

up options on mines outside the property in which they are really operating. The money they spend on development such companies will be allowed to deduct from their profits in the same way as if it had been expended on their own particular mine. It is estimated that allowing this deduction to be made will involve a loss to the revenue of probably a couple of thousand pounds per annum. But the idea in taking the risk of that loss is to encourage companies to spend their money in developing new properties; and, undoubtedly, if by giving such encouragement even one additional good mine should be developed, it will pay the State for losing this £2,000 annually for a good many years to come. Clause 3 extends to companies generally an exemption from duty on interest on Western Australia Government security. This provision obtains also in the Land and Income Tax Act, but it was not inserted in the Dividend Duties Act, which was an omission. The consequences are that in respect of life insurance companies, many of whom have invested largely in Western Australian stocks, as the Dividend Duties Act now reads they would be liable to pay duty on the interest received from those investments, whereas those stocks have always been issued to them on the understanding that they were exempt from State Income Tax. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [10-1]: It was very interesting to hear the Minister's remarks on the encouragement to be given to the development of mining. It should have a very good effect. I congratulate the Government upon the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### In Committee.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Interest on Western Australian stock:

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: This should be inquired into. It is not a new provision?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I regret that I heard only the last portion of the Colonial Secretary's statement on the second reading. What does the clause mean?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To be candid, I am afraid it means that through a little hasty legislation last session, we did something which we had no intention of doing. Prior to the amendments passed last session, these companies came under the land and Income Tax Assessment Act. Under that Act their interest, derived from Western Australian Government debentures, was exempt from taxation. Then it was decided to place these companies under the Dividend Duties Act, and the necessary provision giving them exemption was not inserted. If the hon. member has the slightest doubt about the matter, we will report progress.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is important, and I should be glad if the leader of the House would postpone this.

[The Deputy President resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

## BILL—INCOME TAX.

### Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [10-10]: The Bill proposes, not to remedy an error, but to supply an omission from the Act of last year. Last year for the first time a definite method of calculating the taxation was adopted. The Bill is merely a short provision to put in the Act that method of calculation. It should have been done when the Act was passed, for in that Act the illustration will be of great convenience to taxpayers. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

House adjourned at 10-12 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 13th December, 1918.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4-30 p.m. and read prayers.

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

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT AND DEBATABLE MATTER.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [4-40]: When the Estimates of the Electoral Department were being discussed the leader of the Opposition raised a question in connection with certain photographs of premises, and I promised to get some information from the Chief Electoral Officer. I have that information now and would like with the permission of the House to place it before hon. members. I have asked the Chief Electoral Officer to explain about the claims of certain electors and I think I may read his answer.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

Hon. P. Collier: On a point of order, is the Attorney General in order in proceeding to read a statement which may contain debatable matter and to which I shall not be able to reply?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Attorney General said he had given the leader of the Opposition a promise that he would supply this information in con-

nection with photographs of dwellings and I have permitted him to read it.

Mr. Troy: He must ask the permission of the House.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not fair on the part of the Attorney General to make a statement which is in the nature of an argument and to which I shall not be able to reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thought that to meet the wishes of the House the Attorney General might be allowed to read the statement.

Hon. P. Collier: The Attorney General comes prepared with a reply to statements which I made and I shall not be able to have anything to say in regard to them.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: My request was that I might have the permission of the House to supply this information.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it the wish of the House that the Attorney General be permitted to make this statement?

Members: "Yes," "No."

Mr. SPEAKER: As there are "Noes," permission cannot be given.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not quite satisfied with the decision. Does it mean that the House does not want this information?

Hon. P. Collier: The House wants it in a form in which it can be debated.

Mr. SPEAKER: I asked hon. members whether they would permit the Attorney General to supply this information as he had promised the leader of the Opposition to furnish it. One "no" is sufficient to prevent that permission being given.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: May I move that the papers do lie on the table of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may do that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I want to make my position clear. I have no objection whatever to any statement being made to the House by the Minister in charge of a department. I have no desire to prevent any reply being made to anything that has been said, but I do not wish to have a statement put forward possibly refuting arguments which I advanced when I shall not have the opportunity of replying. The Attorney General can place the papers on the Table and he can find an opportunity for me to, if necessary, reply to any of the statements contained in these papers.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That the papers do lie on the Table of the House.

Question put and passed.

## BILL—WHEAT MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading..

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. BROWN (Subiaco) [4-43]: In connection with the measure, as it originally was an emergency matter I do not intend to discuss it at any great length. I wish to say however that the Government in bringing down the Bill should have brought down a measure for the ratification of the acquiring agency agreement which they have entered into with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. It is unwise for the Government to make agreements with people which may not be ratified by Parliament and if this practice is continued, sooner or later serious results will follow. In the present cir-

cumstances the Government need not be severely censured because we all know the opportunity for making agreements on account of the doubt as to whether the Wheat Pool would continue in the future or not, was limited. As a member of the Royal Commission which dealt exhaustively with the Wheat Marketing Scheme, I must compliment the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) who dealt so comprehensively with every phase of the question in his speech last night. I can only endorse all that he has said and add that I consider his criticism was absolutely fair. There was no personal or political element brought into it and he gave the House information which was disclosed by the evidence. There is one thing that I think the Government are to blame for, and it is for not realising the statement made by the Prime Minister early in 1915 wherein he said that private enterprise should not be interfered with except to the least possible extent when that private enterprise clashed with national interests. Last year the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., got a monopoly and I think it would have been wiser if the Government had made, between that time and the present, arrangements to give the other mercantile farmers as well as the Westralian Farmers, an opportunity of tendering for the carrying out of this work. Owing to the great success of our Allies' arms we are more than likely to have a resumption of shipping equal to what we had in pre-war times. When that takes place there will be no necessity for a continuance of the Pool system. I am pleased to know that the Government have taken a very fatherly interest in the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and have given that company very sympathetic treatment. As a result their business, which was not thoroughly well established, will now, owing to the monopoly of last year and of this year, be placed upon a very fair basis, so that in future any competition will be met on an equal footing. One thing we should not forget is that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., in addition to being a co-operative body, are also a very big trading business and are now launching out in commerce in every direction. In fact, they may be said to be ordinary financiers and brokers, and last week they went into the stock sales business. The public of Western Australia will require to watch very carefully the future of that company or we may find that through their engineering agencies they will be securing control over Parliament itself. I regret that an opportunity was not given to the mercantile firms to compete for this season's handling of the wheat. But as I said before, the circumstances were such that perhaps the Government could not carry out their original intention of affording competition an opportunity. We were told last night that the Scheme asked for quotations from six firms, including the Farmers' Mercantile Union, which had not previously handled wheat, and that, instead of open tenders, publicly advertised, quotations were asked from those firms. When the Royal Commission found out that they were practically on the same lines as in previous years, the Commission asked the Government to stay their hand. It has been said that the Commission intimated to the Government that they desired that the quotations should not be handed in. That was not so. The Commission were favourable to those tenders being submitted. At all events, an extension of the time was given and, finally, the quotations were withdrawn and the Government entered into negotiations with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. I have not much to say

against the Bill. The prices offered in the agreement are fair for the services to be rendered. When the Bill reaches Committee I hope the Minister will see fit to make some alteration in the gisting agreement. In the agreement of last year we had a flat rate of 7d. for every mill, irrespective of capacity. This year the Scheme has arranged for three different grades, so that, according to their capacity, the mills will make a monetary profit. In the existing agreement we have a provision that the miller has to get a certain flour extraction, 70 per cent., from every bushel of wheat, and in view of the general knowledge that the wheat that will be milled this coming year will not be nearly so bad from weevil as in past years, it is more than likely that most of the millers will be able to get this extraction without trouble. The great difficulty is going to arise in the f.a.q. that will be sent to the various mills. I hope the Minister will take some alternative course in connection with the gisting agreement, which will give the Scheme an opportunity, when any dispute arises as to the quality of the wheat tendered to the mills, to direct that the mills shall then grist on a bushel basis. As pointed out last night by the member for North-East Fremantle, it will save a good deal of dispute, and possibly of litigation, if that is done. In respect of other provisions in the Bill, I can only say I am in accord with them. One other matter in connection with milling: Last night we heard various scraps of information in regard to the tremendous profits made out of milling. I can only say that so far as I know, the £38,000 which it is claimed has been lost to the Pool through the millers obtaining that amount over and above a fair profit, is very doubtful indeed. One thing I would say to the farming community is that even if the millers did make that £38,000 over and above what they are entitled to, it is a very small amount as compared with what the millers have made for the Pool. Everyone knows that the millers have worked three shifts to suit themselves as well as to suit the Scheme. They were entitled to a benefit, and no doubt they got a benefit. I should like to point out that the requirements of the State are roughly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million bushels. For the sake of argument I will say a million bushels. The millers, to suit themselves and to suit the Scheme, last year gristed six million bushels. In other words five million bushels were gristed into marketable flour which, but for the millers, would have remained in wheat. That wheat would have deteriorated at least 2s. per bushel, and possibly some of it would not have been marketable at all. So that if we take that five million bushels, which the millers milled for the good of the community, at 2s. per bushel, the Pool has been saved £500,000. The farmers are grumbling about the millers making some money, but I say that the millers, in addition to doing some good for themselves, also employed a large number of hands and, in addition, made available for the dairyman, the poultryman and the pig raiser, a ton of offal out of every 100 bushels milled. That has been a great advantage to the State. Instead of grumbling about what some people make out of certain work, it would be well if the farmers were to consider what loss would have resulted had the millers not given their mills, not only for their own advantage, but also for the advantage of the State. The member for North-East Fremantle commented on the Commission's work and pointed out many instances where, owing to practically experimental work, certain losses were taking place. I consider that they were

incidental to a scheme that had never previously been handled in any part of the world and for which, therefore, there was no precedent. Speaking generally, I think the advisory board and the management have done fairly well. Were the Pool likely to continue, the House would have to pay far more serious consideration to the report of the Royal Commission than is necessary in existing circumstances. It is a very debatable question what kind of management would be the best for the future. As I said previously, the Pool, I hope, will finish up shortly and we shall get back to normal conditions, when every one will be able to carry on his work without being hampered by measures such as we have had during war time. I am convinced that the work done by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., was equally well done with that of the mercantile firms, neither better nor worse. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., are purely a hustling, up to date business firm ready to take advantage of anything going, just the same as any other profiteering firm.

Hon. P. Collier: And by any methods.

Mr. BROWN: It was pleasing to me, as a member of the Commission, to note that the supplies of all kinds of writing paper at the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., were never restricted. Cart loads of letters on trivial questions were sent in to the department, and I am certain that the ambiguity of the language used was such that in some cases it was hard to know where one was.

Hon. P. Collier: And who was the master and who the servant.

Mr. BROWN: Exactly. All my sympathies are with the primary producers. They are deserving of every consideration that Parliament can give them. But they must not forget there are other sections of the community equally deserving. I hope that in the future we shall have less grumbling. I will not say from the farmers, but from their representatives in Parliament. I will support the second reading.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [4.58]: The measure is a fair and reasonable one and very little exception can be taken to it. With a few minor amendments the Bill will meet all requirements. I want to emphatically deny the suggestions that have been made that the Country party has been pulling strings.

Mr. Brown: Pulling ropes!

Mr. PIESSE: I wish to say decisively that never on any occasion have the party united in bringing pressure to bear on Ministers in respect of the operations of the Wheat Scheme.

Mr. Mullany: What you mean is that some have not gone as far as others.

Mr. PIESSE: The hon. member is entitled to his opinion, but I strongly resent the insinuation that we as a party are here to secure all that is possible by hook or by crook, and are prepared to place a pistol at the head of the Government. We have never advanced, either, the schemes of any commercial association such as the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. We have individually approached Ministers in regard to the handling of wheat; but it is manifest to everyone, and it is public knowledge, that the Royal Commission have recommended the handling of wheat in the depots. No further advantage has been sought by us for any other organisation. I wish to compliment the member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown) upon his fair speech and upon his reasonable common sense effort to place the position of the Westralian Farmers in a true light.

Mr. Munsie Do you agree with his statement that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., are only the same as any other profiteering firm in this country?

Mr. PIESSE: I do not know that they are a profiteering firm.

Hon. P. Collier: That is what the member for Subiaco said.

Mr. PIESSE: Undoubtedly the Westralian Farmers are a hustling firm, out to catch all the business that is going.

Hon. P. Collier: A hustling profiteering firm.

Mr. PIESSE: To say that unfair methods are being adopted is unjust. If we compare the cost of handling wheat under the current agreement with the cost of handling wheat in the Eastern States, we find that ours is lower.

Mr. Munsie: The responsibility here is less; do not forget that.

Mr. PIESSE: A sum of £3,500 has been mentioned as being unfairly gained by the acquiring agents, the Westralian Farmers; but that is a matter of opinion. The Royal Commission, I understand, consider that the sum was not fairly earned.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The money was paid but the work was not done.

Mr. PIESSE: We find, however, that there is not any great profit in the other work done by the Westralian Farmers in connection with wheat handling. To place the efforts of our party in this connection before the public in an unfavourable light is not fair. Our methods have been fair and aboveboard, the same as those of any other members having public business to bring before Parliament. Never once, I say with the clearest conviction, have we been brought to heel, as the term runs, by the associations with which we have the honour to be connected; never once.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member discussing the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.?

Mr. PIESSE: I am endeavouring to refute some of those statements which were made last night impugning the honour of the party to which I belong.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Someone has been pulling your leg.

