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, without notice, if you will extend the same privilege to ladies as is extended to gentlemen.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already answered that question.

Mr. Corboy: I am asking if you will extend the same privileges.

Mr. SPEAKER: I answer, "No."

QUESTION—OIL PROSPECTING, BREMER BAY.

Mr. SIMONS asked the Minister for Mines: In view of the claim put forward by Messrs. Martin and Perkins, oil experts, that they have discovered free oil in the

vicinity of Fitzgerald River (Bremer Bay), and in view of the uncertainty which negative reports from the experts of the State departments has created, will he state—1, What steps are being taken to decide finally which of the two sets of opinions is correct? 2, Is it proposed to accept the offer of Messrs. Martin and Perkins to demonstrate that oil can be produced from the samples now in the custody of the Mines Department (declared to yield negative results by the State officials)? 3, Is it the intention of the Minister to send a departmental official to test the accuracy of the report that free oil has been struck in the bore, and if so, when? 4, Is it a fact that Mr. Martin made known to Inspector Wilson his process for extracting the oil, and that Inspector Wilson, in the presence of the discoverers and other witnesses, produced benzine? 5, If the previous question is answered in the affirmative, why was this result not mentioned in the official report?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [4.48]: May I be permitted to make a short explanation in asking the member for East Perth to postpone the question. It affects the Government chemist and mineralogist, Dr. Simpson, and also a member of the geological staff, Inspector Wilson. Both these gentlemen are out of town now and have been away for some considerable time. I do not desire to answer the question until they have returned. Inspector Wilson will return on Thursday and Dr. Simpson will be in Perth on Friday. I will answer the question after they have returned. It is due to them to know what has happened and I wish to bring the question before their notice.

QUESTION—MEDICAL DEPARTMENT, ANNUAL REPORT.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Colonial Secretary: When will the report of the Medical Department for year 1920 be placed on the Table of the House?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: A combined report for the years 1920-21 will be available in May, 1922. As a measure of economy it is proposed to continue publishing this report biennially, as was done for the years 1918 and 1919.

QUESTION—WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Premier: 1, Was value to the extent of £90,000 lost on the last kill at the Wyndham Meat Works, as stated by the member for Pilbara? 2, Does this amount include loss on non-sale of hides, valued at £54,000, or is the loss additional to this amount? 3, What is the estimated amount which would have to be written off to enable these works to operate to profit?

The PREMIER replied: No. Excluding interest, the profit and loss account to 31st December, 1920, shows a loss on the year's

operations and transactions of £71,166. This amount includes £23,805 on products of the 1919 season—being depreciated value of stocks unsold at 31st December, 1919. 2, There was not a loss of £54,000 on non-sale of hides. Hides are included with other products in the balance sheet and profit and loss account. 3, This cannot be answered. The main factors affecting the question are: Market values of products; prices of cattle; ocean freight service and rates.

BILL—REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary and read a first time.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2) £542,000.

All Stages.

The PREMIER AND COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.50]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committee of Supply and Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day.

Question put and passed.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

In Committee of Supply.

The House having resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. Stubbs in the Chair,

The PREMIER AND COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.55]: I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending 30th June, 1922, a sum not exceeding £380,000 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £150,000 from the General Loan Fund, £6,000 from the Government Property Sales Fund, £6,000 from the Land Improvement Loan Fund.

I may explain that I am asking for supply for a month. I hope to introduce the Estimates for the present financial year on Tuesday next. Members will then be fully informed as to the position of the finances and as to what may be expected for the coming year. Members will realise that under our system it is impossible for them to be informed by way of the monthly revenue and expenditure returns which are published monthly as to the exact position. The returns as published are certainly somewhat misleading. I want to explain why that is so.

We collect land revenue largely during the months of September and March. For the rest of the year the collections come in in a very uneven way. This applies particularly to taxation. The deficit on the two months amounted to about £351,000. The collections from land taxation, the land rents, amounted to about £81,000 below the average. The same applies to the revenue from timber. We collected £7,000 below the estimated revenue. In addition to that, we charge interest monthly. I should say that it is not paid, but it is debited monthly up to the several accounts, and later we are recouped with respect to the interest on moneys loaned through the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board. With respect to soldier settlement and also to interest on the State trading concerns, that is paid half yearly. Under these headings during the last two months we have paid away £93,000. That is to be recouped to the Treasury later on. The Committee can be satisfied that the only loss being made at the present juncture is on public utilities notwithstanding that so much is shown as loss in the monthly statements. I do not know if the methods in vogue could be improved so that the money could be collected more evenly. I do not think they could be improved, but we cannot inform members accurately as to what the position will be later on. I shall present the Estimates on Tuesday next and members will then be in a position to discuss the finances fully.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.0]: I have no intention of entering upon a discussion of the finances at this stage, because the Premier has informed us that he will have the Estimates down next week. Members will be able to give further consideration then to the different problems and discuss every phase of the financial position of the State. I would like to know from the Treasurer, however, how the loan funds stand and whether the amount he is asking for, namely £542,000 is purely from revenue to carry on the services of the State—

The Premier: The greater portion is from revenue.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And that it in no way further increases our loan authorisations. If that is the position I would like to have some information as to how the loan funds stand at the present time. So far as I can gather, the loan funds are very low, if not entirely exhausted. The outlook for employment is such at the present time that it would appear as if we shall have to make provision for the expenditure of loan money in excess of the rate of expenditure during the past 12 months. That will probably have to be done if we are to meet the situation as it confronts us regarding unemployment. I do not know what the experience of other members may be, but I am deluged with correspondence nearly every day of the week from persons in different parts of the State

who are seeking employment. There is a considerable number of men and women out of work in and around the metropolitan district. It seems to me that the Government will have to find employment for these people. I know the attitude the Premier takes up when he says that there is plenty of work to be found in the areas where there is clearing of land to be undertaken.

The Minister for Agriculture: The harvest will absorb a considerable number.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That will help to ease the position.

Mr. Willcock: They are sacking men in the Railways when the harvest is starting.

Hon. P. COLLIER: A considerable number of those who are out of work are not fit to take employment at clearing land. We cannot turn a man who has followed a different occupation on to work such as land clearing merely in a day, and it seems to me that the Government and Parliament have an obligation to the people of Western Australia to provide work for those who are unable, for various reasons, to go into the country districts to take up clearing work. I know of course that it is not a wise policy to launch out on the expenditure of loan funds at a time when such money can only be obtained at a very high rate of interest. It is of course a desirable thing to go slow on, but at the same time there is the difference between going slowly and standing still altogether. I do not accuse the Government for a moment, especially the Premier, of having any ulterior motive in declining to embark upon even a moderate policy of public works from loan funds, but it does seem to me that there is some connection between the fact that we have a number of unemployed in various parts of the State and the continued agitation in certain circles for a reduction in the rates of wages and salaries. For instance, we find with regard to the question asked by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) this afternoon that a foreign gentleman who revels in the title of an Italian count—which is indicative of the fact that he belongs to a foreign aristocracy—butting in last week with a statement which he made to the Press in connection with the attitude of a considerable section of the people in this country, and, referring to it as a "fool policy of high wages." I wonder who sent this foreigner here, and why it is that he feels it to be part of his business to get into a controversy of this kind. If the people of the country from which he comes are content to work for a low rate of wages, that is their concern, but it seems to me that as a Consul representing a foreign nation, it should not be part of his business to get into an argument of this description at this particular time. Then, too, we have the fact that one of the gentlemen who does honour to the State by representing it in the Federal Parliament, and who occasionally visits us, perhaps on an average of once every two years, arriving in the State a few days ago, and immediately on finding

his feet in the country which provides his sustenance, launches out on an attack upon what he is pleased to call a high rate of wages. Senator Pearce, to whom I am referring, is just a casual visitor to Western Australia, and in the course of an interview, after referring to the difficulties experienced in the East with regard to what he is pleased to describe as the high rate of wages obtaining in the base metal industry, pointed out that those rates were fixed when the prices of metals were higher than they are to-day, and that because the prices have to-day fallen, the industry is not able to pay the rate which was awarded and carry on successfully. Then this same gentleman shows how completely out of touch he is with the State which finds his pay, by saying that we have a similar situation in Kalgoorlie, and he likens the condition of the gold-mining industry, as it obtains in Kalgoorlie, to the situation existing in the Eastern States in connection with the base metal industry which cannot carry on. For the information of this legislator, I wish to say that we have not a similar situation in Kalgoorlie; the situation there is precisely opposite to that existing in the Eastern States, for, whilst the price of base metals has fallen considerably, and has created a difficulty in the Eastern States, we have in Kalgoorlie the fact that the price of the metal produced there has not fallen but has increased. At the present time gold is worth £1 11s. per ounce more than it was before the war. The latest quotation is £5 11s. 6d. as against an average pre-war price of £4. So that, whilst the position in Western Australia is that the price of gold has increased by £1 11s. per ounce, this gentleman declares that if the mines are to carry on we must reconstruct our ideas about arbitration and have a reduction in wages. I want to take the present opportunity of having a word to say in regard to this position. When the workers in any industry discard arbitration and adopt what is described as a policy of direct action, we have them condemned from one end of the State to the other, and the question is asked why do not the workers settle their grievances by means of the court. In Kalgoorlie we have a situation the like of which did not obtain in any other part of Australia. The men employed in the gold mining industry, except for a fractional increase, went throughout the period of the war without anything at all in the form of an agitation for increased wages, although the cost of commodities was soaring week after week and month after month. From 1914 to 1920, a period of over six years, they received no increase in wages, and the result was that they kept the industry going, while they themselves were living absolutely below the proper standard. Now, having adopted the constitutional method of getting an increase, after having waited for a period of six years, we have men such as Senator Pearce, whose chief stock-in-trade is that of the maintenance of

Constitutional Government, coming along to tell us that we must reconstruct our ideas about arbitration, and that the men will have to be prepared to forego the award they obtained through the court a little while back, an award which was even then below a living wage. Senator Pearce declares that the men should set aside that and accept lower wages so that the mines may be able to carry on. That is the kind of thing which is calculated to make that section of industrial workers who have hitherto preferred the arbitration court, discard it altogether. If arbitration is to be any good to the workers, it should secure to them something like a living wage in bad and dull times without the fear of having those rates forced down. When prices were high and those who engaged in the base metal trade throughout the period of the war accumulated enormous fortunes, the workers did not participate in those profits. By what reason, therefore, should they be asked to share in the losses when bad times come? My belief is that the employers regard the fact that they have an army of unemployed continually around them as a weapon to force down the rate of wages. I believe, too, at the present time, there is an understanding, not to say a conspiracy, existing on the goldfields between the members of the Chamber of Mines and certain other influences in that district, to prevent the men who are out of work in Kalgoorlie from leaving the district to obtain work elsewhere. They are pursuing American methods of keeping around them an army of surplus labour as a kind of menace to those who are at work. As a matter of fact it is conceded already by mine managers on the goldfields that the output per man has increased considerably, perhaps up to 20 per cent., by reason of the fact that the men in work are influenced by the hundreds who are waiting for billets, a fact which in itself is sufficient to spur on those who are at work, to a higher rate than they otherwise would do or ought to do. If this policy, whether men are employed or not, is no concern of ours as a Parliament, the result will be a breakdown of our arbitration laws, because, whilst we have on the one hand employers who will be willing to employ men at reduced rates of wages, on the other hand we shall have a considerable army of unemployed, and no tribunal will be able to maintain the rates of wages. I trust the Premier will be able to start some works, even if only in a small way, to absorb the number of men who find themselves out of employment to-day. I know of men who have spent their lives in Australia, as good a type of citizens as can be found anywhere in the world, with the responsibility of maintaining homes, and finding themselves at the present time unable to raise any money with which to buy the morrow's dinner. It is a deplorable situation when such men are face to face with a position of that kind. It is therefore the responsibility of the State Parliament to find employment for its citizens.