Mr. PIESSE: I do hope you, Mr. Speaker, will permit me to endeavour to show the public that there is no justification for the imputations made last night upon this party. I feel sure every member is conversant with the details of the Bill and convinced of its fairness and also of the necessity for the measure. In Committee, I hope, minor amendments will receive due consideration.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [5-6]: I propose to support the measure on general principles, as the question in dispute is whether the wheat of the country shall be handled by a co-operative institution largely composed of the farmers of this country or whether it shall be handled by this firm who previously dealt with it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Or by the Scheme itself.

Mr. TROY: That is another alternative, whether the commodity could not best be handled by the State rather than by any other institution. I would be quite willing that the State should handle the commodity if that would be cheaper. But the handling of the commodity by the State is not very different in principle from the handling of it by a section of the State. The question is only one of degree. I do not propose to quarrel with a Bill which provides that that section of the people who produce the commodity shall handle the commodity in their own interests. Let me tell hon. members representing more particularly

the farmers' interests in this House that they would be indeed well advised if they kept their particular trading institution free from any suspicion of political influence.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the trouble.

Mr. Griffiths: It is an imaginary trouble.

Mr. TROY: I have already explained to gentlemen on the Ministerial cross benches that there is no doubt that the objection prominent in the minds of hon. members is the feeling that this commercial institution is having its interests advanced in this Parliament by means which are not altogether above suspicion.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a fact, too.

Mr. TROY: That may be or may not be so; but I cannot allow my vote to be influenced by considerations altogether of that character. I am going to deal with the Bill as I find it. The measure provides that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., a commercial co-operative institution representing the great mass of the farmers of this country, shall have the handling of this harvest, and also of the next harvest if so proclaimed by the Governor. Apart from State handling of the harvest, I do not know who has a better right to handle it. I am a believer in co-operation, and the Labour party believe in co-operation. In fact, it was the Labour party that gave the Westralian Farmers their first start. Had it not been for the Labour Government, the Westralian Farmers would never have had a look in during the first Wheat Pool, but would have been shut out. That will be admitted by their own managing directors, if they are honest men.

Mr. Griffiths: They do not admit it.

Mr. TROY: Unfortunately the Honorary Minister sends out certain circulars into the country, and the "Primary Producer" makes certain statements, and the Country party members themselves are not fair, let alone generous; and those are the reasons why the Bill meets with a certain amount of opposition. I myself will vote for the measure; but I am not at all in agreement with the member for Subiaco in the hope he expressed that the time will soon come when this business and other business will revert to the old channels. I do not wish to see that. I have no association with the Westralian Farmers except that by handling my wheat they have made me a shareholder against my will. If the farmers of this country, or any other section of the producers of this country—the miners, for instance—are going to free themselves from the exactions of the unnecessary middleman, they must do it by co-operation. This party will not quarrel with such a course, though I must confess that the consideration I have received from private firms is as good as that which I have received from the Westralian Farmers, sometimes even better. Be that as it may, the principle embodied in the Bill of giving the farmer, through a system of co-operation, the right to handle, and if necessary market, his own commodity, is a principle with which no believer in co-operation can disagree; and therefore, I do not propose to disagree with it. I feel that in adopting that attitude I am truly interpreting the principles of hon. members on this side.

Mr. Munsie: Of every one of them.

Mr. TROY: If hon. members on this side disagree with the Bill at all, it is because they cannot help feeling suspicious when they read the "Primary Producer" and when they read reports of conferences by members attended by members of the Country party. It is the suspicion of political influence being used in regard to measures of this

kind that causes opposition. I am not going to say that the operations of the Scheme last year were altogether satisfactory. I do not consider they were. I know of numerous instances in which the Scheme operated most unsatisfactorily at unattended sidings where farmers were compelled to put their wheat in the sidings and it was left for a month or two months before it could be weighed. I have already consulted the Westralian Farmers regarding that omission, and the satisfactory reply has been given that the farmer can send his wheat into the local depot and have it weighed, being allowed 1s. per ton for that work. An unpleasant feature of the Scheme last year was brought forward by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin). It was proved beyond question before the Royal Commission that a number of sub-agents and lesser agents had been sweated through having accepted work at rates which were not fair and reasonable. I am not ready to support a principle which, though standing on lofty ground, introduces sweating into its operation. Some time ago, when speaking to a body of farmers, I told them that I would not support the proposal if I found that they were not giving fair and reasonable treatment to every man concerned in the handling of the wheat. There is no question the Westralian Farmers Limited would be well advised, and the farmers' representatives in Parliament would be well advised, to see that as little as possible of this sub-letting is done, and to see that the men who do the actual work receive the actual pay. I unhesitatingly say that the vicious principle which the Westralian Farmers, Limited, have adopted of taking the middle man's profit has been evidenced in the report of the Royal Commission. These are defects in the Scheme which any fair minded man must condemn. I hope, for the sake of the principles the Bill stands for, that these sweating conditions will not be permitted in future. If they are it must be remembered that the day is coming when changes will be made and another Government will sit in office, a Government which will not tolerate the imposition of unfair conditions. In regard to the gristing conditions, I cannot help feeling that in connection with the last agreement the millers were on a very happy footing. In fact, it appears to me that the Scheme provides that every person who handles the wheat, or supplies bags, or machinery, or superphosphate, shall get his share of the profit, while the producer gets no profit, but has to suffer any losses. So, too, the poultry farmer, the dairy farmer and the pig raiser get no consideration whatever. The man in the City has to pay 6s. and 7s. a bushel for wheat. The Scheme provides that every man handling the wheat shall be allowed his profit, but that the farmer himself and the general community have to carry the burden. If the miller and the merchant are entitled to their profits in a country where the people are standing behind the wheat Scheme, why should not the rest of the community get some consideration likewise? The member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown) said that the millers had done well for the Pool. It is admitted that they rendered service to the Pool; but they were entitled to give their services without undue profit. The farmer has to give his services without undue profit, whereas the miller got a profit far above what he could have secured under ordinary conditions. I am amazed that a Government out to protect the producers, and a party represented in that Government should allow a Minister to make an agreement with the

millers which gave the millers such enormous profits, to the disadvantage of those whom the Minister represents.

Mr. Brown: How could we help it?

Mr. Griffiths: You want us to use political influence.

Mr. TROY: Since the Government control the Scheme and are acting in the interests of all the people, it is their place to use political influence. It was the duty of the Minister to tell the millers, "Unless you accept a fair rate for gristing, we will take over the mills." It has been done practically everywhere else. The whole of the policy of the Government has been to allow every middle man to get his profit at the expense of the community and of the farmers. If the millers made a big profit, they should not have been allowed to make it. They could never have got the satisfactory agreement they did get had it not been by the will of the Government, and particularly the will of the Minister, who represents in another place the interests of the farmers. So the Government and Country party must take the blame. Had a Labour Government been in office they would have taken action in the matter. In the Bill the Minister provides an agreement which is a considerable modification of that of last year. This is evidence that the millers could have gristed the wheat at a lesser cost than they have done, and that the Government could have compelled them to do so without any injustice whatever. If the millers are entitled to a special profit because they grist in war time, the worker in the mill is also entitled to a similar profit, particularly as the commodity is owned by the nation and financed by the nation. I will support the second reading, because I support the principle of co-operation wherever it exists. So long as that principle is removed from any suspicion of political influence, it cannot and will not be opposed by members on this side. We are not attached to any commercial interest, and we will not stand for any particular institution receiving favours because of the influence it has on the Parliament of the country. Generally, I give my strongest support to the Bill.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [4-24]: I do not propose to expose myself to interjections from members that this is a subject I know nothing about. But I know a little about reading, and I propose to read a few extracts from the report of the Royal Commission which appear to be rather inconsistent with the speeches made by some hon. members. On page 89, in the evidence of Robert Shaw Mitchell Paton, officer in charge of the Wheat Scheme at North Wharf, Fremantle, the witness says—

When they loaded the "Kangaroo" I made a careful inspection under the wharf and estimated that they lost approximately nine tons of wheat in the river. In one spot there was a mound of wheat four feet in depth on the bed of the foreshore alongside the embankment.

The Westralian Farmers claim that they and they alone look after the interests of the farmers. Do you think their loading of the "Kangaroo" was in accordance with that claim?—No, my candid opinion is that the Westralian Farmers have not served the farmers well.

Here are some further statements by the witness in answer to questions.—

You think that what they look after is their own commercial interests?—Yes. With them

the farmer has been a pretty small pebble on the beach.

They have been acting similarly to other private acquiring agents?—No, I would not say that. Taken as a whole the inefficiency of the Westralian Farmers has been greater than that of any other acquiring agent. That is my candid opinion.

I notice you drew Mr. Taylor's attention to this loss?—Yes.

Have you ever seen such a quantity of wheat as that in the water for which any other agent was responsible?—Never to such a great extent. The Westralian Farmers were more noted than any other firm for their insufficiency of labour, and for the undue percentage of boys employed. Possibly they thought they could work the business cheaper than other people could. The desire may have been all right in the first instance, the desire to economise, but the result was very considerably short of the mark.

You mean that the losses were greater because of the insufficiency and inefficiency of labour?—Through their having employed insufficient and inefficient labour the losses have been greater throughout the whole State.

Do you think that the want of experience in handling of wheat has been a contributing factor?—In some instances, yes. In other instances, so long as their own special end of the stick was looked after I do not think they cared much about the other fellow. Losses were made at the time I was re-conditioning a large quantity of wheat in "E" shed on the South Wharf. If my very earnest requests and instructions had been carried out by the Westralian Farmers, Limited, the Pool losses would have been considerably minimised. Some of the wheat was so seriously damaged that it should never have been lifted up to the truck. A first loss should have been made there and then, and it should have been dumped or sold as fertiliser. Instead of that being done, it was rebagged.

Were many agents operating?—There were Darling & Son, Jas. Bell & Co., and the Westralian Farmers. There was nothing from Droyfus & Co. or Dalgety's. The wheat from the Westralian Farmers produced the worst results of the lot.

Did a larger quantity come from the Westralian Farmers?—I should like to see the figures before answering that. Off hand I should say, yes. Their wheat was generally in a worse condition, and little care had been taken to protect it. Where in other instances some attempt had been made to carry out my instructions, the Westralian Farmers absolutely flouted them. They went for weight alone.

It was pointed out to Mr. Paton by the Commission that the farmers had a surplus of 14,000 bushels and the chairman went on to ask—"This bad wheat would be included in the amount of wheat delivered and so counted in with the whole." Mr. Paton replied—

I have wheat on the wharf now from the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., which Mr. Taylor maintained a fortnight back was in all probability sound, sweet, sweepings when put on the truck, although trucks came in to us sheeted. You cannot make bark, chips, and gravel into sweet wheat. It stinks to this day. When the sheets were removed by myself in order to let the air in between the showers, the contents of the truck smelt like a stable.

That is wheat which had been carefully trucked and sheeted down and shifted to Fremantle, and it was supposed to be sweet without comments having been made by the scheme officials. It is a good thing that we have an officer like Mr. Mitchell Paton who said, "I will not allow this kind of stuff to go through," and who declared that the contents of the truck smelt like a stable. The next paragraph also is worth quoting. Mr. Paton was asked whether the wheat was still there and he replied—

Yes, it is sweeter to-day than it was then.

I have it there awaiting instructions as to what to do with it.

Then comes something that we cannot get away from. We find from the evidence that the sub-manager, Mr. Stirling Taylor, claimed that that wheat was a marketable commodity. Wheat which smelt like a stable, Mr. Taylor declared was a marketable commodity. Mr. Paton went on to say—

I invited Mr. Taylor to send a buyer for it and he said he would do so. Two or three days after I rang him up to inquire if he had a buyer to send along, but he told me he had taken no further interest in the matter since he left the wharf. This rubbish is still on the wharf.

Here we have the sub-manager of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., in the first instance deliberately misrepresenting the position and after being convinced beyond all shadow of doubt by our officials that this was rubbish he disposes of it by sale. He declared—"I will find a buyer for it. You people do not know your business but I do and I will find a buyer." Subsequently, however, when taxed again he said he had taken no further interest in it. The buyer did not come along. A nice admission for a general manager of a big concern to make. I am not going to lay myself open to comment on the part of my friends on my right, but I do say that there has been some extraordinary inconsistency. We have heard the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., eulogised to such an extent that one would think they were perfection. We have even a member of the Commission holding them up as being no worse than any other firm. If the other firms are as bad as the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., no wonder the farmers have made losses. I am surprised at the member for Beverley complimenting the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., after the way they carried out last year's work and in the face of such damning evidence as that which I have quoted. I am perfectly disinterested in the matter and I only wish to call attention to the evidence as being directly opposite to what has been stated by the members of the Country party. There is an extraordinary discrepancy that should be explained. When stinking rubbish only fit for a stable can be sent down to Fremantle the position gets beyond my comprehension. Any business man is justified in expressing his opinion on a matter like this. I do not care whether it is wheat or wool, it is a damnable shame to think that the public money should be wasted in this way. I deplore the fact that other members of the Country party have not taken a little more interest in their institution by placing men in charge of it who are capable and competent. Without detracting from the merits of the executive officers at present in charge in any way, I have to bear in mind the fact that some few years ago the present managing director of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., occupied a very ordinary position in His Majesty's post office. (Interruption.) I will repeat what I have said for the benefit of

the member for Williams-Narrogin, but I say so without detracting from the capability or the reputation which Mr. Stirling Taylor may have. I cannot forget the fact that this man who now is positively handling millions of money was a post office official some years ago. (Interruption.) In spite of the interruptions of hon. members I claim that Mr. Taylor is not possessed of that experience which is necessary for the handling and control of a scheme which involves the expenditure of so much money. On the other hand we have his lieutenant who was only a little while back an insurance agent. Those gentlemen took every good care not to have men of experience about them, men who would not send stuff smelling like a stable to Fremantle. It is my opinion that Mr. Taylor was responsible for sending this refuse to the coast. (Interruption.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the hon. member please resume his seat. This continued interruption from the cross benches must cease. Hon. members will have an opportunity of speaking at a later stage and then they may reply to the remarks of the member for Roebourne.

Mr. TEESDALE: Mr. Taylor is a very great friend of mine. I knew him years before the Country party ever heard of him and I have nothing to say against his reputation, but I say that to have such a man in charge of a big concern is a positive farce. He may be all right in his vocation as a manager of a company, but to control a scheme like this requires a captain of industry, a man of experience, and the Government should have seen to it that they had a man in charge who knew something about the work before they handed over to the Western Australian Farmers the control of this huge scheme. I say nothing as to whether they are better or worse than other agents, but the Government should have seen that the farmers had a fair run for their money. That is not taking place to-day when we find that refuse is being trucked to Fremantle as wheat. I consider that the member for Beverley was a little uncharitable and ungrateful when he referred to the fact that the mining industry had received considerable assistance. If the mining industry had received the backing and support that the farming industry has had, up to date, the State I am sure would be in a lot better position than it is at the present time. The hon. member was very ungrateful in inviting comparisons between the two industries and the manner in which they had been treated by past Governments. If the mining industry had had the same opportunities that farming has had we should be in a much better position at the present time, although we are told that wheat and wool has saved the country. I wish we had spent half the money that we have lost on wheat in backing the mining industry in Western Australia.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [5.40]: I have listened with a great deal of interest to the previous speakers, last night and this afternoon. I remember on one occasion after I had made a speech in this House the then Premier of the day, Mr. Scaddan, after commenting on some of my remarks looked across the House, waved his hand at me and said, "Does not the member for York remember that the late John Darling left over a million sterling and that that money was made mostly out of farmer's wheat."

Mr. Brown: Not a bit of it; it was made out of Broken Hill.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Scaddan added that at some future time the farmers' representatives and the farmers themselves would wake up, and he strongly adjured us to wake up.

Hon. P. Collier: Very unsuccessfully.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: By the way the leader of the Opposition has been speaking he wants to claim that we have been very wide awake. The farmers have awakened and they have followed the lead of the Labour party who believe in co-operation. We followed their example. The leader of the Opposition afforded us a quarter of an hour's great amusement last evening when he spoke, and we find that he filled a gap in this morning's paper which was caused by the absence of news from the Western Front. I am sure hon. members enjoy his remarks, but it seems rather extraordinary that he should say of the Country party that they had been using political influence, that they had someone behind pulling the strings at the conference. I may tell him that at that conference we passed certain loyal resolutions. How about the other conference which was held at the Savoy hotel? People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Mr. Lambert: On a point of order. Are you, Mr. Speaker, going to allow this nonsense to go on. What reference is there in the hon. member's remarks to wheat handling?

Mr. Maley: Is the member for Coolgardie in order in asking you, Mr. Speaker, whether you are going to allow what he calls nonsense to continue?

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for York is in order.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Objection is taken to remarks by those hon. members who take so badly to heart what is said about them, but last night did they not rub it into us?

Hon. P. Collier: Go for your life.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I will, and it will take a better man than the leader of the Opposition to bluff me.

Mr. Munsie: Say straight out what you mean. You have not said it up to date.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Hon. members opposite believe in co-operation. We have that from one of their members here.

Mr. Munsie: We believed in it long before you ever thought of it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Hon. members opposite will wake up directly.

Mr. Munsie: So we did.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Then why are hon. members squealing out against John Darling & Son, Louis Dreyfus, James Bell & Co., and the rest of them?

Mr. Munsie: Who is?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am sure that the people who represent these firms here would be delighted with the utterances which fell from the lips of members on the other side of the House last night.

Mr. Lutey: Is John Darling the only alternative?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Country party members are here because they believe in co-operation and that is one of the ways out

for the farmer. We also believe that by co-operating we are going to lift these people out of the slough of despond into which they have fallen, and assist them in getting rid of the heavy load that is now resting upon their backs.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: By sweating other people.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I agree with the Royal Commission that sub-letting should not be allowed, and hope that something will be done to stop it. The recommendation of the Royal Commission is right and just. We do not want anything that is unjust. We only want a fair thing. I am sure the leader of the Opposition when speaking last night had his tongue in his cheek. I suppose politics is a game of ins and outs.

Mr. Munsie: He worked up the Country party.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We are fighting for what we believe in. Members opposite are not fighting for what they believe in when they say they are up against co-operation in one breath and that they are in favour of it in the next.

Hon. P. Collier: We are in favour of it, but not your brand of it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: My brand is that which has a stamp upon it of the Farmers and Settlers' Association, who have founded these co-operative societies.

Hon. P. Collier: Sweating and commandeering.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If that is what the member for Hannans and the member for Boulder look upon as true co-operation then I disagree with them. The leader of the Opposition said they had had nothing from the Country party, that we were supposed to be dumb. We are not so dumb as we look.

Mr. Munsie: We had hard work to get you to take it on.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We stood back for the moment to give the leader of the Opposition a chance. He made some remarks as to not knowing where this co-operative movement would end. He drew a picture of the dire effects which this movement would have because of the monopoly it enjoyed, and he did not know where we were all going.

Mr. Jones: Is there co-operation in Saskatchewan?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The hon. member always tries to be funny. Perhaps if we could get the people of the State to realise what a far-seeing country, such as this, is doing in that direction, and in the direction of lifting the primary industry out of the slough of despond, much good would result.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are doing it there on their own responsibility, and are not getting the Government to do it.

Hon. P. Collier: And are finding the money themselves.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The leader of the Opposition does not know what he is talking about. The farmers there find 15 per cent. of the money for the co-operative business, and the Government find 85 per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are lending the money.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: On 20 years terms.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: At five per cent.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: What is wrong with that? In the Canadian dominions they have a co-operative organisation branch attached to the Agricultural Department. This encourages the movement by lectures and by advice, and by sending out experts to assist in the work of organisation, and, in addition, by hard cash. These countries are really doing what the Premier, at Moora, told us the Government were out to do. I believe the Government are trying to encourage the little infant of co-operation in this country to the end it may become a real help to the community. The member for North-East Fremantle made a most impressive address last night. On several points he showed that he was better informed than many of those who are connected with the farming industry. One thing was said, namely, that the various sheds which are being built are coming out of the farmers' wheat, and that a sum of £38,000 was paid last year to the millers more than should have been paid.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I was only repeating what the Attorney General said.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: A few thousand pounds here or there will not matter. There are losses from mice, weevil and wet, which make up a grand total. One hears these wild and woolly gentlemen from the North-West delighting themselves by stirring up things as they have done this evening. They make a lot of wild statements, and when something is said about the farmers not paying their water rates they cheerfully chip in with the remark, "They have never paid anything yet."

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member in question did not bring this in on this debate. The hon. member cannot refer to a previous debate.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is said that farmers are not paying their debts. We see this constant leakage which is going on, and these enormous losses, and have these men, who know nothing about it saying, "Why do we not pay our debts?" Is it any wonder that the farmers cannot pay their debts when this waste of money is going on? True, the waste is not so bad in this country as it is in South Australia, where the condition of the wheat is deplorable. We are asked to encourage immigration and to put men on the land. In one area between Tammin and Jennaberring, only two small agricultural areas, there are 17 one thousand acre farms vacant, a few because of the enlistment of the holders, but the great bulk because of the impossibility of the men carrying on and their being obliged to throw their farms on to the hands of the Government. There are between 800 and 900 farms on the hands of the Government or the Industries Assistance Board or the Agricultural Bank. What is to be the end of the men concerned?



MR. SPEAKER: This Bill deals with wheat marketing and not with the general policy of land settlement.

MR. GRIFFITHS: We ask men to come into the wheat growing industry, but when these things are going on we have no fair ground to go upon. I cannot recommend any man to grow wheat under the present conditions.

MR. SPEAKER: This Bill does not deal with the production of wheat, but the marketing of wheat. Will the hon. member confine himself to the question?

MR. GRIFFITHS: If hon. members would take a trip down the Swan at any time they would see palatial residences on the banks of the river. To whom do these residences belong? They do not belong to the timber getter, the shearer, the miner, or the out-back wheat grower. They belong to the insurance agent—

Hon. P. Collier: Are you referring to Mr. Murray?

MR. GRIFFITHS: To the banker, to the implement maker, and to the merchant. These are the people who are making money out of the wheat, and not the men who are growing it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., included.

MR. GRIFFITHS: I heard the hon. member say last night that this firm made 12½ per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I said the co-operative societies did.

MR. GRIFFITHS: If the co-operative societies are making this profit, and are doing the handling of the wheat cheaper than has been done by any of these handling firms in the past, as well as doing it cheaper than it is done in the Eastern States, what did those people make before the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., took over the handling of the wheat?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The price has gone up.

MR. GRIFFITHS: The member for North-East Fremantle said that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., were nine or ten months behind with their work. I should like to know what ground he has for stating that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would you like to know?

MR. GRIFFITHS: I will tell the hon. member.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I can tell you.

MR. GRIFFITHS: They were up to date with their work. There was certain work, the moving of a certain quantity of wheat at a certain time, and they asked the Scheme if they could keep their staff employed and carry on the work until the beginning of the coming wheat season, without putting these men off.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That has nothing to do with it; we were dealing with certificates.

MR. GRIFFITHS: Then I was barking up the wrong tree. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) made some reference to the "muck" in the wheat at Fremantle.

MR. Teesdale: I said it was in the evidence; be very careful.

MR. GRIFFITHS: I am always careful with the hon. member. On what ground does he

make such a statement? Has he any superior knowledge and information to that possessed by other hon. members? Does he know more about the evidence that was taken before the Royal Commission than the member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown), the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison), or the member for North-East Fremantle?

MR. Teesdale: He can read as well as they can.

MR. GRIFFITHS: Then I am sure the hon. gentlemen who compose that commission must have sadly neglected their duty.

Hon. P. Collier: They have not denied that evidence.

MR. GRIFFITHS: They have said that these people have not done the work better than anyone else could do it. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., took over the management of the scheme without having had any practical experience beforehand. To-day they are doing the work quite as well, and not worse than those firms which have been doing it for scores of years.

MR. Johnston: Better.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not better.

MR. GRIFFITHS: Certainly not worse, and that is a compliment to pay to them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It could be done better.

MR. Pickering: By the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Or by private people if they wished to do it.

MR. Pickering: True.

MR. GRIFFITHS: I do not intend to go over the whole matter. I think I have said sufficient to show that, so far as this co-operative movement is concerned, I believe the Government are trying to encourage it. I believe that had it not been for the measure of encouragement given to it by the Government things would have been in such a position that the Eastern firms, which were making enormous profits over there, would have been able to come in here for one or two seasons, and so undercut the prices that they would have been able to get the contract. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [6.0]: The debate on this Bill affords an illustration of the manner in which some members of this House on every occasion make the question of the marketing of wheat the basis of an attack on the members of the Country party and on the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. It appears to me that those members are seeking to convey to the public an impression that the Westralian Farmers have received from the Government, through political influence, some benefit to which they are not entitled; whereas, in fact, that is not the case at all. We know, further, that the Government stand arraigned on a charge that they have fallen short of their duty to the wheat growers in not accepting the Royal Commission's recommendation that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., who are the acquiring agents, should have further powers in regard to the handling of the wheat.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Royal Commission never recommended that.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I have here a copy of the report, signed by the hon. gentleman, containing that recommendation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Recommending that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., should be granted further powers?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Recommending that the acquiring agents should be granted further powers; and in this case the acquiring agents are the Westralian Farmers. The Commission place as second in importance the following recommendation to the Government:—

That in future acquiring agreements the agents be responsible not only for the acquiring of wheat but also for its care and protection up to and including delivery and stacking into the sheds and depots or sidings, such work to be carried out under the supervision of the Scheme.

Since that interim report was made, or else about the time it was made, the Westralian Farmers were certainly appointed acquiring agents for the Scheme. These facts do not entitle us, as representatives of the wheat growers, to fail in our duty of urging on the Government that this recommendation should be carried into effect, in the interests of the wheat growers. Simply because the Westralian Farmers happened to be the acquiring agents, hon. gentlemen rise here and say that we are not advocating the adoption of this recommendation in the interests of our constituents, but in the interests of the Westralian Farmers. As a matter of fact, we are not doing anything of the kind. As illustrating the attacks made on members of the Country party whenever the Wheat Marketing question comes up for discussion, I need only refer to the observations made last night by the eminent member for Leonora (Mr. Foley), who stated that Mr. Monger had said there was not one man in the Country party with the brains of a numbskull. I do not know whether Mr. Monger did make that remark; but I venture to say that he has never made that remark about the National Labour party.

Mr. Foley: You do not deny that he made the remark?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not know whether he made it or not. I am not prepared to accept as a fact that he did make it, merely on the hon. member's assurance.

Mr. Foley: Do you say that he did not make it?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not know. I say he could not truly have made it concerning the members of the National Labour party.