Mr. Angelo: Has not the Premier offered to put them on the land, and did he not fail to get applications?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Everybody cannot go on the land to grow pumpkins and bananas. Men who are up in years and who have spent the best period of their lives following a particular occupation cannot be turned out at 24 hours' notice and told to take up another avocation.

The Premier: The hon. member is referring to the 50 men we tried to get in Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Angelo: The Fremantle lumpers have done well at Yorkrakine.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am aware that the Premier may say that he recently failed to get any applicants for the 50 blocks he made available at Esperance. It may be that those who would be willing to settle at Esperance are afraid that the railway will not be constructed to that part of the State, and that therefore it would be unwise for them to take the risk. For my own part I have no such fear. The Premier and his Government have declared definitely and emphatically that they will construct that railway, and that is sufficient for me. In my opinion there is no foundation for any such suspicion as might be harboured by would be settlers at Kalgoorlie. But I know that attitude has been fostered even by a section of the goldfields Press, and that is an unworthy thing to do.

Mr. Angelo: The declaration you are making may do good.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Press are going to say to the people on the goldfields that it would be foolish for them to take up land because farming in this country will result in failure, and, further, that it would be unwise for them to go to Esperance because the word of the Government cannot be taken so far as the construction of the railway is concerned, I say that is an unworthy attitude to take up. I hope the Premier will be able to assure us that something will be done to provide work for the hundreds of men who are out of employment at the present time. It may be that things will be eased somewhat when the harvest comes in, but every man cannot undertake the work of harvesting. The only other point to which I wish to refer is this: I hope that before the Estimates come down next week and before we are called upon to discuss the financial statement, we shall be provided with the annual report of every one of the departments for the year. There is no reason why, after the lapse of three months since the close of the financial year, this House should not be provided with the annual report of every department.

Mr. Pickering: It would be an innovation if we got them all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It would be on what we have experienced in recent years. The hon. member may not be aware that it was the practice of the departments in former years.

The departments, however, have been allowed to drift into a lackadaisical way. Last year they had the excuse or explanation that the reports were delayed on account of the Public Service strike. No such excuse is available to them this year, and the officers charged with the duty of preparing these annual reports, if unable to do the work in the three months since the close of the financial year, ought to get out and make room for someone who can. Last year we were called upon to discuss the financial statement and the Estimates without having even the advantage of the public accounts. I hope that when the Premier brings down the Estimates they will be accompanied by the public accounts, as they always were since I have been in the House, with the exception of last year. I shall not be prepared to discuss the financial position unless I have the public accounts before me, and there is no reason why the House should not be furnished with all the necessary information. It is of no use presenting reports after the Estimates have been passed. The money spent in printing belated reports might as well be saved. This session we have received a number of reports dealing with the previous financial year. No member has read them; they are out of date; they are of no use whatever, and the money might as well have been saved.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [5.18]: I wish to obtain a declaration of the attitude of the Government with regard to the unemployment now existing. I attended a meeting at Fremantle this morning when there were present 500 or 600, if not more, men who are most anxious to obtain work and who are in a pretty bad way. They became very impatient when the situation was presented to them that more delay might ensue. It is the function of the Government to see that there are no citizens in this State short of the necessities of life. The Government must offer them opportunities of work, and the work offered to them must be remunerative and attended with reasonable conditions. The Government departments are contributing towards the creation of unemployment. The railways are dismissing a great number of men, and so are other Government departments, and the number of men out of work is increasing each day. The Government must find some way out of the difficulty. The lack of shipping at the port has increased the number of unemployed considerably, but most commercial houses have also slackened hands. As it has happened in most other parts of the world, so it is happening here, the Government have given a lead by retrenching and private enterprise is following that lead.

The Premier: We cannot keep men in the railways if there is no work for them.

Mr. McCALLUM: If there is no work in the railways for them, work must be found somewhere, or else the Government must keep these men. The Government would be better advised to find for such men work in which

they could earn their sustenance and thus avoid paying them sustenance for doing nothing. We are not here to ask for charity or to advocate that the funds of the State should be utilised to keep men in idleness. Every man should have an opportunity to earn his livelihood. What logic is there in a policy of introducing immigrants to this State at the present time? We learn from this morning's paper that some hundreds are arriving by the next mail steamer, while at the same time a large number of our own citizens are unable to obtain employment. At the Fremantle meeting this morning one man stood up and said that during the past 15 months he had not earned more than £26. Another stood up and told the gathering that in the past six weeks he had earned only 12s. If the only offer that the Government have to make to the unemployed is to provide work for them in the country—

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is not too much of it there.

Mr. McCALLUM: And if these men are to accept employment at clearing or other agricultural work, there must be some evidence that the wages and conditions will be reasonable and up to the Western Australian standard. I have had experience of the rates paid in some of our agricultural districts. A farmer will not pay a penny piece more than he is absolutely obliged to pay; yet the farmer has got more money from the people of this State for his product than has any other section of the community. He has been subsidised by a million pounds a year, and he has at the same time been fleecing the people of the country for the past 12 months absolutely without warrant. There is no warrant for the price of 6d. per loaf for bread at the present time, or for the price of wheat and flour during the last 12 months. The farmer has been fleecing the great mass of the community, and yet it is the men now out of work who have been subsidising the farmer all along. I emphasise a point I made in a previous speech, that the whole of the workers' savings in the Savings Bank have been handed over to the wheat growers. The primary producers—they are really the wheat growers—have been given a monopoly of all this money saved by the workers.

The Premier: No, they have not.

Mr. McCALLUM: The working man in Fremantle cannot get assistance to set up in business or to build a home, or to establish himself for the future. This is reserved for the wheat grower.

The Premier: Not at all.

Mr. McCALLUM: The wheat grower has a monopoly of the Savings Bank money and obtains it from the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board.

The Premier: No.

Mr. McCALLUM: What other money has the Premier for him?

The Premier: This money is used for water schemes and all sorts of works.

Mr. McCALLUM: Of all the money spent in that connection, the great bulk of it goes through the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. A. Thomson: The wheat growers are paying interest for it.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yet the men who provide that money are out of work, and have to pay an exorbitant price for wheat and for the products of wheat to the men who have a monopoly of their savings. I wish to emphasise the point, made by the Leader of the Opposition, that all men are not suitable for agricultural work.

The Premier. We know that.

Mr. Pickering: If it is such a good thing as you have been trying to prove, the wonder is that they do not take up agricultural work.

Mr. A. Thomson: Yes, why don't they get in and do a bit of fleecing?

Mr. McCALLUM: Not all of us are so unscrupulous. There are some sections of the community who are prepared to act honourably. Not all sections of the community are thrusting their hands into the Treasury and dipping into the people's funds and placing no limit on their demands. Not all sections are prepared to bleed the country white regardless of what happens to the State so long as they can get unlimited assistance.

Mr. Pickering interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Sussex will have his opportunity to speak and I must ask him to refrain from interjecting.

Mr. McCALLUM: Some of us are prepared to see that a fair thing is done. If the Government's only offer is that the unemployed should go into the country, irrespective of whether the wages and conditions are reasonable, I would point out that men undertaking this work should be sure of getting their money when they earn it. Many scores of men have come to me after doing a job in the country and complained of their inability to get their wages. I do not say that all the agriculturists are dishonest, but a great many men who undertake work in the country are unable to get their money.

Mr. Pickering: They are not all dishonest!

Mr. McCALLUM: The member for Sussex is not a wheat farmer. He has not grown a bushel of wheat in his life, notwithstanding that he poses as a representative of the farmers. On this side of the House, however, are men who have grown more wheat than all the members of the Primary Producers' party put together.

Mr. Pickering interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: I must again ask the member for Sussex to obey the Chair.

Mr. McCALLUM: We in Fremantle have canvassed private enterprise to ascertain what opening there is likely to be for employment. From all the big establishments in the port we have been unable to find any promise of an outlet for labour in the near future. Those in charge of operations at the port are not in favour of a large exodus of labourers from Fremantle. They argue that when the port is

busy, quick despatch is required, and the lumpers will be needed to do the work. In the slack time, however, they recognise that the position is very bad indeed. It is unreasonable for the Government or for the Harbour Trust to expect a body of men to wait in idleness and merely float along when required. These men are human beings and cannot exist on nothing. If labour is necessary for the port, when shipping is available, it is the duty of those who want the work done efficiently to see that sustenance is provided during the slack times. Even if the Premier provides work for men in the country, some provision will have to be made for the upkeep of their wives and families until their earnings are available. The position is becoming absolutely desperate and relief is essential.

Mr. Mann: Is it a fact that certain lumpers are getting all the work to the disadvantage of others?