Mr. Foley: Do you deny that he made that remark?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must discuss the Bill, and not Mr. Monger. We have heard enough of Mr. Monger, I think.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Reflections have been cast on the gentleman who signed the agreement, Mr. Basil Murray, the managing director of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. We are told that Mr. Murray is a mere insurance agent. But, since this House is about to confirm an agreement with Mr. Basil Murray as managing director of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., may

I point out that that gentleman in two years' open competition with all the other firms operating here worked up the business of the Westralian Farmers to such an extent that they received four-ninths of the wheat of Western Australia. That is to say, the people who grew the wheat, and who had the right the year before last to place it with whom they liked, gave it to Mr. Basil Murray's company to the extent of nearly one-half the year's crop. And that was in open competition with the other firms.

Mr. Foley: It was not open competition at all.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Very great credit is due to Mr. Murray for having worked up this business so well, especially if, as some hon. members have said, he started with little or no experience in that particular line. Moreover, the Royal Commission—a Commission not sympathetic to the Country party, a commission whose personnel included only one representative of the Country party—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What do you mean by saying that the Commission were not sympathetic to the Country party?

Mr. JOHNSTON: That they were not sympathetic to our co-operative movement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Nonsequit!

Mr. JOHNSTON: The report of the Royal Commission says—

As far as its investigations have extended to date, the Commission cannot find that the work of acquiring agents has been performed either better or worse by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., than by any of the other four firms operating with them in the handling of the 1916-17 harvest.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We were not inquiring into the Country party, but only into the Wheat Marketing Scheme.

Mr. JOHNSTON: But I am replying to the criticisms of the member for Leonora on the managing director of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., I am replying to the unwarranted reflections cast on the Country party and on Mr. Basil Murray. The reason for the attack is a mere aftermath of the recent Swan election.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will confine himself to the Bill, and let Mr. Murray and the Swan election alone.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Then we come to the attack of the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale), which may be adequately answered from the report of the Royal Commission. At the same time, I have some facts relating to the evidence of this man Paton.

Mr. Teesdale: "This man Paton." Why do you not call him "the officer in charge"?

Hon. P. Collier: "Mr. Basil Murray"; "this man Paton."

Hon. J. Mitchell: He is a good man.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not doubt that he has ability, but he is an employee of the old firms, and he was always antagonistic to the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Hon. P. Collier: Where is the evidence of that?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Mr. Paton gave his evidence freely and openly.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Since that attack was made, we have had the opportunity of making inquiries, and we find that the Westralian Farmers were merely handling at the wharf, in this connection, the refuse sent down from old stacks, stacks from which the good wheat had been shipped away by the other firms in the previous year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Wrong again.

Hon. P. Collier: Who gave you that information?

Mr. JOHNSTON: It came from the Westralian Farmers.

Hon. P. Collier: That is their contention.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am assured that the wheat which was the subject of that evidence is refuse as I have stated.

Mr. Teesdale: It is a funny thing they shifted it down, if it was refuse.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am giving the reply with which I have been furnished to that evidence. If the position is as serious as the member for Roebourne makes it out to be, why did not the Royal Commission report on it? After hearing that evidence, the Royal Commission reported that the handling of the wheat by the Westralian Farmers had been as satisfactory as the handling done by the other firms. The Westralian Farmers represent the growers and the owners of the wheat, and are doing their very best for those owners and growers.

Hon. P. Collier: By sending that stuff down?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I put it to the hon. gentleman, who I know believes in the principle of co-operation, that since these co-operative societies have been established by the wheat growers themselves, and since their shareholders comprise practically the whole of the wheat growers, or at all events the great majority of the wheat growers, in the State, there is no reason why they should not have the right to handle their own product through their own company. That is a principle which I think any member of any party in this House might fairly be asked to subscribe to.

Mr. Foley: Why should a lot of insurance people batten on the wheatgrowers, taking from them a profit as middlemen?

Mr. JOHNSTON: If such a condition of affairs as described by the member for Roebourne obtains anywhere in a small way, I am certain that the Scheme inspectors, co-operating with the Westralian Farmers' inspectors, will see that it is remedied as speedily as possible. I do contend, however, that it is not fair, in view of this report, to accept that isolated piece of evidence as in any way affording a general criterion of the management of the Westralian Farmers. The one criticism I, as representative of a large wheat growing district, have heard passed on the agreement, is that the agreement does not go as far as was recommended by the Royal Commission. The members of this House and the people of this country are entitled to know absolutely from the Government why they do not accept the Royal Commission's second recommendation, namely, that the handling of the farmers' wheat should be done right into the dépôt by the acquiring agents. Wherever

I go, throughout the country, I am asked by my constituents and others why this recommendation has not been carried into effect.

The Attorney General: I told you about that.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is very difficult for us, as representatives of the farmers, to justify our having sat here quietly and never made any move in the direction of having that recommendation carried into effect.

Mr. Foley: Why should you use your political influence here for the benefit of the Farmers' and Settlers' Association and of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.?

Mr. JOHNSTON: We are using our influence in the interests of the growers of the wheat, whom we represent here. The Commission have reported from the standpoint of the growers of the wheat, I take it, also having regard to the interests of the State of Western Australia. I have already mentioned that there was only one member of the Country party, and only one direct representative of the producing interests, on that Royal Commission.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I say there were five representatives of the producing interests on that Royal Commission.

Mr. JOHNSTON: No. I say the other members of the commission were fair, open-minded men. We give them the credit of desiring the Government to accept their recommendations. I do not know what higher recognition we, as representatives of the wheat growers, could accord to the value of the report and to the earnest and arduous work of the members of that Royal Commission than to say that when their work is consummated and we have their definite recommendations, we expect those definite recommendations to be carried into effect if possible. As to whether they are carried into effect by the Executive Board to be appointed, or by the Government, we do not care. The point that we do emphasise to hon. members of this House is that we, as representatives of the wheat growers, feel that we would be lacking in our duty if we remained silent whilst the Government departments still handle the wheat into the dépôts contrary to the recommendation of the Royal Commission. We have heard a good deal about the principle of dual control.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 till 7.30 p.m.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Before tea I made clear the point that as a representative of the wheat-growers and a member of the Country party I wish the Royal Commission's recommendation No. 2 to be carried into effect. We look on this as only a step in the march of progress. The aim of the wheat-growers is, by co-operative effort, not only to ship their wheat from the State themselves through their own company, but to market it in the markets of the world by co-operative effort. The farmers' aims in this respect ought to be made clear, not only in the House but throughout the State. The co-operative movement is growing. We have over 90 branches in this State alone, and we do not intend to build up fresh millions for Darlings, Dalgetys, or Dreyfus & Co., but to do the work ourselves through

our own companies owned by the producers. This may hurt hon. members like the member for Roebourne, whose attack on Mr. Stirling Taylor I regret very much. Mr. Stirling Taylor, like many of us, has risen from the ranks, and I admire him for it. It is from the ranks that those captains of industry in America, to whom the hon. member referred, have come, and if Mr. Stirling Taylor is not yet a captain of industry he is at least an energetic, capable, and trustworthy manager with large business experience, and is an honourable man. I regret exceedingly that the big principles of wheat marketing dealt with in the measure could not be discussed in this Chamber without the introduction of a note of that kind, which I think is unworthy of the hon. member. I have said that the farmers intend to handle their own wheat from the field to the markets of the world through their own co-operative companies, and I say that the feeling of the farmers at present, so far as I can ascertain it by personal contact with them, is one of surprise, disappointment, and dismay that the Government have not definitely announced that they are prepared to go as far as is recommended by the Royal Commission. The farmers remember the commendation of the Premier of their co-operative efforts, not only in his policy speech delivered at Moora, but also on repeated occasions since then; and there is cause for wonder when we remember that the Government did not in this very agreement incorporate the recommendation of the Royal Commission that the handling as far as the depots should be in the hands of the acquiring agent, who in this case happens to be the Westralian Farmers Ltd. But, representing the growers, I say that no matter which acquiring agent had been chosen by the Government, the recommendation of this impartial Royal Commission should have been incorporated in the agreement. We remember the slogan of the Premier at the elections, produce, produce, produce. His appeal was made to the farmers in the name of loyalty to the State and to the Empire.

The Premier: The trouble is to find money for this.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I will refer to that later. We wish the Government to protect the interests of the public treasury, and we claim that that is being done in the Eastern States to-day, in Victoria and, I believe, in South Australia by the acquiring agents who, on behalf of the Government and the Wheat Pool, are in those States handling the wheat right through the depots to the ship's side. The appeal to the farmers to produce, produce, produce was made in the name of loyalty to the State and to the Empire, and I venture to say it was patriotically answered by the farmers. The farmers did produce the wheat under costly conditions imposed by the war. They were forced to pay inflated prices for all their requirements, and the wheat stacks being dealt with under this measure are the result of their patriotic response to the appeal of the Premier to them to continue producing. It was recognised by the farmers that the only chance of saving the industry under the then

conditions was the establishment of the Wheat Pool, and that the handling and marketing of the wheat should be done as economically as possible.

Hon. P. Collier: How can you say that, seeing that the farmers opposed the establishment of that Pool by the Government, and that your association advised them to refuse to put their wheat into the Pool?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I believe advice of that kind was made by one or two individuals, but I have yet to learn the name of one representative of a farming community in all Australia who opposed the establishment of the Wheat Pool.

Hon. P. Collier: The head of your association advised the farmers not to put their wheat into the Pool.

Mr. JOHNSTON: For my part, I always supported the establishment of the Wheat Pool under the conditions that then obtained, and I believe the great volume of representative farmers' opinion throughout the Commonwealth, irrespective of party, worked together to secure this result.

Hon. P. Collier: The Farmers and Settlers' Association were strongly opposed to it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I ask the hon. member to remember that I was not at that time as closely associated with that party as I am to-day. Consequently, those facts do not recur to my mind.

Hon. P. Collier: We as a Government were strongly opposed by those people to whom I have referred.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I understood that on this point throughout Australia there was a general consensus of opinion—

Hon. P. Collier: As usual, when a thing is successful the Country party claim credit for it, even though they opposed it previously.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is not so. I believe the huge majority of the wheat-growers in Australia favoured the Pool, and I give credit to the hon. members opposite who were associated with its establishment. I do say, however, that since the Pool has been established it has been recognised that it should be run as cheaply as possible, that every unnecessary expense in handling should be saved and that we should not have this dual control at the depots. I hope the Government will make a definite announcement that they intend to allow the agent to handle the wheat right through the depot. We do not ask permission to handle anybody else's product, we do not ask permission to make money out of any other section of the community, but we do say that the farmers, through their co-operative societies, should handle their own product right to the ship's side.

Mr. Foley: If the Government take away the guarantee you can have it all.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I will deal with that presently. The farmers and the Government have a common interest in getting the best possible price for the wheat. The interests of the State as mortgagee of the wheat ought to be fully protected.

The Premier: I have a double interest in seeing to that.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Royal Commission condemned the system of dual control entirely, but I fear there is still danger of that system continuing to operate, unless the agreement is extended. I do not care for the form of the executive board proposed in the Bill. It appears to me the provision that the Minister should be chairman is a good one, but I think the board would be quite large enough if it were composed of the Minister and two members elected by the wheat growers. We might eliminate the provision for two other members to be nominated at the hands of the Government, members possibly representative rather of commercial interests than of the growers.

The Attorney General: Suppose they did not agree?

Mr. JOHNSTON: There is a provision that the Government retain control on the question of finance. At any rate there is but little risk of the board not agreeing. I believe the Premier's commendations of the co-operative efforts of the farmers, repeated on several occasions, were entirely sincere. I do not believe they were uttered to please his hearers at any time. That being so, I look to the Premier and the Government with confidence to carry the recommendations of the Royal Commission into effect. What is the use of a Royal Commission, why should the State bear the expense of a Royal Commission, why should we ask the Commissioners to spend months in getting thorough knowledge of the subject and to give us excellent advice, if the recommendations of the Commission are not to be carried into effect?

Hon. P. Collier: They have not been accepted; the contract has been made and signed.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We have seen a letter published in the Press from the Government saying that the matter is to be referred to the executive board which it is proposed to appoint.

Hon. P. Collier: That is information.

The Attorney General: Where was that letter published?

Mr. JOHNSTON: In last week's "Primary Producer."

The Attorney General: There is no such letter. I challenge you to produce the "Primary Producer" with the letter in it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I only made the statement in reply to the interjection of the leader of the Opposition. That, however, is how I read the letter in that paper.

The Attorney General: I gave the information which you read in that paper in my second reading speech on the Bill last week.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must discuss the Bill.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I regret that the interjection of the leader of the Opposition led me away from the point. At any rate, the Minister for Industries says that he made that statement when introducing the Bill, and I am glad to find what I believe appears in the "Primary Producer" is confirmed by the Minister in the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: From the experience of last year it would be dangerous to give any other work outside this agreement.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the recommendation is not accepted are we to take it as an intimation that outside influence or Press dictation has been responsible for the Government not carrying this recommendation into effect. I hope the Government will take such action when appointing nominees to the board as will result in the interests of the wheat growers being conserved in every possible direction. Wherever I go farmers complain that their operations have been held up. I have already said that in the Eastern States the privilege—if it is a privilege—which I advocate has been adopted. I ask members of the Opposition whether it would not be a right, not a privilege, for the producers to handle their own product from the farm to the ship?

Mr. Munsie: No one is objecting to that.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am glad to hear it.

Hon. P. Collier: It is only the Government who are objecting.

Mr. JOHNSTON: This is not included in the agreement.

Mr. Munsie: Why blame us; we did not draft the agreement?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am not blaming the hon. member.

Hon. P. Collier: You are appealing to us.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Does not the leader of the Opposition regard it as a right for the producers to handle their own produce right through.

Mr. Munsie: We do, but not by a limited liability company.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It is true that the State stands in the position of mortgagee on the wheat. We admit that there is a mortgage. The Pool and that mortgage were not created in the interests of the farmers alone. The Pool has been of the utmost value to the industry. It is keeping the industry of wheat growing in Western Australia alive, and in fact throughout Australia, but at the same time the Pool was also necessary to preserve the existence of this State and to assist the Empire in its hour of need. We want the public interests to be protected by the Government in every way. We claim that the Government are capable of doing it equally as well as the Governments of Victoria and South Australia, who permit private firms to act as acquiring agents to handle the wheat on behalf of the Pool, right to the ship's side for export. I hope I made it clear to the House that my only desire is in the interests of the wheat producers, the men whom I represent. Of course the argument has been advanced in the House that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. or other acquiring agents cannot do the work. For two years in this State the Westralian Farmers Ltd. have done this work, and other firms have actually handled the wheat to the ship's side and exported it. Incidentally, I may say they bestow that care on it that only owners of a product will give to it. Their handling, the Royal Commission said, was as good as that of anyone else and it was carried out with greater economy. I have only one final question to ask the Govern-

ment to answer, and it is whether the farmers are going to get that recognition for their co-operative organisation which they are justified in expecting?

Hon. P. Collier: You have already answered that yourself. You said you were sure the Premier would give it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: No. I asked the Government to give me an assurance on that point. On the guarantee already given and the advances made through the wheat Pool, the wheat growers are asking for no further financial assistance from the Government in this matter. They only ask permission from the Government to do their own business through their own company at the lowest price paid in any of the States of the Commonwealth. In conclusion I would like to emphasise the fact that the business acumen possessed by the members of the Government has been so displayed that although our wheat yield is very much less than that of some of the neighbouring States, and although our State is sparsely settled, still the prices being paid to the Westralian Farmers Ltd. the prices paid by the Government on behalf of the wheat growers of this State are as low, if not lower, than those which obtain in any other State of the Commonwealth. I have seen the various amounts. I do not propose to weary the House by repeating them, but the Government may certainly congratulate themselves that they have protected the interests of the wheat growers by paying the lowest possible rates operating in the Commonwealth for the handling of the produce.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [7.55]: I do not desire to say very much on this question, but there are one or two points that I want to touch upon. During the progress of wheat stacking at the various ports the wheat marketing board, through their members, have grossly libelled the port of Geraldton. It has been announced all over the State that Geraldton is a bad place for weevil, that, in fact, it is the worst in the State, and that the wheat was being destroyed there by the weevil. The Royal Commission visited all the ports and the various parts of the State where wheat has been stacked, and I would like to read, for the information of the House, what they had to say in connection with Geraldton. The Commission were unbiased; they had no axe to grind in connection with any particular port, and what they say should be taken notice of. The Attorney General: That is not a part of the Bill.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But it is part of the Scheme. The port of Geraldton has been given a very bad name, and the manager of the Scheme told me that Mr. Love, the British representative, declared that he would not take wheat which was stacked there. This is what the Commission had to say about Geraldton:—

There are several stacks, containing 204, 808 bags of the 1916-17 wheat still stored at this port. This wheat appeared to be badly affected by weevil, and from the outside the stacks had the appearance of being in a very bad condition. On inspection, however, some of these stacks when

opened up showed that the damage was confined to the outer bags only, whilst the wheat in the interior was in fairly good condition. These stacks are closely supervised and well protected. Approximately two miles from Geraldton, at Bluff Point depot, sheds are erected which contain wheat of the 1917-18 season. Unfortunately, weevil was also found in the grain stored there. At this depot one portion of a shed had been filled under the conditions proposed by Professor Lefroy, the floor being closely boarded, covered with hessian, and raised a certain distance from the ground.

Then further on they say—

The action of the farmer who delivered this with the "new" wheat rendered valueless the test under Professor Lefroy's proposals, and was, in addition, the means of possible damage to the whole stack. Such action is detrimental to all the farmers who deliver wheat to the Scheme, and the Commission is of opinion that legislation should be enacted providing heavy penalties to be imposed on any person who thus delivers "old" wheat as "new" to the Scheme, since it is of the utmost importance to protect those farmers who honestly endeavour to make the Scheme a success.

I am very pleased that in framing this Bill attention has been given to the offence of delivering old wheat as new, and that provision has been made for a penalty of £100. If that had been done in the past the reputation of Geraldton would have been as good as that of any other part of the State. With regard to Fremantle, the Royal Commission say that the wheat there was also damaged by weevil, and was in a similar condition to that at Geraldton. At Bunbury the Commission point out that 20 per cent. of the wheat was damaged, while at Albany it is stated in the report that over 111,600 bags were scattered over a large area in small stacks, and were badly damaged by weevil. So that we see, notwithstanding the reputation Geraldton has, when it comes to actual investigation by disinterested persons, Geraldton is no worse than Fremantle, Bunbury, or Albany. Through the reputation that Geraldton has received, we find that now the policy of the board is to cart wheat 343 miles for shipment, that is, from Mullewa to Spencer's Brook, and then ultimately to Fremantle, instead of what should have been a distance of only 65 miles to the port of Geraldton, from where it could have been shipped. I understand that no difference will be made so far as the freight that they are charged is concerned, and that the wheat they produce is going to be taken to Spencer's Brook at the same charge as would be made if it only had to go to Geraldton. This is only due to the fact that this reputation has been given to Geraldton unwarrantably. There is an increase in the rate in connection with the handling of the wheat this season. I have not heard much justification for that at present. Presumably the Westralian Farmers, Limited, made a profit last year, and yet this year the handling charges are increased by one-eighth of a penny per bushel. On the esti-

mated wheat of the coming harvest this would represent a sum of £6,250. Apparently the Westralian Farmers Limited were quite able to profitably handle the wheat last year without this extra impost being placed on the people. I do not see any necessity for the extra charge. Those farmers who did not happen to be members of the Westralian Farmers, Limited, are penalised by being obliged to contribute their share of this increased rate of one-eighth of a penny per bushel. I am prepared to give the second reading my support. I am glad to see the penalty of £100 provided, because I think it is necessary. In Committee, however, I shall object to the passing of Clause 11, which gives the Governor the right to extend the operation of this particular contract to the 1919-20 harvest.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [8.3]: I am going to vote for the second reading of this Bill, but with all the arguments in my power I shall endeavour to defeat the principle contained in Clause 11. I believe in the interests of the farmer of Australia that the Pool has been a good thing. I am not in accord with the views expressed by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Brown). In the interests of the farmers, should the Pool be continued, it should be continued by them without Government assistance. They could then do as they liked.

Mr. Brown: They hope to do that.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope their anticipations will be realised. If we have a prosperous farming community we must have greater prosperity to the State in general. I cannot understand why every speaker, particularly those on the cross benches, keep on trying to convince members on this side of the House that they should support co-operation. We are here to support it. We always did support it, long before the Country party was ever thought of. I do not look upon the Westralian Farmers Ltd. as a true co-operative concern. I admit that the small co-operative branches, which do the handling of the wheat in the country districts, are purely co-operative. I have read their articles of association, and had a good deal to do with some of their work, and admit that they are run truly on the co-operative principle.

Mr. Johnston: They do most of their business through the parent company.

Mr. MUNSIE: I admit that, but the parent company extracts every pound of flesh from them that they can, just as any other commercial firm in Perth does.

Mr. Lutey: Profiteering.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes.

Mr. Maley: They are all shareholders.

Mr. MUNSIE: What benefit has the farmer had out of the Westralian Farmers Ltd.? He gets absolutely no benefit.

Mr. Pickering: That is not true.

Mr. MUNSIE: The farmer does not get any benefit except that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. may, by becoming a big business commercial institution, be able to buy a little cheaper than would otherwise be the case. That is the sole benefit that the farmers would derive from that organisation.

Mr. Maley: That is not so.

Mr. MUNSIE: No one has yet given any instance in which the farmer has benefited.

Mr. Johnston: We would have been out of order if we tried to do so.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the hon. member always sails as close to the wind as that, he will not do so badly.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They sell most of their stuff on commission.

Mr. MUNSIE: Of course they do. I was surprised at the member for York, in particular, inferring the things he did infer. I trust that if any hon. member has anything to say he will say it outright. I do not object to anything that might be said concerning arguments which have been put forward with regard to the policy or principle of members on this side of the House, but I do not like anyone to say certain things, from which an inference may be drawn and then come to a stop as if afraid to go on. So far as the remarks of the member for York are concerned, he knows in his own heart that they were absolutely untrue. In regard to the suggestion made by the Royal Commission for doing away with subletting, I trust that when the Bill is in Committee, and the agreement is being considered, an amendment in this direction will be made.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is too late.

Mr. MUNSIE: That may be, but I am going to make my protest against it. I do not mind so much the Westralian Farmers Ltd. subletting the handling of the wheat to the small country co-operative associations, providing the associations are prepared to go on with the work. I do, however, object to the Government, in framing this agreement, cutting the work down to the very lowest margin at which it can be done by the men who have to do it. Under the method adopted by the Westralian Farmers Ltd. in subletting this work the acquiring agents get the profit. Very often, too, the small co-operative society gets the profit when it sublets the work to the man who actually does it. This amounts to absolute sweating.

Mr. Maley: Many of the men who do the work are shareholders of the small concerns, and the shareholders of the small concerns are also the shareholders of the large one.

Mr. MUNSIE: In addition, the shareholders of the small concerns are being absolutely sweated by the big concern. I must protest against that. I do not believe that the farmer is getting a fair deal. If a man is being sufficiently paid to handle the wheat, and has got the price at which it is sublet from the small co-operative concessions, that is all the Government should charge the farmer or the Pool. Neither the Westralian Farmers nor the small co-operative society have a right to take one half-penny out of the Pool, in the interests of the State and the farmer. The man who does the work is the only man who should get paid. That is why this agreement is provided. They tell us they are determined to work on until they get the complete handling of the wheat from the grower to the ship's side, and they say, "We are going to do it ourselves." They are fostering an institution

to-day which is working exactly on the same lines as John Darling & Co. The farmer is not getting one half-penny more benefit out of the system adopted by the Westralian Farmers Ltd. than if John Darling had been handling the harvest this year. That is the reason why I do not look upon the Westralian Farmers as a co-operative concern. It is purely a limited liability company, trading in the ordinary business way, and making as much profit, and making it out of the farmer, as they possibly can.

Mr. Pickering: What do they do with their profits?

Hon. P. Collier: They pay their directors' fees, and the managing-organising secretary.

Mr. MUNSIE: There are only two items in this Bill with which I disagree. One is the principle under which the Governor in Council may by regulation apply this Bill to the harvest of 1920, as well as to the coming harvest. I hope that when the 1920 harvest is to be garnered the farmers will be in a position to handle their own wheat in the markets of the world, as pointed out by the member for Williams-Narrogin, without coming to the House and asking the people to give them a guarantee of 4s. 9d. a bushel. If they can get 6s. a bushel, well and good. I do not think many hon. members representing the farming constituents here would be as anxious that the Wheat Pool should be continued if there was a rising market in the price of wheat. If there is a possibility of a falling market, however, they would want the 4s. 9d. guarantee again. They actually wanted practically 5s. a bushel guaranteed for a term of five years. I do not think the 1920 harvest will realise what has been guaranteed for the 1919 harvest.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why not?

Mr. MUNSIE: Because other markets of the world will be opening up.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Where is the wheat?

Mr. MUNSIE: Is there no wheat in Russia or in the Argentine? I heard the hon. member discussing the proposition here when the first Wheat Marketing Bill was introduced. He said that if we had the good fortune to force open the Dardanelles, and also the granaries of Russia, there would possibly be a big fall in the price of wheat. I would point out that the Dardanelles are open now.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Things were very different then, and there was no revolution.

Mr. MUNSIE: I say that there is plenty of wheat in Russia now. If there is not plenty, there is an opportunity of growing plenty. It has been grown there in the past, and will be grown there in the future. I am satisfied of this, that do what we will to assist the farmer in Western Australia we have only to label a candidate, when he goes up for election, with the word "labour," and the farmers will vote against him irrespective of what he may be doing for them. But I am also satisfied that the farmers of Western Australia are not as ungrateful as are their representatives in Parliament. I care not what is done for the farmers or how much assistance is given to them—which assistance I do not altogether regret,

although it is more liberal than that given in any other portion of the British dominions—

The Minister for Works: Are not the farmers grateful for it?

Mr. MUNSIE: They would cut the hand off the man who fed them, or many of them would. I believe some of the farmers are grateful, but their representatives here are uniformly ungrateful. We had an instance of that in the speech delivered last night by the member for Beverley (Mr. Brown). When the Government pointed out that by the re-arrangement of the milling agreement under this Bill they had been able to save to the Pool an amount equal to £38,000, we had a representative of the farmers immediately rising to condemn the Government because they had not saved that £38,000 last year as well.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Either too much was paid last year, or too little is being paid this year.

Mr. MUNSIE: Why not give the Government a little credit for their energy? Instead of that, the farmers' representatives are prepared to kick the Government stiff. The farmers' representatives now claim—we had an illustration of that here to-night—that practically the Farmers and Settlers' Association are responsible for the establishment of the Wheat Pool. Again, the "Primary Producer," the leading organ of the Country party, now claims that the Farmers and Settlers' Association are responsible for the establishment of the Industries Assistance Board. If there is thanks or credit due to anybody for the establishment of those institutions, it is the Labour Government and the Labour party. We were opposed in this House as regards both proposals. But the Labour Government established both.