Mr. McCALLUM: All that has appeared in the Press to that effect is not true. There was a meeting of the union yesterday and a decision was arrived at. The members of the union are the best judges of the position. I think that a better distribution of the work available could be arranged, and it is advisable that this should be done, but there is very little foundation for the exaggerated statements which have been published. I hope that the Premier will not follow the lead of the Premier of South Australia and say that no relief can be afforded to the unemployed until such time as wages are reduced. I hope that the Government here will not adopt any such attitude. I regret very much that foreigners commissioned by their Government to represent them here, and mainly to deal with commercial matters, are delving into this highly controversial question of the reduction of wages. Are we to be told by the local representative of a foreign Government that wages must come down here before work will be provided? I want no such interference. We have had experience of the attitude of Italians in industrial crises previously. I am not one of those who desire necessarily to adopt here what is done in other countries. Let us solve our Australian problems according to Australian methods, and not according to foreign methods.

Mr. Johnston: Let that representative go and solve the problem in Italy.

Mr. McCALLUM: Yes. The position there is much more acute than the position here, and the Italian Consul would be much better employed telling the Italian workers what to do; though for my part I believe those workers would repudiate the Italian Consul's ideas. On the Eastern Goldfields the position has been almost critical for some time. A certain visitor from the Commonwealth Parliament, who has represented Western Australia in that Parliament for 20 years, has expressed certain opinions regarding the Eastern Goldfields situation. I doubt whether that gentleman, apart from election times, has spent a fortnight at a stretch in this

State since he was first elected. I can say that whenever he was wanted here to do a little work for the political movement that gave him birth, he raised all sorts of difficulties. His statement that wages must come down affects the financial position of Western Australia very materially. Apparently the hon. gentleman in question is seeking to create the atmosphere necessary to a campaign for reduction in wages. No body of Australian workers have shown themselves more tolerant than the gold miners of Western Australia in regard to wages and working conditions. The wages on our goldfields have been, effectively, the lowest in Australia; and the living conditions of our miners and of their wives and children have approached towards those of aborigines. Even miners in constant work have found it almost impossible to pay their accounts; a week's idleness means to an Eastern Goldfields miner that his tradesmen are pushing him. How many times has the hon. gentleman from the Federal Parliament to whom I have referred, stood up, since the split in the Labour Party, to say that he was one of the originators of the principle of industrial arbitration? But now he is arguing that the decision of the Arbitration Court should be set aside, and wages lowered. If Senator Pearce and others have their way, and the wages of miners and other workers in this country are lowered, the financial position of Western Australia will be materially affected. I trust the State Government of Western Australia will not follow the lead given by the State Government of South Australia in this respect.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.35]: I have said repeatedly, that the employers and the employees in this country have responsibilities towards each other. Times, of course, are bad just now, and business is dull. I fail, however, to see that the statements of the two gentlemen referred to by the last speaker have any bearing on the question of wages, seeing that we have an Industrial Arbitration Court in this country. But I recognise that if we have a large body of men out of work, the State itself must lose very considerably. There is, in point of fact, work for everybody in this State today, though I admit that many of the unemployed cannot go into the country. Take, for instance, the case of a Fremantle lumper with a family who has his home established at the port. It is expected that within a few days some of the wheat stored in the country will be moved—something like 700,000 bags.

The Minister for Agriculture: There will be three grain vessels in next week.

The PREMIER: That will mean a considerable amount of work. All I can say just now is that I have always been anxious to see everybody at work. The Government have used their best efforts, and with a fair amount of success, in that direction, though I admit that I cannot always find unemployed men

just the work they would like. There are some public works which the Government could start; but we are short of loan funds just now, and it is difficult to get on the London market. Still, I believe there will be a revival of trade; certainly, that revival will come when the harvest is ripe. As regards the men referred to by the member for Gascoyne, the position is that 50 men were sought from the goldfields to go upon the land under specially favourable conditions, but that owing to the opposition of a section of the Press, based on what grounds I do not know, the men were not obtained. Still, we shall get the 50 men notwithstanding.

Mr. Troy: What age have you stipulated?

The PREMIER: We have not stipulated any age.

Mr. Troy: A man of 50 with a family cannot go on a farm.

The PREMIER: A deputation asked the Government to give this opportunity to the men on the goldfields. I am not saying that any man who is out of work can go anywhere.

Mr. Willcock: We recognise that you are not at fault in the matter.

The PREMIER: The men in question would have run no risk. They were not asked to put up any money. They were offered special terms in the way of sustenance when they went on the land. Naturally, the Government cannot accept the responsibility of employing everybody who happens to get out of work. We shall, however, continue to do our utmost to make work available. I appreciate that the State will never be in order until we have all our people at work. The member for North-East Fremantle proposes to bring me to-night a deputation on the unemployed question; the matter will be discussed further then. Personally I believe that the Fremantle position will be rectified more quickly than the Eastern Goldfields position, because the shipping will shortly be restored to Fremantle.

Mr. McCallum: According to the experts, the position will not be restored before the end of the year.

The PREMIER: It will improve very shortly. The Government will endeavour to meet the situation generally as far as they can.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.42]: The House must supply the Government with funds to carry on. But the astounding charges made by the member for South Fremantle call for refutation.

The CHAIRMAN: He was perfectly right in making what he thought to be an accurate statement.

Mr. A. THOMSON: And I am perfectly right in refuting it. It is most astounding that the hon. member should declare that farmers are fleecing the public, that they have a monopoly of the workers' money in the Savings Bank.

Mr. McCallum: So you have.

The Premier: No.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the money invested by the Savings Bank in the Agricultural Bank and in workers' homes—

Mr. Munsie: Not a bob in workers' homes.

Mr. A. THOMSON: And loaned to the metropolitan water supply.

Mr. Munsie: Not a bob there either.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Nevertheless, it is wicked for the member for South Fremantle to say the farmers are robbing the workers. If that is the sort of statement he is going to make, he cannot expect members on this side to give his words due consideration.

Mr. McCallum: You show us that the statement is wrong.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is an absolute misstatement to say the farmers are fleecing the public.

Mr. McCallum: With wheat at 9s. a bushel for Western Australians and 7s. a bushel for niggers!

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member had a larger mind—

Mr. Mann: It is not possible.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No, perhaps it is not. The hon. member declared that the Railway Department was putting off hands. Does he not realise that the greater the production in the country districts the greater the work provided for the railways, and for the lumpers whose unemployed meeting he attended in Fremantle to-day. He has the audacity to say the producers are robbing the workers and have a monopoly of the workers' money. The hon. member has no right to make such a charge against a section of the community.

Mr. McCallum: You will get more of it before you are much older.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member desires to be listened to with respect, he should not make such misstatements.

Mr. McCallum: You show it to be wrong. It is true.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The farmers are paying interest on the money advanced to them to develop their lands and so find employment for the very men whom the hon. member claims to represent.

Mr. Willcock: They are doing it for their own benefit.

Mr. A. THOMSON: How can the farmers be robbing the workers, when bread is cheaper in Western Australia than it is in South Australia?

Mr. McCallum: You are wrong. In South Australia advantage has not been taken of the extra halfpenny.

The Premier: Anyhow, that is under the Wheat Bill.

Mr. A. THOMSON: As Deputy Leader of the Country Party, I must refute the statement made by the hon. member.

Mr. Munsie: You have given us no facts whatever.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Neither did the hon. member for South Fremantle. I am afraid he is one of those who make a statement so often that in the end they come to think it true. To-day there is work in the country,

and if men are prepared to go out there they can have it. I trust it will not be necessary for the Government to introduce any system of charity doles. The hon. member is not prepared to work, but apparently he is prepared to create strife in this House. He says the farmers are dishonest, and will not pay. In spite of that I, who am privileged to know many farmers, declare that there is no more honourable body of men in the community. The vast majority of them have come from various Labour unions on the goldfields or in the metropolitan area. The hon. member said the workers wanted payment for their services. There are many farmers who have worked for years without anything like adequate payment for their services.

Mr. Heron: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No, but let us have more harmonious feelings.

Hon. T. Walker: You set us an example.

The CHAIRMAN: We are discussing the Supply Bill.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, but you allowed the member for South Fremantle plenty of latitude, and I claim the same privilege.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair shall be the judge of that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But you allowed the hon. member to make serious allegations.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to confine his attention to the business before the Chair.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am replying to statements made by the member for South Fremantle. I should be lacking in my duty if I did not deny such statements.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.50]: Something must be done to provide work. It is of no use living in a fool's paradise and saying there is no lack of employment. Only to-day I attended an unemployed meeting at which there were some 300 persons, not all lumpers by any means. The member for Katanning said there was plenty of work in the country.

Mr. A. Thomson: I said there was a certain amount.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: A short while ago I applied to the Colonial Secretary for assistance for a person who, chiefly through having a large family, is in some financial difficulties. The reply from the Under Secretary reads as follows—

With reference to your representations to the Minister in regard to the application for assistance by Mr. Blank, I am instructed to inform you that the Minister has given this matter his consideration and has directed me to point out that it is not the policy of the Government to assist by way of charity men who are able-bodied, and that there is plenty of work in the country which men of this class might obtain if unable to get sufficiently continuous employment at the work they have been accustomed to in the city.

We want to know where that work is. Only recently two men who applied at the Fremantle Trades Hall for work were told that there was plenty of work in the country. I rang up the State Labour Bureau the same day and the answer was, "Jobs are very few at present. If any come in I will let you know." We are told there is plenty of work in the country, but when we come to look for it that work cannot be found. The member for Katanning declared that farmers were willing to pay. I have an instance of it. Only a few weeks ago an ex-soldier of the British Army came out under the Overseas Settlement Scheme. With his wife he was sent into the country to a job offered by a farmer. When the pair got there they were told there must have been some mistake, because the farmer did not want anybody. However, the new arrivals were given a shakedown for the night, and next day they applied to a neighbouring farmer, who gave them a job at 30s. per week for the man and his wife. The woman alone could get 80s. a week as a domestic! However, they accepted the job, and hung on for a fortnight, until they earned sufficient to bring them back to Perth. Having had experience in England in a certain commercial line, the woman has decided to stay in Perth and earn money in order to enable her husband to take up a farm under the Premier's group settlement scheme. That incident happened only a few weeks ago, and it is not the first that has come under my knowledge. We cry out for population, but under conditions such as obtain in the farming districts, how can we hope to attract population? Our farmers should realise that they have a duty to perform to those who come from overseas, to those who have risked their lives in the interests of the farmers of Australia, and in other parts of the world. Unemployment is general. There are scores of persons out of work, and I know of many who are out of work in Fremantle. I trust the Premier will see as early as possible whether work can be found of a kind that will suit those who need it. Every case should be treated on its merits. If a man cannot get work, I am sure there is no member of the House who would stand by and see his family starve. As it is, many people are going short of food. It is time some action was taken in the direction outlined by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum). I know the difficulty. I can see the possibility, in connection with the Wheat Pool, of our London financiers saying they cannot go any further in assisting the Government, and of our public works ceasing in this State.