Mr. Troy: And without pressure or support.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes; and against the opposition of the Country party. I trust that in future the farmers, if treated fairly, will recognise the fact. While I realise the necessity in any country, and particularly in one like Western Australia, for encouraging the agricultural industry generally, and wheat growing in particular, if the farmers in Western Australia cannot make a success without a continuance of the assistance of the last three or four years, the sooner the Western Australian Government tell them there is nothing more for them, the better for Western Australia will it be.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.20]: In addressing myself to this Bill I want to read, in refutation of the statements made by the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale), some extracts from the report of the Royal Commission on the wheat marketing industry. That hon. member has the faculty of reading, and he might have extended his faculty of reading to the evidence of the man against whom he made such serious allegations. I now quote, from page 237, portion of Mr. Stirling Taylor's evidence—

There has been some evidence given by a Mr. Paton, the Scheme's representative



on the wharf. Mr. Paton was outside inspector in the first year of the Pool. He has made certain astounding allegations against us in regard to nine tons of wheat which we are supposed to have lost when loading the s.s. "Kangaroo," and he also expatiates at some length on other matters. It is not my desire to waste any time whatsoever over Mr. Paton's evidence. Even Mr. Keys, who now knows him intimately, does not take him seriously. I claim justification for this from the evidence given by Mr. Keys. I just wish to give an emphatic denial of the statements made by him, and to suggest that if the Commission are not satisfied as to the incorrectness of Mr. Paton's evidence, they call anyone else they like who was present on the wharf during 1915-16 season. They would, I feel sure, get an unbiassed statement from Captain Clark, stevedore.

The Minister for Works: That does not answer the statement.

Mr. PICKERING: It gives an emphatic denial to the statement. It is a direct refutation of the statement made by the member for Roebourne. Mr. Stirling Taylor also said that he was quite prepared, as against any other evidence the Commission might call, to verify the statement he had made. The attack on Mr. Taylor went not only to that extent but also to the misrepresentation of his character. Contumely was cast upon him because, in the first instance, he had not had the opportunities that some members of the community have enjoyed. It is a very bad state of affairs if any member of this House makes such statements against a man who is not here to defend himself.

Mr. Teesdale: You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. PICKERING: The member for Roebourne should be ashamed of himself. I did not anticipate such charges from the hon. member.

Mr. Teesdale: I merely read the evidence.

Mr. PICKERING: I refer to the statements which accompanied the reading of the evidence. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) said in justification of Mr. Basil Murray that that gentleman had built up the wheat business of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Basil Murray is not under discussion. I cannot allow hon. members to go on referring to him. Let hon. members keep to the Bill.

Mr. PICKERING: Seeing that Mr. Basil Murray is managing director of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and is referred to in the agreement contained in the Second Schedule to this Bill, I am in order in referring to him when unjust accusations have been launched against him. Mr. Stirling Taylor was really the man who built up the wheat business of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and Mr. Basil Murray does not desire to take any of the credit away from that gentleman.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Which of them is Lloyd George?

Mr. PICKERING: Unfortunately, through pressure of private business, I was deprived of the opportunity of hearing the leader of the Opposition and the member for North-East Fremantle last evening. The only place in which I can familiarise myself with the statements made by those gentlemen is the report published in to-day's "West Australian." I regret to find that the leader of the Opposition has adopted the usual tactics of casting vituperation and abuse upon the unfortunate party of which I have the honour to be a member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member quoting from the "West Australian"?

Mr. PICKERING: No, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member began by saying that he had not heard the speech of the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member cannot quote from the "West Australian" in this debate.

Mr. PICKERING: I have a very vivid impression of having heard somewhere that the leader of the Opposition made certain unjust statements in regard to this party. Apart from the question of the executive board, I find there is very little on which to comment. Regarding the board, the leader of the Opposition seems to think there is a marked difference between the board as recommended by the Royal Commission and the board as proposed by this Bill. I can find very little difference between the two proposals. The Bill recommends a board consisting of five members, two to be elected by the contributors to the Pool, two to be nominated by the Government, and one to be a member of the Executive Council. The recommendation of the Royal Commission is to the effect that the board shall consist of five members, the Minister to be the chairman, two members to be elected by the contributors to the Pool, and two members to be nominated by the Government. I see very little difference between the two proposals, and I fail to understand why the leader of the Opposition should seek to make it appear that there is any marked difference. I quite agree with the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) that the power of the executive board is negligible.

Mr. Munzie: It is not an executive board.

Mr. PICKERING: It is called an executive board, but it is not an executive board in a proper sense. The member for Leonora (Mr. Polev) has said the Westralian Farmers, who are the acquiring agents under this Bill, are politically controlled. But on the other side of the Chamber we have it put the other way, that the members of the Country party are the nominees of the acquiring agents. Seeing that I have been most intimately associated with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., since the inception of the company, I may be able to throw some light on the matter.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are you a shareholder?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. I hold 20 shares.

Mr. Holman: I am a bigger shareholder than you are.

Mr. PICKERING: The company was formed amongst the farmers of Western Australia, and it is wrong to say the shares are not broad

distributed. I am prepared to maintain that a great number of the small farmers of Western Australia are, like myself, small holders in that concern. It is wrong to say that the company is not co-operative; there is no company in Western Australia more truly co-operative. As regards the profits accruing in the business, the shareholders are limited to seven per cent., and any surplus is distributed among the clients of the company by bonus shares, or by ordinary shares where the recipient would be qualified to hold ordinary shares. Otherwise the clients receive bonus shares.

Mr. Munsie: And the bonus is paid to them after they are dead.

Mr. PICKERING: The interest on those shares is the same as that on the original shares. The holders of the shares that are thus issued receive the same interest as the ordinary shareholder gets. The only difference is that the one share is not negotiable. The statement was made by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) that one Christie had been employed by a co-operative society to do certain work and had found difficulty in getting his money. This gentleman, it appears from inquiries, was employed by a local co-operative society to do certain work, and instead of doing that work he got the farmers to do it for him, and then expected payment. This was opposed, and it was because of that that Christie wrote, threatening legal proceedings. The local co-operative society paid the man in full because in a previous case it had been found the costs were so much greater than the amount at issue that it was better to pay the claim. There is now pending against this gentleman an action for libel. There is no reliance to be placed on his statements. I attach some importance to the attitude of the member for North-East Fremantle, who seems desirous that the State should take over the handling of the wheat. In respect of the millers it has been alleged that Mr. Padbury made £30,000 out of his flour deal.

The Minister for Works: Does Mr. Padbury admit that?

Mr. PICKERING: I think so. There is another firm, the York Milling Company, which could have made a similar deal but were prevented on account of the high freight offered by the Japanese shipping company. It would have been possible for the Japanese company to get this flour if they desired by putting in a lower freight. The responsibility for that rests with the central Wheat Board in Melbourne, and it is evidence of the Government's incapacity when they allow millers to compete against the Pool and make a profit of £30,000.

The Minister for Works: But it is only an allegation.

Mr. PICKERING: It is a fact.

The Minister for Works: You cannot prove it.

Mr. PICKERING: I can, and I challenge you to disprove it. The facts are as I say. I am convinced that the more this handling is left to the co-operative companies, the benefits from which go to the wheat-grower, the

better it will be for the grower. I take this opportunity of expressing the gratitude of members representing the industry to the members of the Royal Commission. We feel that the result of their careful investigations is likely to be of great value to the industry. I only regret that the chairman of the commission, the member for North-East Fremantle, is so embittered against the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., that he cannot give them ordinary justice.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He is the fairest man in the House.

Mr. PICKERING: I admit that in general, but on this question I think he has a kink.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in imputing motives.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not imputing motives. The hostile attitude of the chairman towards the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., has been an outstanding feature of the Commission. The hon. member seems to be obsessed with the idea that this co-operative movement is worthy only of contempt and ridicule.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We have not attacked the principle at all.

Mr. PICKERING: But you have attacked the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and have imputed to us undue influence over that firm.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Thousands might believe you, but I would not.

Mr. PICKERING: I should not expect you to.

Mr. O'Loughlen: None of your members have replied to the member for North-East Fremantle.

Mr. PICKERING: There is no justification whatever for the remarks made by the member for Leonora.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member were to discuss the Bill, we might get along a little better.

Mr. PICKERING: The member for Leonora said that the handling of the wheat by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., has been more expensive than it was previously. I challenge him to prove that statement. The cost of handling the wheat since the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., took it over has been considerably reduced. I am convinced that the Government are adopting a right course when they hand over the handling of the wheat to a company which has demonstrated its fitness for the work and which has had the hallmark of approval from the Royal Commission. This company has shown its ability to handle the wheat either in competition or by sole agency, and it would be most unwise for the Government to contemplate any change in the handling of the wheat.

Mr. O'Loughlen: If the company has the hallmark of approval of the chairman of the Royal Commission, how can you say that he is biased against the company?

Mr. PICKERING: Any praise given to the company by the chairman of the Commission has been grudgingly given. When a question was put to him this evening, the answer he gave showed that he was not in sympathy with the company.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No question has been put to me this evening.

Mr. PICKERING: You stated it by way of interjection.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I said that from past experience no extension of the agreement could be made now. But you held a pistol to the head of the Minister last year and made him pay double for the work. He had to do it, because the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., was the only firm handling the wheat. That firm robs the farmers just as much as does any other firm.

Mr. PICKERING: I am satisfied that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., are competent to fulfil all their obligations.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member would discuss the Bill, he would get on much better.

Mr. PICKERING: I support the second reading.

Mr. Foley: I desire to raise a point of order before the division is taken on this question. My point of order is that any member who is a shareholder in one of these co-operatives societies, who are sub-agents and are handling the wheat and being paid for so doing under the agreement in the Bill, that hon. member is not entitled to vote on the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better raise the point when the vote is being taken.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [8.42]: I have listened to a great deal that has been said in connection with this matter, but very little that referred to the Bill. It is useless to bring down agreements to the House for consideration after those agreements have been signed, sealed and delivered. We have been told that last year the millers, by reason of their agreement with the Wheat Pool, made a profit of £38,000. Last year we were asked to ratify an agreement that had been in existence for months. It is an absolute farce. I have not looked up "Hansard" of last year, but no doubt if I did I should find that the Minister promised on that occasion that we should see the agreement before it was signed and acted upon this year. Because of this I will vote for the striking out of Clause 11. I am not going to discuss agreements which I cannot alter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But you can alter this.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I cannot. The acquiring agents are receiving wheat under it to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That makes no difference.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not see how we can alter an agreement between the Government and the acquiring agents.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Unless it was made subject to ratification by Parliament.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I only hope we can alter it. Whatever arrangement may have been made with the millers last year, this year's agreement is particularly liberal. I have no objection to the millers doing well. It is well that in this State we have a milling capacity far beyond the average of any of the other States. We were able to mill half our crop. I have no objection to paying millers

a fair price for doing the work, because the weevil in the wheat has given a good deal more trouble and there is greater risk than they would take in ordinary times. I am not going to agree to the proposal for the appointment of the board. So far as I can see, the board will be a Minister's board. Two of the nominees and a Minister will sit with two members elected by the wheat growers. The discussion to-night has shown me that it would be better to hand over the control of this work to the board, to take it altogether outside the control of Parliament. We are told that the finances connected with this matter are so important that the board must be controlled by a Minister. As a matter of fact, the only money that the board could exercise control over would be the money handed over to them by the Government for wheat advances. The member for North-East Fremantle pointed out that the charges which went to the Westralian Farmers last year amounted to .625 of a penny, and that the amount the sub-agents received was just under a penny, making a total of 1½d. for the acquiring agents. The hon. member said it would cost 1s. 2d. to take the wheat from the farm to the ship, allowing, of course, for many charges which are occasioned by reason of the fact that wheat will be in a bad state for a couple of years. But even if the charge of 1s. per bushel were made against wheat, the wheat board would have very little control over the expenditure. I do not know that the farmers of this State care very much who handles their wheat so long as it is handled well and cheaply. I would be glad to admit that the charges received by the acquiring agents are not very large. There is no particular reason why the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., should have the handling of this wheat. I think the Government have no right to do the work to the hurt of other people who trade in a similar way. We hear a good deal about fortunes made by Darling, Bell, and Dreyfus but I do not know that those fortunes have been made out of wheat. I do know that if the money that these firms have were spread over all the bushels of wheat they have handled, it would be a small fraction of a penny that they would have.