The Premier: No!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They may say they can go no further than they have gone. There have been many occasions when previous Governments have found it necessary to go to the London and Westminster Bank for an overdraft in order to carry on the public works of the State. The bank may decline to as-

exist any further, and the workers of the State may have to suffer because of the advantage that will accrue to the farmers through the wheat pool. I am not opposing the wheat pool, but I say there is a danger to other sections of the community in establishing it. I trust the Premier will give further consideration to the question, and see if some relief cannot be afforded to the persons on whose behalf I am speaking.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Bill introduced, etc.

Resolution in Committee of Ways and Means having been passed, a Supply Bill was brought in providing for the expenditure of £542,000.

Bill passed through all its stages without debate, and transmitted to the Council.

RETURN—WYNDHAM MEAT WORKS.

On motion by Mr. Pickering ordered:—That a return with regard to the Wyndham Meat Works be laid upon the Table of the House showing—(a) The total actual cost to date of buildings, plant, jetty, and water supply. (b) The total interest and sinking fund, if any, paid to date. (c) The total cost of administration, including management and clerical expenses, up to the end of 1920. (d) The cost of administration, including management and clerical expenses, for 1920-21. (e) The total cost of maintenance to date and basis upon which assessed. (f) The staff, number engaged, salaries and allowances. (g) The loss that has occurred during present management, the amount, the nature, and the cause. (h) The actual loss per annum whilst works are lying idle. (i) The loss during the last period of operation.

Sitting suspended from 6.13 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th September.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [7.32]: This Bill meets with my hearty approval. It will enable members of either House of the State Parliament to contest Federal elections without having to give up their seats. To that extent it will widen the area of the choice of the electors. I see no reason whatever why a member who has had many years' experience in the Parliament of this State, and who the electors may desire to represent them in the Federal Parliament, should in any way be penalised because he desires to contest a seat in the Federal legislature. Therefore, I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill. It may be that the fact that a new field of competition has been brought into the Federal arena, will quicken—

Mr. Pickering: The dead.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; and it may lead to activities on the part of members representing us in the Federal House now. I do not think half the members of this Chamber could, without consulting a reference book, name the whole of the representatives of Western Australia in the Federal Parliament. It is so long since we have heard of them, let alone seen them. They have passed out of memory for the time being, but, of course, they will come back when the elections come round again. If the knowledge that this Bill is likely to be passed through the State Parliament comes to the Federal members from Western Australia, it may have the effect of waking them up.

Mr. Johnston: It will have that effect if the Bill goes through.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It may have the effect of awakening them to the responsibilities attaching to their positions. I hope that when the Bill becomes law, there will be quite a number of State members who will offer themselves to the electors for service in the Federal Parliament, and that all members will get into training right away and start cultivating the Federal side of the electors' requirements. I hope, too, that the result may be that in the next Federal Parliament, we may have members representing us who will at least deem it their duty and responsibility to visit this State more frequently than every few years.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 15th September; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Advisory committee:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Has the Minister any information to give members as to who will comprise the advisory committee? Doubtless they will be men associated with the business of wheat growing, or buying and selling in some way or other. I desire, if possible, to have a representative on that board who will watch the interests of the consumer. The Minister will be guided largely by the advice tendered to him by the members of this committee and I want other interests represented besides those concerned entirely with wheat growing. Can the Minister tell members what he has in mind regarding the composition of the committee?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The constitution of the committee at present comprises Messrs. Sutton (Chairman), Field,

of Elder, Smith's, Paynter, farmer, Doodlakine, and Mr. Cotton, farmer, Muresk. Those members have been acting in this capacity from the inception. There is at present one vacancy which will have to be filled, and it is problematical whether Mr. Field, who has acted more from the standpoint of a war effort, will accept reappointment. It is the desire of the Government to give adequate representation to all sections of the community, but we want to have the services of gentlemen with a knowledge of the business, whether they be drawn from the Chamber of Commerce, the Trades Hall, the Primary Producers' Association, or any other body. We have not completed arrangements regarding the personnel of the board, but desire to have the most effective organisation possible. We want the best men procurable for the position, but we have an open mind on the subject.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment—

That the following new subclause be added:—"One of the members of the committee shall be appointed in the interests of the consumers and shall be a person who is not interested as principal or agent in the growing or production of or dealing in wheat or the products of wheat."

I move that amendment as a guide or an intimation to the Government that there shall be at least one person on this board who can be said to be entirely free from any personal consideration. We know that the price of wheat for home consumption will be fixed by the Minister on the advice of his committee. As the Bill is drawn, having regard for London parity, it will be seen at once what attitude will be adopted by the committee. As to what really constitutes London parity there is a considerable difference of opinion, as well as to what the price ought to be in Western Australia based on London parity. If a man is a wheat grower in a large way and has a considerable quantity of wheat in the pool, if he should be a member of this committee, I do not say he would deliberately try to inflate the price or make the parity price higher than it should be, but after all it is the human wish, which no man is free from, to get the most for what he has to sell. Seeing that the consumers are so vitally interested in this matter and believing that they are entitled to consideration by virtue of the fact that it is the credit of the public that is being utilised to carry through the pool, it is not asking too much that one of the five should be a man who might be considered to represent the consumers and who has no interest in the buying and selling of grain.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no objection to the insertion of the subclause. As a matter of fact, the Government had in mind such a proposal as that put forward by the Leader of the Opposition.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MANN: In view of his intimation that Mr. Field may not be a member of the board again, will the Minister agree to make provision for a member of the Chamber of Commerce to take the place of Mr. Field?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The only reason for the appointment of a merchant or other commercial man would be the assistance he would render in connection with the marketing of wheat. There may, however, be men possessing the necessary qualifications but who may not be members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Prohibition of sales, etc., except to Minister:

Mr. PICKERING: I move an amendment—

That in lines 1 and 2 of Subclause 4, the words "either generally or in a particular case" be struck out.

It is felt that it is unnecessary for those words to be included, as they give too wide a power. It is conceded that the price for local consumption will be fixed, and I have no doubt that that price will be arrived at satisfactorily. Having arrived at an equitable price, it should be possible to prevent the flooding of the market with inferior wheat, which the clause will allow if it is permitted to stand as it is.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope the House will not agree to the amendment. The Bill this year is an honest attempt on the part of the Government to meet the desires of every section of the community, and we naturally want fairly wide powers if we have to deal with particular problems which will confront the management. No action will be taken by the Minister off his own bat. This is the result of the past four or five years' experience, and it has been deemed advisable to include these amendments to meet the peculiar positions which may arise.

Hon. T. WALKER: I cannot understand the purpose of the amendment. The object of the words is to permit discretion, not total or sweeping action in every instance. It will be possible to judge every case on its merits if the words are permitted to remain. Once there is an exemption of any kind, if these words are omitted we must bring all into the general and complete exemption. I trust that the Committee will retain the words.

Captain CARTER: I was glad to hear the expression of opinion from the Minister regarding the necessity for this discretionary power. The other night I quoted a concrete instance where wheat classified by the grower as being well below f.a.q. standard and sent to the Perth markets for sale by auction had been taken by the inspectors and pooled. That happened at a time when wheat was practically unprocurable by the poultry farmer. Poultry raisers are dependent on

low-grade wheat for the carrying on of the industry. If we have a hard and fast rule without any discretionary power, wheat will become more and more scarce. It is now so scarce that the poultry industry has been just about wiped out of the metropolitan area. It is a matter of extreme importance to exempt certain classes of wheat, and I believe that the clause should stand as printed.

Mr. PICKERING: In 1919-20 there were 853,000 bushels of wheat subject to dockage, and in 1920-21 the quantity was approximately one million bushels. The poultry and pig raising requirements of the State are about 300,000 bushels. The question of dockage has been a source of trouble to the scheme and it might be that the board will say, "We will not be bothered about this question, but will reject that quantity of wheat and throw it on the market." That would be a serious position for the State. The clause makes provision for the sale of wheat for the poultry industry. If we pass a measure which fixes a price, we should not defeat that object by permitting a large quantity of wheat to be thrown on the market. A large proportion of the wheat subject to dockage was turned into f.a.q. wheat and used for milling purposes. The board, however, could throw it on one side and let it go anywhere.

Hon. T. Walker: Where will it be altered if you omit these words?

Mr. PICKERING: The operations of the clause are enumerated.

Hon. T. Walker: The clause is confined already.

Mr. PICKERING: No, the clause says, "generally."

Hon. T. Walker: That means in the particular cases mentioned.

Mr. PICKERING: I am still of opinion that the words should be struck out.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I support the amendment. If the same quantity of wheat was re-conditioned as on previous occasions, there would be a chance of the millers getting it.

The Minister for Agriculture: The millers will not have any opportunity to get it.

Mr. HICKMOTT: If there is as much as 850,000 bushels of wheat rejected or subject to dockage, and the quantity required for poultry farmers is 300,000 bushels, surely there is a big margin.

Hon. T. Walker: It will be the responsibility of the board and the Minister.

Mr. HICKMOTT: The amendment will make the clause serve the purpose for which the Bill is designed and both sides of the House favour pooling.

Hon. P. Collier: You have not read the clause right through or you would have seen that what you desire is provided for.

Mr. HICKMOTT: Too much power is placed in the Minister's hands.

Hon. P. Collier: Cannot you trust him?

Mr. HICKMOTT: It should be obligatory for the wheat to go through the proper channel.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not too late in the season to experience a repetition of what happened in 1915-16, when the whole of the wheat in the districts north of Moora to Northampton was smitten with red rust and crops which should have gone 30 to 40 bushels went only a couple of bags. We want special conditions to meet such circumstances. I think the member for Sussex overstated the case when he said that practically one-tenth of the crop in a normal year like last year was under standard.

Mr. Pickering: Subject to dockage.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is to say that one bushel in every 10 was of inferior grade.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That may have been brought about by bad farming.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member is not on safe ground when he talks about good or bad farming.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I mean that it might have been smutty or dirty wheat.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think that the words will serve any purpose whatever.

Mr. LAMBERT: Some members of the Country Party apparently are not satisfied with the pool but want to further tie the pool up and have a greater grip on the consumers of this State. According to the member for Sussex, not only f.a.q. wheat but also inferior wheat fit only for poultry purposes should be subject to the pool.