Mr. O'Loughlen: John Darling died worth over a million.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But he made his money principally out of Broken Hill. I have no objection to the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., handling wheat so long as they do it well and cheaply. I agree that the acquiring agents should handle the wheat to the ship. They did it two years ago.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They did not; there were no ships then.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Then three years ago. There were always ships coming here practically up to June, 1916.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: All the wheat had to be taken over on the 31st December, 1917.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Someone has to take the responsibility. The Scheme takes it to-day. The agents who were paid to take it did not take it, and if it costs 1s. under the present

method, then that method, even allowing for the special charges, is more expensive. If we can get it done cheaper by giving the work to the acquiring agents alone, we certainly ought to do it. I agree with a good deal of what has been said about payment to the agents in the country. They are entitled to the major portion of the money, because they do the major portion of the work. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) had something to say about Mr. Stirling Taylor, the manager of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. I know Mr. Taylor very well, and I believe he is a capable man. He certainly did not deserve all that was said about him by the member for Roebourne. I have had a good deal to do with Mr. Taylor. Of course during the first year, the wheat received by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., was not handled well, but afterwards it was very well done indeed. My relations with Mr. Taylor have been very satisfactory. He has displayed considerable ability in responding to the request made by the management of the Pool. It has to be remembered that the work of handling the wheat was quite new to the company in 1915-16, and it has also to be remembered that the Pool was a fresh thing. There were no inspectors with experience, and the management was not what it is to-day. I must speak of Mr. Taylor as I find him. He is certainly a satisfactory man to have any business relations with. When the Bill is in Committee I am going to endeavour to have Clause 4 amended to provide for a board that will have fairly extensive powers. I want to see this question of dealing with our wheat kept well away from the work of members here. We have heard during this debate the interest that members take in the acquiring agency, but I do not think it is good to associate politics with a matter of this kind. I admit that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., is composed of farmers who produce wheat, but all the farmers who grow wheat are not members of this concern.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are compelled to be members; they cannot help themselves.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There cannot be compulsion. In order that we may place the board on a business footing I intend to propose to alter the suggested personnel. I welcome the suggestion that we should appoint a board to look after the affairs of the Wheat Pool. I suppose the Pool will last only a short time now. I do not know how we can have a compulsory Pool when the markets of the world are open, and it will not be long before the Federal Government fail to find money to make further advances. If there are to be no more advances the Pool cannot exist.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They can finance it themselves.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Pool have been a decided advantage to us, and it is the work of the Federal Government that we have to acknowledge. I do not wish to discuss the matter further. I doubt whether the Pool will last much longer. I hope we shall be able to sell our wheat. I think we shall be able to

do so at a reasonable price. The member for North-East Fremantle fears that the Government will lose on the wheat on which 4s. 4d. a bushel is being guaranteed. I think he is wrong. With regard to finding markets for the wheat, I have seen later reports than those quoted by the member for North-East Fremantle, in which it was stated that Great Britain would require 200 million bushels of wheat. That will be Australia's opportunity.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I was quoting the food controller at home.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is true there are some markets closer to England than Australia, but we have the opportunity of supplying England now, and if we can get the shipping we shall be able to sell the wheat we have at a reasonable price.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning—in reply) [8.59]: I have to thank hon. members for the moderate way in which they have referred to the Bill. I want to say a few words in reply, and I desire particularly to refer to the work of the Royal Commission. The whole country is indebted to the chairman and members of the Royal Commission. Most Royal Commissions are abused.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I think we should pay this Royal Commission.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There are very few recommendations of Royal Commissions which are followed, but the bulk of the recommendations of this Royal Commission have either found their way into practice or are incorporated in this Bill. I feel sure I am voicing the opinion of the whole community when I pay a special tribute to the chairman of that board, the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin). No man has ever sat on a board or Royal Commission, that we have had in this State, who has given so much of his undivided attention without fear or favour to the subject before him.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Without pay.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He has done this without pay, without regard to the political aspect, and purely from the economical view and for the best interests of Western Australia. I would also like to note, in passing, that many hon. members of this Chamber have recognised the merits of my colleague, the Honorary Minister, Hon. C. F. Baxter. He is a man who has been a great deal misunderstood. The Royal Commission and other members, who know him best, understand how untiring his energy has been, and how wholeheartedly he has worked for the farmers, many of whom have misunderstood him, or affected to misunderstand him, and wished to punish him or abolish him from office. No man in this country has worked harder for the farming community of this State and with more successful results than the Hon. Mr. Baxter. I notice in dealing with one or two of the provisions of the Bill that the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison), who was supported by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston), who by the way this afternoon delivered a speech to which we were all pleased to listen,

because he spoke directly to the points affecting the Bill—

Mr. O'Loughlen: He was in a good humour.

Mr. Pickering: He ought not to be.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Strongly advocated what they called handling the wheat from the farm to the depot. By interjection the member for North-East Fremantle explained the position quite easily. The agreement with the Westralian Farmers Ltd. was completed for a partial service, what is called the acquiring part of the service, which appeared in the schedule of the Bill before the Royal Commission's report was published. I am open to correction on this point.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A month after.

Mr. Pickering: There is nothing to prevent a further agreement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We will never get a further agreement that is satisfactory. Past experience has proved that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Government felt they had no right to take upon themselves what might be part of the functions of an executive board. They thought they were going quite far enough in saying, on the recommendation of the Royal Commission, "We will establish an executive board." I hope the agreement as it is will be approved by this Chamber. The executive board, when it comes into being, will have some power. It will practically have the power of the Minister except in financial matters, and may make many changes in the administration of the Wheat Scheme. I have no doubt it will have to give that proper regard to the findings of the Royal Commission that the Government and hon. members of this House have already bestowed upon them. The Government felt they would be entrenching on the work of the days to come if they altered the present agreement. No words of mine are necessary to show that whatever appears in this Bill does not appear there through the pressure of any party, political or otherwise. If I did not say this I suppose someone would be kind enough to remark that the Government did not deny it. We have had regard to the report of the Royal Commission. The Government, however, are bound to listen to the representations made to them from time to time by representatives of the people, whether they sit on the cross benches, the Opposition benches, or behind the Government. To say that political pressure has been brought to bear upon the Government is foolish and not true in fact. I think the Hon. Mr. Baxter has shown during his term of office, in the handling of the Wheat Scheme, that no pressure of any kind, except the ordinary reasonable logical sequence of events, would make him swerve from that path which he deemed to be his line of duty. One or two members have stated that they lived for the day when the farmer would market his own wheat, and when he would handle it from the farm up to the time when it was sold in London. No one would be more pleased to see that day than the Honorary Minister, or the advisory board. For my part I also echo those sentiments. We would not have to introduce these wheat handling Bills if that was

the case. So long, however, as the farmer calls upon the Government to handle his wheat, so long must the Government take a hand in the management of the affairs of the board. It would be a poor Government which would submit to a guarantee, such as we have given, being administered by any board however capable that board might be. This is final so far as the Government are concerned. It cannot be done. I hold that those persons who have asked for such a thing must be biassed. No person who looks at Western Australia as a legislator, and who scans the State from the north to the south, and has regard to the interests of any person in it, would dream of asking for the control of the affairs of the board whilst the Government guarantee is there. It is not a business proposition, and will not bear argument for a moment. I want to read a word or two from the evidence given before the board. It was said by one hon. member that in consequence of the fair average quality standard being reduced to 58 its value had been lessened, and that the proper standards were not taken, and an instance was given of a visit to the Westralian Farmers Ltd. where lots of wheat were found to have been improperly sampled and much below 58. In question 7214 put to Mr. Keys we find the following:—

We were in the Westralian Farmers' office the other day, where they had three large tin boxes locked up containing fair average samples of the wheat taken when put into the depots. There were three lots weighed out of the Spencer's Brook depot; I cannot swear to this, but from memory all were under 58?—That is not a fair average of the Spencer's Brook wheat.

Mr. Harrison says he thought there were 56, 57, and 58?—That is not a fair average of the Spencer's Brook wheat.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: At that time he had not made a test. He has made a test since, and said it was 60.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It must not be thought that, because a few samples in the Westralian Farmers' rooms were found to be below the average, the wheat in the stacks or at the depots is also below the standard. Mr. Keys says that the wheat is well up to sample, and the member for North-East Fremantle has interjected that the standard is now 60.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We were told that was put there to avoid disputes in future.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for North-East Fremantle raised the question as to the constitution of the board. As a matter of fact, the board is being constituted practically in the terms of the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not raise that point, but raised the point as to the powers of the board.

Mr. Broun: It is not an executive board.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Two members are to be nominated by the Government and two elected by the farmers. What the farmers wanted was two members to represent them, one member to be nominated or sent from the Chamber of Commerce, and

another member to come from the banks. I would have no objection to that but for the Government guarantee.

Mr. Broun: The Minister is to be chairman.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He would have no power or control over the board unless the Government had direct representation upon it. There can be no control. The Bill contains the recommendation of the Royal Commission, and these are the terms which the Government propose to support.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Commission recommended two members for the Government and two for the farmers; the Minister to be chairman.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know that I should have referred to the question of penalties but that it was raised by the member for Beverley (Mr. Broun). I desire to give him an answer which I hope will be intelligible to him. I do not see what it has to do with any member of this House, if the Westralian Farmers Ltd. in negotiating their agreement, agreed to these penalties. Does the hon. member object to them on behalf of the Westralian Farmers Ltd.?

Mr. Broun: I gave you my reason for objecting.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am coming to that. The reason given by the hon. member is that the same penalties are not imposed on the millers. I will deal with that phase of the question in a moment. If the work is well carried out by the Westralian Farmers Ltd., there can be no reason for objecting to the penalties or for enforcing them; and so far as I know the Westralian Farmers Ltd. do not object to the penalties. The agreement lasts for a season; and if there were no penalties the only way of dealing with breaches, or negligence, or carelessness would be to estreat the bond.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Or to cancel the contract.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Or to cancel the contract. Either course would be not only unwieldy, but almost impracticable in the middle of a season; and no one knows that better than the acquiring agency knows it. The only way of keeping the agency up to its work is to provide penalties, and, if the agency fails, to enforce the penalties. The member for Beverley must not forget that his company have a practical monopoly and therefore must put up with such restrictions as are proper and necessary to control that monopoly. The hon. member questioned, too, the amount of the bond. Surely the amount of the bond cannot be less than the liability of the company. The bond in my opinion is a small amount and might well be more.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What good would it be if it were more?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: But there will be no need to appeal to the bond or to take into consideration the question of terminating the agreement if small breaches can be dealt with under the penalty clauses. As regards the millers' bond, it is only £1,000; but the member for Beverley overlooks two remedies which the Scheme have in respect of the millers and which they have not in respect

of the acquiring agency. As I have explained, the acquiring agency must continue right through the season, since otherwise there would be a fine muddle. On the other hand, the Minister can immediately terminate a miller's agreement, or he may refuse to renew it after a three-months period. Further, he has another remedy against the miller which it would be impossible to have against the Westralian Farmers, and that is to charge 10 per cent. on account sales which are delayed over a fortnight.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The less you say of that the better. I do not think any interest will ever be paid, even if the accounts are paid.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Now in this season the power to terminate the millers' agreement is not a power that need lie idly by. It may be made use of, because we have not such factors as weevils or mice, or other pests which might necessitate the active co-operation of the millers, as was necessary in the previous year. There is no doubt, also, that if one or more of the mills dropped out, it would make no particular difference.

Mr. Broun: You say the miller must dispose of the old flour before he sells the new. What penalty is imposed on him if he sells the new flour before the old?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There are penalties provided.

Mr. Broun: I fail to discover them in the agreement.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have sufficiently replied to hon. members and I hope the second reading will be carried.

Mr. Foley: I desire to raise a point of order under Standing Order 192, which reads—

No member shall be entitled to vote in any division upon any question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest, and a vote of any member so interested shall be disallowed.

Mr. SPEAKER: I may tell the hon. member that this is not the stage at which to raise that point. When the division is being taken, if the hon. member then raises the point, I will advise him, so far as I can, what to do.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. G. Taylor in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2 of the principal Act:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There is something new in this clause. "Minister" is to include "member of the Executive Council for the time appointed as chairman of the Wheat Marketing Board." What is the need for the amendment?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is desired that Mr. Baxter should be chairman of the board, and he is a Minister without portfolio.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I quite understand that, but this seems to be a means of providing an extra Minister with executive power. It is an extraordinary provision. I shall not

object to the clause, although I think it is a pity that we should depart from the usual custom.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This clause is necessary. If a portfolio Minister administering the Wheat Scheme were called away, an Honorary Minister would take his place at the meetings of the board. The funds to be dealt with are the funds of the Scheme. I am rather surprised that the member for Northam should raise this question, seeing that for three years he, as Honorary Minister, administered a department and spent more money than any of his colleagues.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But there was always the control of the statutory Minister.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is impracticable for the portfolio Minister to be always present at meetings of the board. A Minister must be present; otherwise there might be two members of the board on each side.

Clause put and passed.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Wheat Marketing Board:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I hope hon. members will assist me to improve this clause in one or two respects. The first point is the limitation of the board's power of administration. If this clause passes as printed, the board will be in exactly the same position as the advisory board of to-day—able to recommend, but having no power to expend any money whatever. The Royal Commission's recommendation was that the board should be appointed with full administrative powers, while the Government would retain absolute control over the finances as regards the guarantee. This clause proposes an alteration which I consider unnecessary. Subclause (4) provides that no public servant shall be a member of the board and that no director, officer, manager, or servant of any company concerned in wheat acquiring shall become a member of the board. But the subclause goes even further, and provides that no person who has ever been a manager or a director, or interested in any way as an acquiring agent, shall become a member of the board. One of the best members we ever had on that board was Mr. Deane Hammond. Immediately he was asked to go on the board, he resigned his position as a director of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., though there was no necessity at the time for him to do so. He would be debarred for all time under this clause from becoming a member of the executive board. Mr. Hammond resigned from the Wheat Board because the board's powers were diminished, and because it became an advised instead of an advisory board. The Minister at the end of 1916 did not take any notice of the board.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is not so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister in 1917 never attended a meeting of the board. Mr. Hammond did not want to be treated as a child, and consequently he resigned his position on the board.