The Minister for Mines: All wheat of less than fair average quality is not necessarily unfit for human consumption.

Mr. LAMBERT: Quite so, but it would appear from the remarks of the member for Sussex that he would have the grade of wheat fit only for poultry purposes subject to the rigid control of the pool.

Mr. DURACK: It does not matter whether the words are retained or deleted, the Minister will still exercise his discretion both particularly and generally. I cannot see the object of the member for Sussex in moving the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (c) be struck out.

This will probably attain the object which the member for Sussex sought in moving his amendment. There is a good deal of uneasiness in the country as to the attitude the pool will adopt during the coming harvest with regard to the inferior wheat or wheat subject to dockage, and it would reassure farmers if the Minister announced that he intends the pool to deal with all wheat, and particularly that of lower standard, on the same lines as in past years.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What reason have you to assume he will act differently?

Mr. JOHNSTON: One reason is the statement made by Mr. Sutton that during the coming harvest the pool may not deal with docked wheat at all.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: What will you do with it?

Hon. T. Walker: If you omit this sub-clause, the inferior wheat must go into the pool and thus lessen the general average.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Let it all go into the pool and let the pool deal with it as in previous years.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Where will you sell it?

Mr. JOHNSTON: We are giving the Minister power to eliminate from the operations of the pool the wheat below the standard fit for milling into flour for consumption in Australia. In other words, we are going to permit the millers to mill inferior wheat provided they export the product. Western Australian wheat has a pretty good reputation abroad. The flour which was recently condemned in South Africa was not made from West Australian wheat, and the sooner this is known throughout the Commonwealth the better. I am opposed to giving the Minister power to sell inferior wheat provided that it is exported in the shape of flour.

Mr. O'Loghlen: You do not trust him?

Mr. JOHNSTON: There is no need to trust him. We have had too many cries in late years of "Trust the Minister." If we always trusted Ministers, what would be the use of considering this legislation at all?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You want him to pay 3s. a bushel for inferior wheat straight-away.

Mr. JOHNSTON: No, it is all subject to dockage. I want the operations of the pool to be conducted during the coming harvest on the same lines as in past years. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment, which is not moved in any spirit of hostility to either the Government or the Bill.

Mr. PICKERING: If the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin is negatived, shall we then be able to move to amend the paragraph?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I desire to move that the words "in Australia" be struck out of the paragraph.

Mr. JOHNSTON: May I move an amendment for the striking out of all the words of the paragraph except the last two, "in Australia"?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Such an amendment could not be accepted. There would be no sense in those two words if the remainder of the paragraph were deleted. The member for Pilbara should move an amendment on the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. SAMPSON: Is there any occasion to alter this clause at all, seeing that paragraph (c) affords the criterion by which wheat shall be judged?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I see no necessity whatever for the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin. Clause 6 provides to whom the Minister may sell wheat. I disagree entirely with what the hon. member has said regarding Mr. Sut-

ton's statements on this measure. My opinion of Mr. Sutton is that he would not commit such an indiscretion as to make authoritative declarations concerning legislation not yet enacted. Inferior wheat might be reconditioned and brought up to standard, and then sold by the Minister to millers.

Mr. MUNSIE: I rise to inquire what will be the position regarding the amendment indicated by the member for Pilbara after the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin has been dealt with? The member for Pilbara is possibly under the impression that you, Sir, have accepted his indicated amendment as an amendment on the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin. If that is so, the amendment on the amendment should be put first; otherwise the Committee will not have an opportunity of dealing with the motion of the member for Pilbara.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I think the words "in Australia" should be struck out, more for the sake of appearances than anything else. Dealing with the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin would prevent my amendment being dealt with.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like the member for Williams-Narrogin to withdraw his amendment, so that the amendment of the member for Pilbara may be dealt with first.

Mr. JOHNSTON: But will you, Sir, give me a chance to move my amendment afterwards?

Mr. MUNSIE: It seems to me that if the member for Pilbara moves his amendment and it is carried, the Chairman should then put the paragraph as amended. The member for Williams-Narrogin can then have the whole paragraph struck out, provided he secures a majority in favour of that course.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the member for Williams-Narrogin desirous of having his amendment put now, or will he withdraw it for the time being?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am willing to withdraw my amendment for the present if the statement about the whole paragraph being put afterwards is correct.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. JOHNSTON: In that case I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I move an amendment—

That after "for" in line 4 "human" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I move a further amendment—

That in line 4 "in Australia" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Paragraph (c) as amended put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7—Authority for agency agreement:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I should like a ruling from the Chair. In all previous Wheat Marketing Bills the provision has been "the agreement is hereby ratified and confirmed." In the Bill now before us we have the words "in the terms of the draft agreement." I want to know whether the schedule, to be amended, must be amended in this clause.

The CHAIRMAN: It is quite open to the hon. member to move any amendment.

Hon. T. Walker: The point is, can the schedule be amended under this clause, or must we wait until we come to the schedule?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Have we power to alter that draft agreement when we come to the schedule?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 1 be struck out.

This subclause gives the Minister power to enter into an agreement with the Westralian Farmers Ltd. for the acquiring of the wheat. Parliament has no right to make a present to any one trading corporation of a sum of at least £15,000.

Mr. Pickering: You are beginning to believe that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, otherwise I would not move the amendment.

Mr. Sampson: What about the cost of administration?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Under the Bill we shall be duplicating it. The Bill provides for a board, with a staff, to be the administrators of the wheat scheme. The board has to appoint certain officers to see that the acquiring agents carry out the agreement. On the second reading I pointed out that before the Royal Commission the manager of the Wheat Scheme, Mr. Keys, a man of wide practical experience, an officer who has given every satisfaction to the Government, one whose evidence can be accepted as thoroughly reliable, said that if the wheat board did the acquiring work it would mean a saving of approximately £15,000, based on a 10 million bushel crop. Is there any necessity for two managers? What a storm of protest there would be if the Premier were to appoint two secretaries!

Mr. Sampson: What makes you think this amount is profit?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Because under the agreement, it can be nothing else than profit. Here is an extract from the evidence given by Mr. Keys before the Royal Commission on the Wheat Marketing Scheme—

4512. Does this include handling the wheat as well?—That is only our cost in the office for issuing certificates. The amount we pay sub-agents would be the same whether we did it or whether it was done through some company.

The Westralian Farmers Ltd., as soon as they get their acquiring agency, appoint sub-agents to act for them at the sidings.

Mr. Sampson: Using the co-operative companies.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Where co-operative companies exist, yes; in other places outsiders are appointed. It would make no difference, except that the sub-agents might get a little more money from the Government than they get from the Westralian Farmers Ltd. However, the evidence given by Mr. Keys continued as follows:—

This is naturally cheaper than any outside company can do it for, because we have a certain staff and there would not be any necessity to increase it. We also have inspectors, and it would only mean the employment of a couple of additional inspectors to thoroughly check the country sub-agents and see they were doing their work in a proper manner.

4513. This would mean the weighing, sampling, and issuing of certificates?—Issuing certificates only. We do the other work at the present time. We do the checking at the depots now.

4514. If you acquired the wheat yourselves, you would have to do the work at the siding?—The sub-agents would do that, and the rate of commission would be the same as they would receive from anyone else.

4515. Would the penny you are paying now include the issuing of certificates?—No. The Westralian Farmers get five-eighths—one farthing plus one farthing plus one-eighth; that represents what we pay the Westralian Farmers, except that they have to do a certain amount of checking at depots. We already do that, so that we would not have to do it twice.

Mr. Pickering: It is an advantage having a double check.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, because in many instances the Westralian Farmers Ltd. merely took the check from the Government. In one year they received from the Wheat Pool £4,000 for doing £1,000 worth of check work. To-day we are paying two managerial staffs, two sets of inspectors, two secretaries, and two accountants, where one of each would do.

Mr. Johnston: We are handling it cheaper than any other State in the Commonwealth.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not like to hear the hon. member talking through his neck. I think I know as much about this as any other member, for while on the Commission, without pay, I spent my time day after day for weeks on end investigating the subject. Before the Westralian Farmers got the acquiring monopoly, the agents used to be paid extra for care-taking the wheat.

Mr. A. Thomson: They did not pay their sub-agents.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Apparently the Westralian Farmers Ltd. did not do so either. The pool paid for the care-taking of the wheat. If the wheat was damaged, the acquiring agent was responsible. But when the Westralian Farmers Ltd. got the monopoly the Government took the responsibility, and so the handling of the wheat cost less. But

we are told that, with a probable fall in the market, the wheat-growers have a hard time in front of them, and that they will not be able to reduce the cost to the consumer. If in these circumstances the wheat-growers do not want this £15,000, it can be allocated to a reduction of the price of bread. Are we justified in handing over to a firm—

Mr. Pickering: A reputable firm.

Mr. O'Loghlen: A political firm.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Apparently it is almost a sacrilege to say anything at all derogatory to the Westralian Farmers Ltd. Members of the Country Party do not like it at all. Are we justified at the present time in handing over the acquiring agency to one company when, on the evidence of an expert, the board can carry out that work and effect a saving of £15,000 to £20,000?

The Premier: Do you think it could be done?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do.

The Premier: I do not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am confident that it could be done. If we employ the Westralian Farmers Ltd. it will be tantamount to employing two managers where one would do.

Mr. Pickering: Then you would add to the unemployed trouble.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not believe in throwing money away for nothing. The time has arrived when the board should do the work of acquiring. The members of the board have to be paid. I am not satisfied by a long way that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. have handled the wheat to the best advantage. They complain among themselves. To-night we have heard something about the dockages. Who make the dockages? The acquiring agents.

Mr. A. Thomson: Which they had to do.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course; if they had not done so they would have had to stand the responsibility. I believe that the farmer would get a far better deal from the board than from the Westralian Farmers Ltd. The board will see that the farmers' interests are protected, whereas under the present system the Westralian Farmers first of all look after their own interests.

Mr. Hickmott: Mr. Keys does the dock-ing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He does not see the wheat.

Mr. Hickmott: He has samples in his office.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course samples are sent in. If I continued that line of argument, I might say that the Westralian Farmers wanted not only Mr. Keys' job but the Minister's job and the Under Secretary's job with regard to signing cheques. The Commission, however, recommended otherwise. On the evidence of Mr. Keys, we are not justified in making a present of at least £15,000 to one company.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think that Mr. Keys to-day would qualify the statement he made some time ago, in view

of what is in front of him.' Both the management and the advisory board have stated that the acquiring work of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. has been well performed, and endorse their re-appointment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They could not have done otherwise.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If there was any justification for giving them the sole acquiring agency during the past five seasons, surely the same justification exists to-day when we have to apply ourselves to the changed conditions of a State pool. The management of the scheme will have a lot of additional work to do apart from arranging throughout the country districts a new organisation such as the Westralian Farmers Ltd. have in existence to-day. I have heard no complaints from the shareholders regarding the acquiring agency, and if a ballot could be taken, I am satisfied that a large majority would favour the Westralian Farmers Ltd. continuing the acquiring business. This arrangement enables the Government to assist the co-operative movement.

Hon. T. Walker: There is co-operation and co-operative monopoly.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It has been claimed that the Government of New South Wales have done more for co-operation than the Government of any other State. In Melbourne a little while ago I proclaimed that the Government of Western Australia had done more to assist the co-operative movement than any other Government.

Hon. T. Walker: It would be co-operative if the Government or the board did it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In view of the additional work which will be thrust upon the scheme, I hope the Committee will agree to retain the Westralian Farmers Ltd. as acquiring agents.

Mr. TROY: I prefer to speak for myself in this matter. I support the amendment. The Minister argued that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. were entitled to the acquiring agency because they had operated during the last five years.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said there was no need for a change now.

Mr. TROY: In my opinion and in the opinion of the great majority of the people of the State, the only reason why the Westralian Farmers Ltd. are getting this special privilege is because of the influence of the Country Party in this House. But for this the Westralian Farmers Ltd. would receive no consideration above other institutions of the same kind. I see no reason why the commercial side of a political organisation should be given a special concession by Parliament, as a result of which they would enjoy advantages over other sections of the community. If Dalgety's or Elder, Smith's or any other trading corporation had in Parliament the influence by representation which the Country Party have, that organisation and not the Westralian Farmers Ltd. might get the special treatment. Such is the influence and

the tendency of politics in Western Australia during the last five years that there has been introduced a principle which has never before operated in Australian politics. During the long time I have been in Parliament, I have heard much about the Tammanyism of the Trades Hall and of spoils to the victors, but there was no principle of legislation enacted by the Labour Party which ever gave the privileges and concessions sought to be given by this Bill. It is a very bad principle and if continued it means that any Government would be justified in giving to their supporters special consideration of the same character. I speak as one who trades with the Westralian Farmers Ltd.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are a shareholder.

Hon. T. Walker: He cannot help it.

Mr. TROY: I have no desire to see the pool destroyed; I have no desire to return to the old methods, but it is not right in a Bill, which will involve the utilisation of the people's money to finance the harvest, to give special consideration to one body because it has political influence in this chamber.

Mr. Hickmott: Did not the Westralian Farmers Ltd. get it in open competition?

Hon. P. Collier: No, it was a monopoly given by this House.

Mr. TROY: In 1918 the other companies who previously operated put in a price lower than that of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., and the Minister said he would not consider it because the other companies were out to destroy the Westralian Farmers Ltd. As if this State existed for the Westralian Farmers Ltd. and nobody else! The inference was that the Government existed for the advancement of the interests of the Westralian Farmers Ltd.

The Premier: It is all a question of price, is it not?

Mr. TROY: No; this Bill gives no other person or company an opportunity of tendering. Where does the question of price come in? I am surprised that a Bill of this character should be supported by the Premier, who has so often spoken of "spoils to the victor," and "Tammany corruption."

The Premier: I have not.

Mr. TROY: From this side of the House. I support the amendment moved by the member for North-East Fremantle. We on this side, at all events, should consider the principle of equal rights for all. I object to the Westralian Farmers alone being given this right. It is purely a political organisation.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am surprised at the opposition that has been raised to the farmers' own co-operative company continuing to do work which has been so well and so cheaply done for the last four years.

Hon. T. Walker: You mean the old farmers?

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Westralian Farmers' Co-operative companies owned by the farmers of Western Australia.

Hon. T. Walker: The farmers are owned by the company.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am surprised that the hon. member, who is a wheat grower, should object to the growers' own company handling their produce. Who has a better right to do this work than they?

Hon. T. Walker: The people's own co-operative company.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Under the method whereby the work is carried out by the Westralian Farmers and kindred co-operative companies, we have an ideal system of co-operation. I resent the imputation of political bias in this matter. The Westralian Farmers belong to a co-operative federation, which has no association or affiliation with any political party. The industrial co-operative companies such as the Narrogin Industrial Co-operative Company and that at Collie and other places, are affiliated with the Westralian Farmers, and consist entirely of workers. They are all part of the co-operative federation which is—

Mr. JOHNSTON: Free from any political party.

Hon. T. Walker: You say that without a smile.

Mr. JOHNSTON: No doubt members of the Collie co-operative company, in their individual capacity, support labour, while the farmers support their own party, but anything the farmers are doing in that way they have learnt to do from the organising example of hon. members opposite. We find that the advisory board have recommended the renewal of the agreement with the Westralian Farmers, and Mr. Keys drew up the draft agreement.

Hon. P. Collier: It was drawn up under instructions.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We can say with pride that our wheat has been handled better and cheaper than in any of the Eastern States. There have been in Western Australia no wheat scandals such as were associated with New South Wales. On the other hand we have had efficient administration. For the past four years our wheat has been handled for five-eighths of a penny, which is more than a half-penny less than the cost in the other States. This is entirely due to the fact that the farmers have their own co-operative companies to do this work.

Hon. T. Walker: Not entirely. It is due to the extreme simplicity of our railway transport.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the Westralian Farmers and kindred co-operative companies had not been in existence I am certain we would have had to pay at least five-eighths of a penny per bushel more for the handling of the wheat. The difficulties in this State for cheap and efficient handling are greater than they are in the Eastern States where the cost of handling exceeded ours. We have smaller quantities of wheat received at sidings and more unattended railway sidings, and the areas over which settlement and wheat growing extend are more scattered than they are in the wheat growing districts of the other States. The saving that the co-operative movement has meant to the growers in com-

parison with the Eastern States represents a sum of £25,000; that is to say, the farmers of Western Australia are that much better off than they would have been if their wheat had been handled at the same price as was charged in the other States. Now that the co-operative movement has been established, and that the farmers have been shown to have had a fair deal, it is all very well for someone else to say the handling could have been done cheaper. Through the industry and self-sacrifice of those concerned the growers and other producers in the State have received a great benefit.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I regret I cannot support what the hon. member styles "this ideal form of co-operation." It may be said for the hon. member, having regard to the fact that he was using typewritten notes, that he has dutifully carried out his brief for the Westralian Farmers Ltd. I take up the same attitude to-night as I have done in the past. This trading and commercial concern would never have been able to secure the sole agency for the handling of wheat had it not been for the political side of the movement, and the influence that was exercised through members of the Country Party in this Chamber. This has created a very vicious principle which we used to believe was confined to America. The fact that this political power practically controls the life of the Government and that it has secured concessions by virtue of that political support, represents the introduction of a bad principle in our public life. What would have been said by members opposite and by the Press, if the Labour Government had enabled the Trades Hall to embark upon a co-operative concern, and to secure a monopoly of a certain trade through the agency of labour representatives in the House? This commercial concern has secured the agency for four years because of the political influence it has had in Parliament. The agency should never have been given in this way, and I am going to endeavour to deprive the company of it. The comparison made by the member for Williams-Narrogin as to the difference in cost of handling is of no value. Like must be compared with like. We must be assured that the conditions in this State and the other States were similar. We know, however, that the conditions under which the work was done in this State were not similar to those which prevailed in the other States.

Mr. Johnston: That comparison, I believe, was for the same services.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member adds that as an afterthought, in order to make good the comparison. Without doubting the hon. member's integrity, or honesty, or truthfulness, I nevertheless decline to accept his assurance. The question is not whether the company have handled the harvest in an efficient manner during past years, or whether their handling has resulted in savings of twenty odd thousand pounds to the growers; the question is, would this Parliament be jus-

tified in handing out £15,000 over and above the necessary cost of handling the harvest, merely in order to benefit a company, when we have had it given in evidence, on the authority of the qualified experts in control of the pool, that the work for which the company were paid £25,000 could have been done by the Government for £10,000? Let me ask hon. members apart from those who are politically tied to vote for anything and everything that may be in favour of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., what is the justification for handing over £15,000 to the Westralian Farmers, even though it be the wheat-growers' money? It is not sufficient to say, as the Minister for Agriculture has said, that the wheat-growers themselves are satisfied. After all, that is a matter of opinion; and I do not know that every farmer has had an opportunity of recording his opinion on the subject. But, even if the farmers were satisfied to pay this year the amount they have paid in the past for handling, the Committee still have the responsibility of saying whether this £15,000, if the farmers disclaim it, should not be applied towards reducing the cost of wheat for local consumption. In that way the price of bread could be lowered without the profits of the wheat-growers being affected. There is no justification for throwing away £15,000 just to keep a company afloat. An hon. member has stated that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. last year made only £13,000, from which it is to be inferred that the wheat-acquiring contract has been the means of keeping the company afloat. I shall vote for the amendment, and I shall always oppose the wretched principle of combining politics and business with a view to ruining other traders or driving them out of business. The company should stand or fall on their merits as a trading concern in the open market. If there is anything in the principle of co-operation, as maintained by the member for Williams-Narrogin, they ought to be able to survive in those conditions. No business concern has the right to survive merely by means of political influence in this Chamber. The member for Williams-Narrogin ought not to tell the Committee that this concern is non-political and not in any way influenced by a political party. He should tell that sort of thing to people who do not know him as we here know him. The men who run that trading concern are the men who run the political machine also. They are getting special consideration because they exercise political influence in this Chamber.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Every session we have the same diatribe against the Westralian Farmers Ltd. from the Leader of the Opposition and the member for North-East Fremantle. Speaking as one who for a short period acted as a wheat acquiring agent, I can assure those hon. members that the average acquiring agent is not very anxious to resume the work under similar conditions to

those which have obtained hitherto. The contention of the Leader of the Opposition that the conditions of handling here were not the same as those in the Eastern States might lead members to believe that conditions in the East were more favourable. Residents of our country districts, however, know that that is not the case. Our farming districts are extremely scattered. Prior to the Westralian Farmers obtaining what has been termed the monopoly of handling Western Australian wheat, it was quite a common thing to see three or four different wheat acquiring agents represented at the one siding, without sufficient work for the representatives to do. By eliminating that competition the Westralian Farmers were enabled to reduce handling costs to $\frac{1}{8}$ d.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the other companies were not allowed the opportunity of doing so.

Mr. A. THOMSON: No company had a monopoly.

Mr. Simons: No company should have a monopoly.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I agree that under certain conditions monopolies are harmful. But who is more capable of looking after the farmer's wheat than the farmer himself?

Hon. T. Walker: It is not the farmer's wheat; it is the people's wheat; the people pay for it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have yet to learn that members of this Chamber have ever paid one brass farthing towards the upkeep of any wheat pool either in Western Australia or in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Munsie: The farmers would not have had a wheat pool at all but for the backing of the State and of the Commonwealth; and you know it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That statement is perfectly correct; but is not the hon. member aware that the wheat pool represented protection not only to the farmers but also to the large body of consumers?

Mr. Munsie: In what way? By their being charged 9s. a bushel?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Could the growers reasonably be expected to produce wheat if there was no sale for it?

Mr. O'Loughlen: The orchardists produced fruit without there being any sale for it, and the Agricultural Department advised them to cut their trees back.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are not dealing with fruit, but with wheat. The strenuous opposition of the member for North-East Fremantle and the Leader of the Opposition year after year to this agreement with the Westralian Farmers Ltd. is, in my opinion, not justified, having regard to the peculiar circumstances which have existed and which to-day exist. The Leader of the Opposition has stated that £15,000 can be saved to the farmers on the handling of this season's wheat, and that if the farmers' representatives will not take the opportunity of making that saving for the benefit of the wheat-growers, he is determined to make it for the

benefit of the local consumers of wheat. The statements quoted by both those hon. members are from the evidence given by the manager of the wheat scheme in Western Australia, not in 1921, but in 1918.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What difference does that make?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Is there no difference in the conditions now compared with 1918? Have there been no increases in wages, for instance?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, there have, but any increase in wages is provided for under this Bill.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I presume that the people in the agricultural areas have to pay more than in the past. Therefore, the statement that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. will make £15,000 is, after all, only a statement made by those hon. members.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is based on evidence on oath.

Mr. A. THOMSON: On evidence two years old.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That does not matter.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is admitted that there are different conditions to-day.

Mr. O'Loughlen: And different conditions are provided in the Bill.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Minister in introducing the Bill made use of a statement somewhat to the following effect: "The experience of the board and of the present manager was that in their opinion it would be expedient to renew the agreement with the Westralian Farmers Ltd."

Mr. O'Loughlen: If you were a member of the board, what would you do?

Mr. A. THOMSON: I would be guided by the experience of the past four or five years.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You would do what Mr. Baxter did; you would do what you were told.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Members have made various suggestions that members of the Country Party are under the control of the Westralian Farmers Ltd.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You will not vote for this amendment.

Mr. Pickering: We do not believe in it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: If I thought it was in the interests of the producers or in the interests of the farmers of my district, I would vote as I thought fit.

Hon. T. Walker: You would do what you were told.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have always voted as I thought fit. I am not a shareholder in the Westralian Farmers Ltd., nor have I been approached by any representative of that firm on the question of how I will vote on this Bill.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You have a good deal of Scotch caution, you know.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I endeavour at all times to tell the truth when speaking in this Chamber. I ask hon. members to accept the statement that I have not been approached by any member of the Westralian Farmers Ltd.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is not necessary.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have not been asked by them to vote for the continuance of the system. I believe it is in the interests of the producers that the farmers co-operative company should have the handling of the wheat, for they can do it more efficiently. There is one point that has not been stressed; this company is composed entirely of farmers, and every wheat farmer who is a shareholder in the company—

Hon. P. Collier: That is why you are not a member of it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Any shareholder will benefit by any profits made by the company. Any profits made by an outside company would go elsewhere. When the Leader of the Opposition was speaking on the Address-in-reply he said he was in favour of a wheat pool, and he expressed the hope that the farmers would never have to go back to the days when they were controlled by private buyers, when they would have to accept 3s. or 3s. 6d. per bushel. The Leader of the Opposition commented upon the enormous amount of money made by one gentleman who had died worth practically a million, the whole of which had been made out of the farmers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is the preferential treatment the Westralian Farmers Ltd. are receiving of which we complain.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Here is a company composed of farmers, and all profits made go back to the farmers.

Mr. Troy: Is McGibbon a farmer?

Mr. A. THOMSON: He is a farmer.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What about the tender put in originally and the preferential treatment accorded this one firm?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If there is any profit made by the Westralian Farmers Ltd., who is more entitled to make it and benefit from it than the farmers who grow the wheat? I trust that the Committee will not accept the amendment moved by the member for North-East Fremantle. He has moved practically the same amendment every year. I trust the new members of this Chamber will accept the statement of the Minister for Agriculture and also accept my assurances that there is no political control involved in the matter. I am one of those referred to by the Leader of the Opposition as "the political machine." On my word of honour, I have not been approached by the company, nor have I been influenced one way or the other.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is not necessary to say that.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is wrong for members to endeavour to mislead the Committee.

Hon. T. Walker: That is an unfair accusation.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is fair.

Hon. T. Walker: No one has endeavoured to mislead the Committee.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Yes, there has been that attempt.

Hon. P. Collier: Who endeavoured to mislead the Committee?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The hon. member did.

Hon. P. Collier: I ask that the statement be withdrawn.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I withdraw the statement, and say that the Leader of the Opposition endeavoured to lead members to believe that members of the Country Party were under the domination of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. and were told what they had to do.

Hon. T. Walker: So you are.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That statement is incorrect.

Mr. Troy: You are under their control; you know you are.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We are not.

Mr. Troy: You are mere puppets.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I trust the Committee will reject the amendment and agree to the clause as it stands.

Hon. T. WALKER: This declaration of purity respecting the members of the Country Party is absolutely unnecessary.

Mr. A. Thomson: Why make the statement, then?

Hon. T. WALKER: Why all this effort to prove how good, sweet, pure and virtuous is the member for Katanning? We took that for granted. He is an honourable man, and so are they all. Therefore, to be always protesting about their honesty and so forth, is apart from the question. It seems to be most unbecoming of the mighty dignity of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party. I am astonished that no one has really addressed himself to the amendment moved by the member for North-East Fremantle. The issue is a plain one: dual control or single management, one expense or duplication of expenses. What we have before us is evidence given by the manager of the wheat scheme in 1918 and it has not deteriorated in value since that time. It is the testimony of that officer that the board could do this work without the assistance of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., and that the work could be done efficiently. No one has addressed himself to that point. If that is the position, why bring in the Westralian Farmers at all? If the company can be dispensed with and money saved for the farmers, why should we not do so? Common sense would dictate that we should do without this unnecessary addendum to the work of acquiring wheat. That being so, we must look for some other motive for the attitude of the members of the Country Party. Why vote and argue for the Westralian Farmers Ltd., if work which is costly can be dispensed with and something like £15,000 or £20,000 per pool saved to the farmers?

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not think it costs that much. There must be some service in return.

Hon. T. WALKER: Of course there is some service, but the board could do that service without the Westralian Farmers Ltd. coming into the matter at all. Under the measure, the board itself will be more ex-

pensive than heretofore, and that board should control the pool. Why bring in the under-study company which is absolutely unnecessary? It is simply duplicating the work. The inference to be drawn from the attitude of members of the Country Party, I regret to say, is that there is some hidden influence at work.

Mr. Pickering: The unseen hand.

Hon. T. WALKER: Exactly. There is the wire-puller, the power behind the throne, that which has created the party that is the directing agency and the acquiring agency of the Government benches. That is really the source of the defence of this policy. With considerable suavity and cunning, it was argued by the member for Williams-Narrogin that the Committee should support this provision because the company was carrying out the principle of co-operation. But is it not a better co-operation to have the whole State co-operating than to have the farmers co-operating for themselves alone? I object to the work being done by a private company when the Government can do it for less money. Everybody in the community is concerned in the success of the pool, and therefore it is the people's pool. There is another point which betrays the advocacy of those speaking on behalf of the farmers: they want the monopoly for one special firm.

Mr. Pickering: That is not original.

Hon. T. WALKER: But in every instance where it is done a wrong is created. It is pure favouritism.

Mr. Corboy: Class legislation.

Hon. T. WALKER: Worse than that, it is legislation in the interests of those who are making profits by it. The whole influence of Parliament is to be used to keep in existence this wealthy corporation.

Mr. Johnston: It is not very-wealthy yet.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is the point. Take from it this monopoly, and it is practically bankrupt. This monopoly is keeping it alive. We are to foster it in that way by our votes in Parliament because it is the farmer's own.

Mr. Troy: McGibbon's own!

Hon. T. WALKER: And Murray's own, and because of that we are to use all the machinery of the State and the people's money and the people's credit in order to keep it alive. Nobody else is to be allowed to compete with it. Why? Because the party at the head of the management of this institution is the same party as is at the head of the management of the Primary Producers' Association, the political party which is asking that this monopoly shall be retained. I object to the bolstering up of this institution, to the swelling of the heads of its officials any more than they are swollen now. I object to giving them the power to coerce legislation and drag Parliament at the chariot wheels of this monopoly, created for political ends and hypocritically using political and social cries to fetter the untrammelled judgment of representatives of the people in this Chamber.

The PREMIER: I do not quite know what it is all about.

Mr. O'Loughlin: No, you have been asleep for nearly an hour.

The PREMIER: It is merely a matter of costs, after all. When the pool was started the member for North-East Fremantle was in office. He knows just what happened then.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: All wheat buyers save one had an opportunity.

The PREMIER: No, not all. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that trade and politics will not mix, but I do not agree with anything he said against this agreement. I did not know that members of the Country Party had been asked by the Westralian Farmers Ltd. to support the agreement. I have not been asked to do so. I had no hand in eliminating the other agents four years ago. I was in charge of the wheat pool in 1916, and I had some experience of the acquiring agents, including the Westralian Farmers Ltd. What we have to consider is the question of costs to the farmer.

Mr. Troy: Why not call for tenders? You might get the work done more cheaply.

The PREMIER: At one time we had a number of acquiring agents, but the work was not done as cheaply then as now.

Mr. Corboy: Why not give your own officers a chance?

The PREMIER: We have tried other means. We have had other agents.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And they gave every satisfaction.

The PREMIER: Yes, but the work was not as cheaply done as it is now.

Mr. Troy: They did not have a monopoly.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They offered to do it for a farthing less.

The PREMIER: If we are to employ some agent to do the work, and if the Westralian Farmers Ltd. who have done it for the last four years will do it as cheaply as any other agent, then since it is the farmers' money we are using we ought to employ the farmers company.

Mr. Troy: I am a wheat farmer. They are not my company.

The PREMIER: But they are a company supported by a majority of the wheat-growers. We are paying farmers' money for this service.

Mr. Troy: We are not. It is the State's money.

The PREMIER: It passes to these people not from the Treasury but from the wheat scheme. The Treasury has never contributed one penny to the wheat scheme.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not cut it down a finely as that. You will be wrong.

The PREMIER: The Treasury have not paid one penny to the cost of this scheme. Some one must be paid to do the work. We have a co-operative company owned by the farmers a majority of whom are in it. Why should not this company be appointed to do the work so long as their charges compare favourably with those of others? The charges of this company are lower than those of other agents

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Because you carried certain responsibilities, you had the risk.

The PREMIER: After all, what does it amount to? I do not know why the hon. member moved the amendment. If he objects to the cost of the scheme, the proper thing to do is to refuse payment when we come to the schedule.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Westralian Farmers Ltd. cannot do the work for much less than they demand, but we can.

The PREMIER: Not a farthing cheaper. The costs to-day are greater than they were when the hon. member was chairman of the Royal Commission. It is all a matter of cost. It is the farmer's money, the farmer's wheat and the farmer's business. If the farmer is to pay, all we are concerned about is to see that he does not pay more than he should. If the member for North-East Fremantle can prove that the costs are too high, let him move to reduce them when we reach the schedule.

Mr. PICKERING: The object of the amendment is to give the handling of the wheat over to the board controlling the pool.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: To save two sets of salaries.

Mr. PICKERING: Where would the board get the different agencies to carry on the work?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The same as the Westralian Farmers have.

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member advocates that the system built up at the cost of the Westralian Farmers should be utilised by the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Or they could get the local agents they had previously.

Mr. PICKERING: They could not. The Westralian Farmers Ltd. have built up their organisation at considerable cost. I regret that the member for Kanowna should gloat over the anticipated downfall of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. He was unjust. It is the one co-operative company which has won through in Western Australia.

Mr. Troy: It has not.

Mr. PICKERING: It has up to the present. There is one other co-operative company which has won through—that at Collic.

Mr. Wilson: That stands on its own, too.

Mr. PICKERING: I admit that it is a very fine company, and it is my earnest desire that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. should win through likewise.

Mr. Corboy: Not on privilege.

Mr. PICKERING: It is not a privilege to let a co-operative company handle the wheat grown by their own shareholders; it is a right.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You compel everyone else to trade there.

Mr. PICKERING: The idea of suggesting that the figures of three years ago would form an accurate basis for the cost of handling the forthcoming season's wheat is ridiculous. Those figures might have applied at that

time, but we have now the knowledge and experience of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. to work on, which indicate that the pool and the handling have been conducted in this State more cheaply than in any other part of Australia. It would not be in the best interests of the State to take this work from the Westralian Farmers Ltd. The board will have additional and greater responsibilities during the coming season in that they will have to deal with the selling and shipping of wheat.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They do now.

Mr. PICKERING: Their responsibilities will be greater. It is absurd to suggest that the board could undertake the additional work of handling the wheat. I was surprised that the member for North-East Fremantle should have advocated a change of policy which would at once increase the difficulties of unemployment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have advocated this for three years.

Mr. PICKERING: The position was not so grave then as it is to-day. The handling of the wheat by the Westralian Farmers Ltd. does not involve any increase in cost this season, but to take the business away from that organisation will mean increasing the number of unemployed, and the responsibility of the unemployed, we were told this afternoon, rests upon the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: What a spectacle it would be to see Murray and McGibbon marching down the street with the unemployed!

Mr. PICKERING: I would be very sorry to see gentlemen of their standing and experience placed in such an ignominious position. Members of the Opposition should credit the Country Party with the purity of motive which actuates themselves. I trust that members will not be led by the arguments of the Opposition and possibly do a very great and serious injury to a company who have proved to be of considerable benefit to the farming community of Western Australia.

Mr. SIMONS: I support the amendment on the ground that the preferable way to handle such a big service would be by State control. Under the Bill it will be necessary to have practically two sets of Government officers, one to check the operations of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., whereas the Government officers would be capable of running the whole business. If we cannot run it on the lines of State control, the next fairest thing is to throw this privilege into the market for open competition. It is an unsound principle to give any concern a monopoly of a big utility such as this represents. We are building up the Westralian Farmers Ltd. by Government aid to such an extent that in time to come it will grow more powerful than the Government itself. It is a danger which we should take every step to avert. This right will mean so much to the Westralian Farmers Ltd. in the way of goodwill, in that it will conscript

every farmer to do his business there, that the company ought to be glad to handle the business for nothing at all. They to-day are covering practically every activity known to commerce, selling every commodity from a packet of tacks to a traction engine, handling a shipping department on lines of commercial brokerage, and having a political department, the meetings of which are held in their own warehouse.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is wrong.

Mr. SIMONS: Will the hon. member deny that they held their last conference in the warehouse of the Westralian Farmers Ltd., just like a firm calling a meeting of commercial travellers to give them instructions for the next campaign?

Mr. A. Thomson: That statement is incorrect.

Mr. SIMONS: Will the hon. member deny that the meeting was held there?

Mr. A. Thomson: The annual conference of the farmers was held there.

Mr. SIMONS: At which every member of the Country Party attended, like so many commercial travellers, to receive their instructions. That is undeniable. We are now asked to give a big monopoly to one set of business men in Perth to the detriment of other business men who have big concerns to keep going.

Mr. A. Thomson: In the interests of the producers.

Mr. SIMONS: We should throw the privilege into the open market and let every firm have an opportunity to tender for the right. The value of the goodwill given to the Westralian Farmers Ltd. in this way is almost beyond computation.

Mr. MANN: I support the amendment, not because I think that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. have any political influence here or any influence over the Government, but on the score of economy. The board would be able to undertake the acquiring of wheat as well as its distribution and sale. I see no reason for paying out a sum of money unnecessarily, whether that sum be great or small. On the second reading, I said I had been told that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. showed a net profit of £26,000 for the year.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is all they got from the whole service.

Mr. MANN: Mr. Murray has written correcting me in that statement, and advising that the net profit was less than one-third of that amount. Accepting his statement as being correct, it represents a sum of £8,000 which I think could be saved by giving the work to the board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would save a duplication of cost as well.

Mr. MANN: At such a time as the present, we ought to seize every opportunity to exercise economy, and therefore I shall vote for the amendment.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	20

Majority against .. 1

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Simons
Mr. Collier	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Corbooy	Mr. Troy
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Heron	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willson
Mr. Mann	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Money
Mr. Boyland	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Broun	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Carter	Mr. Richardson
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davies	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Durack	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Mullany
Mr. H. K. Maley	(Teller.)
Sir James Mitchell	

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Price of wheat for local consumption:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1, line 4, the words "shall be based" be struck out and "subject as hereinafter shall be fixed" inserted in lieu.

The words "shall be based" are capable of too broad an interpretation. The Minister or the Committee could advise that the price for local consumption should be fixed having regard to the price in London without the actual parity being adopted, and could then say that the price was based upon that which was obtainable in London. I think it is the intention of the Minister to fix the price as it is ascertainable on the local equivalent to London parity. My amendment merely says this in specific terms.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would be better to report progress and have the suggested amendments placed on the Notice Paper, in which form they would be more intelligible to hon. members.

Mr. A. Thomson: I think so too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: My amendment is quite clear. Is it suggested that I am endeavouring to get an amendment through by subterfuge?

Mr. A. Thomson: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The words I speak of do not specifically tie down the Minister to fix the price on London parity as it is ascer-

tained. I want the clause to be definite and to say that the price shall be fixed. The reason why I seek the insertion of the words "subject as hereinafter provided" is that I propose to move a further amendment, namely to strike out in the next line the words "but with due regard to the prices to be charged by millers for the products of wheat," with a view to the insertion of words establishing a maximum price of 7s. and a minimum price of 5s. per bushel.

The PREMIER: I suggest that the better course would be to let the clause go as it is, for the present, and deal with it on re-committal.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I suggest that we now report progress, so that the Leader of the Opposition may have an opportunity of placing his amendment on the Notice Paper.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I regret that the amendment is not intelligible to members. It was drafted by the gentleman who drafted the Bill, namely the Solicitor General. It is not my fault that the amendment does not appear on the Notice Paper, since I asked the Solicitor General to have it placed there, and he said he would do so. I understand, however, that the Premier told the Solicitor General it was unnecessary.

The Premier: Well, the amendment is so easily understood.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is how it appears to me.

The PREMIER: When the Solicitor General asked me whether it was worth while printing an addendum to the Notice Paper for the purpose of this amendment, I said it was not worth while, as the amendment was so simple—a question of a maximum of 7s. and a minimum of 5s. per bushel for local consumption.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.36 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 21st September, 1921.

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

QUEENSLAND COLLIERY DISASTER.

Message in reply.

The PRESIDENT: I have to announce to hon. members that I have received the following telegram from the Premier of Queensland in answer to the telegram despatched by myself yesterday—

The President, Legislative Council.
Thanks for your wire respecting the appalling disaster at Mount Mulligan. (Signed)
Theodore, Premier.

QUESTION—ARBITRATION COURT CASES.

Hon. J. DUFFELL asked the Minister for Education: Will the Minister lay on the Table of the House a return showing—1, The number of cases brought before the Arbitration Court since the 1st of January, 1913. 2, The number of cases which resulted in an increase of wages, and the number in which increases were refused. 3, The number of cases in which the decisions of the Court were deemed unsatisfactory by the workers, and led to strikes or other action on their part. 4, The number of cases which were deemed unsatisfactory by the employers, and what action was taken by them in consequence. 5, The number and amount of fines inflicted by the Court on registered unions, and the amount received in respect of such fines.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied—While it is not usual to furnish such returns, if the hon. member will move for a return, and the House concurs, it will be furnished, excepting the information asked for in 3 and 4 in respect of which there are no official records from which the information can be compiled.

QUESTION—STATE RECEIVING HOME.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many children are there at