The Attorney General: If that provision is cut out, Mr. Basil Murray might be appointed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The limitation is altogether too restrictive. The fees to be paid to members of the board should be fixed. If in order, I shall presently move that the fees be on the same scale as those paid to the members of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, namely, two guineas per sitting, with the total amount limited. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of the proviso to Subclause

1 the words "and of all expenditure of administration" be struck out.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think the proviso should remain as printed. The responsibility of the Government is a very heavy one. I do not care what the expenditure may be, the Government should have the right to say whether or not they will agree to that expenditure, because unreasonable expenditure would mean a larger amount than the Government guarantee. Everybody desires that the farmer should get every penny of his money, and that no loss should fall on the State. Because the Government retain the control of the finances, is not to say they will refuse to consult with these men. I understand that the expenditure of the board runs into something like £100,000 per annum.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Over £50,000 is for handling the wheat, the contract for which is let by the Government.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Government must retain the control over the finances for the protection of the people of the State. The guarantee is a heavy liability.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This will be an administrative board without any administrative powers. The Government have not put a penny into the Pool; in fact they have drawn a great deal from the Pool. The only occasion on which the Government contributed anything was in Mr. Wilson's time, when we paid by way of dividend £250,000 more than the Commonwealth Government were willing to let us have. The State may be responsible for the 3s. But certainly the State will never pay one penny of that 3s. It is only reasonable that the board should have some power over expenditure and over the staff.

Mr. DRAPER: In this we are dealing, not with a matter for all time, but with a Bill to meet peculiar circumstances of a temporary nature. It is idle to shut one's eyes to the fact that the Government are responsible, at any rate, on guarantee, for half the difference between 3s. and 4s. 4d. I should not be surprised to hear that the board would be working on an overdraft for which the Government would be responsible. In these circumstances it is quite reasonable and proper that a representative of the Government and of this House should have the ultimate control of the expenditure of the board. The control of the expenditure should not be allowed to pass away from this House. It has been objected that the board could do nothing unless the authority is first taken away from the Minister. That is a fallacy. The Bill merely provides that the Minister shall have control

of the expenditure. This merely gives the Minister a veto over the expenditure. The Minister would not veto any ordinary expenditure. I hope the Committee will agree to the clause.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It appears to me that in Subclause 3 "prescribed member" should be "prescribed number." Will the Attorney General explain this?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The word "member" should be "number." I move an amendment—

That in line 10 of Subclause 3 the word "members" be struck out and "number" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. PILKINGTON: I move a further amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Subclause 3:—"Provided further that one of the other two members of the board shall be appointed on the recommendation of the Perth Chamber of Commerce."

The clause as it stands at present provides that there shall be two members elected by the farmers, two appointed by the Governor, who may be removed at any moment by the Governor, and a chairman. If my amendment is agreed to the Government will still have the right to appoint two members, but one of those two members will have to be appointed on the recommendation of the Perth Chamber of Commerce. The Bill appears to me to give absolute control to the Minister so that I think the board will be useless. The Minister will have two persons on the board whom he can appoint and remove at any time. It may be said that he will not remove those gentlemen. I can understand the Government telling us under the agreement which exists that it is essential that the Government should have absolute control. I do protest, however, against a board which, in effect, gives a Minister absolute and complete control, and which allows him to shift responsibility. My amendment is reasonable. We should ensure the presence on the board of a person with commercial experience.

Mr. Jones: What about the consuming public?

Mr. PILKINGTON: They are interested too, and it is important that there should be on the board a representative of the commercial community, who understands commercial enterprises.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What special claim has the Perth Chamber of Commerce over the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, or even over the Geraldton or Kalgoorlie Chambers of Commerce? The Chambers of Commerce in this State are composed mainly of representatives of Eastern States' firms. We have just as good a claim for the representation of the lumbers' union on the board. They have more to do with wheat than the Perth Chamber of Commerce, because they handle it. This power should be left entirely in the hands of the Government. If the Government want to appoint a member of the Chamber of Commerce they can do so.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot support the amendment, because it is already covered by the clause. I feel sure the member for Perth wants nothing more than that the Government shall nominate a capable business man. That is what the Government propose to do.

Mr. TROY: I intend to vote against the amendment, because there is no reason why the Chamber of Commerce at Perth or anywhere else should be entitled to representation on this board, apart from any other section of the community. If the Chamber of Commerce is entitled to representation, why not other sections of the community? I always thought of the Chamber of Commerce as a party of biased persons, always making suggestions and offering criticism without coming forward without any helpful assistance for the party in power. If any member of that body is a grower of wheat he will have a vote for the election of the representative of the wheat growers and that is all to which he is entitled. Many of these gentlemen are representatives of firms having their headquarters in the Eastern States, and as they are merely birds of passage, there is every reason why they should not be represented. I have a further suspicion of this body when I realise that in business they are all mixed up together and are, in fact, engaged in an unlawful combination. They all play into each other's hands and upon the whole community. In fact, we ought to declare it an illegal organisation. There is no justification for the amendment.

Mr. MULLANY: I also oppose the amendment. It is the most extraordinary thing I have yet heard of in this Chamber. Indeed, it is an impudent proposal. Imagine a body of individuals who have no interest in the wheat wishing to be represented on this board! The member for Perth appears to be unable to express any views other than those put forward by the Perth Chamber of Commerce. Surely he is not acting under direct instructions from that body.

Mr. HOLMAN: I feel that someone ought to take the part of the Perth Chamber of Commerce. No doubt the prosperity of the State depends upon it, and why, therefore, should they not be represented on a board which deals with the very staff of life? We know that the Government are not to be depended upon to put the best men upon this board. I congratulate the member for Perth upon his far sightedness in asking that some organisation which possesses a certain amount of intellect shall have a voice in nominating members of the board, but I am afraid there is not much chance of our carrying this through.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The idea is that the board should be the real thing, and not merely a sham. I would remind hon. members of what has happened in the past, when Mr. Bickford, who did magnificent work, was replaced by Mr. Pearse, a civil servant. No doubt the two members nominated by the Minister will override the farmers' representatives, and it will become a Minister's board. It will not be as strong a board to protect the interests of the farmer as it is now. It would be almost



a waste of money for the farmers to go to the expense of electing representatives upon the board. The Chamber of Commerce is quite competent to name someone who would make a suitable member of this body.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are not the Government competent?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, but the Government would have control of the board. The idea is that the board should watch the interests of the farmer as well as of the people generally, and be able to exercise some influence even against the Minister, if necessary. Failing this proposal I should like to see three representatives appointed by the farmers.

Mr. BROWN: The farmers' representatives under this provision would be elected by the wheat growers as a whole. I intend to move an amendment to Subclause 4, striking out the reference to any servant, director, or officer being able to sit on the board. I do not see what objection there could be to allowing the Government to nominate the other two members, although I should like to support the member for Perth in his efforts to have a member of the Chamber of Commerce upon it. The board is very little better under this Bill than it is at present. I should like to have seen an executive board appointed possessing full powers. I will at all events support any provision that will give us the best possible board.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. BROWN: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause (4) the words "or who may have been a director, officer, or servant of any incorporated company or firm acting as a Government acquiring agent" be struck out.

My reasons are those stated by the member for North-East Fremantle, with regard to Mr. Hammond—undoubtedly one of the best representatives the farmers have had on the board. And there are other gentlemen in practically the same position as Mr. Hammond.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I quite realise that Mr. Deane Hammond would be an admirable member of the board. Some exception has been taken to his going on the board, but I personally should not have the very slightest objection. However, I strongly object to any existing director, officer, or servant of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., the acquiring agents for the Scheme, resigning his position in that company in order to put up for election as a growers' member. Such a possibility should not even be tolerated by the Committee. Personally I have the highest respect for the Westralian Farmers' officers, but they must not go on this board, and I have no hesitation in saying that if by any chance the amendment was carried and one or other of those gentlemen was elected to the board the Government would dissolve the board.

Mr. Brown: That is absolutely a threat. What will be the use of the board if the Minister is to have absolute control?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Is there one member in this Chamber who will support the taking from the Government of powers which

are rightfully theirs and the placing of the Westralian Farmers Ltd. in those powers? What does the hon. member want the amendment carried for, if not for that purpose?

Mr. BROWN: I am unable to understand the Attorney General's attitude.

The Attorney General: Whom do you want to put on the board?

Mr. BROWN: The Government themselves would elect the members under this clause.

Hon. P. Collier: Oh no!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They will be elected by the wheat growers.

Mr. BROWN: It is useless to give the farmers the board if the Attorney General really means what he has threatened, namely to dissolve the board if a man whom we have nominated is elected.

The Attorney General: I said, if a member of the Westralian Farmers is put on the board. Do not affect to misunderstand me.

Mr. BROWN: To-day there are on the board two farmers' representatives nominated by Mr. Baxter. They are shareholders in the Westralian Farmers, and I think one of them has been an officer, I fancy a director, of the Westralian Farmers.

Hon. P. Collier: If we get down to legislating for one man, it is very peculiar indeed.

Mr. Holman: Why waive anything for anybody?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: What we want to do is to prevent a director or officer or employee of one of these companies resigning his position in order to become a member of the board.

Hon. P. Collier: Stick to your clause, Mr. Attorney!

Hon. J. Mitchell: My idea was to insert "for the past 12 months" after "servant" in line 3.

Mr. HOLMAN: This is a most extraordinary proposition. Here we have a clause supposed to be based on a principle, and the principle, if it is good for any time, is good for all the time. To see a Minister in charge of an important Bill agreeing to waive an important provision of it merely because one or two members have expressed the opinion that a certain man is very capable, absolutely astounds me. The better course would be to insert a proviso that if so-and-so is willing to sit on the board he may do so. The Government degrade their position in the State by allowing themselves to be turned and twisted on this wheat question.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I fail to see why any person who has held a position in a company concerned in wheat acquiring should be debarred from a seat on the board. My objection is that by this restriction we are not treating everybody alike. Is it at all likely that Mr. Murray, Mr. McGibbon, or Mr. Taylor is going to give up his high salaried position in the Westralian Farmers Ltd. in order to take a seat on this board? The supposition is ridiculous.

The Attorney General: What I seek to prevent is an officer or director resigning now in order to obtain a seat on the board.

The CHAIRMAN: We are now discussing the amendment moved by the member for Beverley, and the member for Northam has suggested another amendment. If the Committee carries the amendment of the member for Beverley and agrees that the words shall remain part of the question, I shall not be able to accept the amendment of the member for Northam.

Mr. MALEY: What is the position in regard to another big spending department of the State which is carrying out its functions by means of an executive board? I refer to the Industries Assistance Board. I want to allow every person to exercise equal rights.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope the Minister will stick to the clause. There can be no comparison between the work of the Industries Assistance Board and the board which would be appointed under the Bill. The Minister had an object in including this clause. The object was based on a principle which is sound and should be adhered to. Members agree that any of the present directors of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., should not have the opportunity of being elected to this board if they were to resign with that object in view, because they would be interested. The Westralian Farmers Ltd. will be the servants of this board, and the board will have to adjudicate on a hundred and one questions which will crop up. We know the conflict of opinion which took place last year between the Minister and the acquiring agent all along the line, which resulted in building up flies yards high. It is reasonable to assume that there will be innumerable instances in which a conflict of opinion will arise between the Minister and his board and the acquiring agent. Here is a member of the board, who should be acting in an impartial manner, adjudicating between the Government and an acquiring agency, of which, 12 months before, he was a servant or officer. It is a bad principle. If I could be sure that certain ex-directors of this company, in whom everybody has confidence, would be appointed, I might agree to the amendment. But what guarantee has the Committee that any worthy ex-director will succeed in being elected under this? Having regard to the important duties and functions which will devolve upon the board, I think it is wise that the clause should stand. I will vote for the clause.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	..	22
Majority against					13

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Money
Mr. Brown	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Jones	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Collier	Mr. Roche
Mr. Davies	Mr. Teasdale
Mr. Draper	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Foley	Mr. Troy
Mr. George	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Holman	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)
Mr. Mitchell	

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I think the fee should be fixed in Subclause 8. I do not know whether I shall be in order in moving to insert a fixed fee. Under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act members receive two guineas for every meeting at which they are present, the chairman receiving an additional sum. Seeing that the chairman in this case is to be a member of the Executive Council, I do not think he should get any special fee above that given to the other members. I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 8 the word "prescribed" be struck out with a view to inserting other words. I will then move to insert the prescribed fee that shall be paid.

The CHAIRMAN: I am prepared to accept the amendment to add a specified fee. It does not come out of Consolidated Revenue but out of the Pool.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The board, as at present constituted, receives no fee at all, except the country members who are given two guineas a day to compensate them for their expense in coming from the country to attend meetings. The fees are paid for the purpose of recouping them for any expense they may incur. I have no objection to the amendment.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope the hon. member will see that the members who come from the country receive travelling allowance in addition to their other allowance.

Mr. Holman: We will see that only town members are elected to the board.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can discuss that later.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move a further amendment—

That after the word "fee" there be inserted "two guineas."

It will be noticed that the word "may" appears in the subclause. I do not know whether it means "shall," or not. If the members do not desire to accept the fee they can reject it.

Mr. THOMSON: I should like to move an amendment that travelling expenses should be added in the case of members from the country. I think that is a reasonable proposition. It does not cost the City men anything extra to attend these meetings, but the country member arriving in Perth has to pay his hotel expenses. He is not on the same footing as a metropolitan member.

The CHAIRMAN: After this amendment is disposed of the hon. member can move an amendment to that effect.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. THOMSON: I move a further amendment—

That after the word "fees" there be inserted "and prescribed travelling expenses."

Mr. HOLMAN: What are "prescribed expenses"?

The Attorney General: A rule will be drawn up, prescribing expenses.

Mr. HOLMAN: Is it not the practice in connection with all boards to pay travelling expenses?

The Attorney General: Yes.

Mr. HOLMAN: "Prescribed expenses" might include living expenses. What are the expenses going to be? The amendment is unnecessary.

Mr. THOMSON: My amendment refers to members of the board who may have to travel to and from country centres for the purposes of the board's work. If the member for Murchison can point out how the travelling expenses may be allowed apart from this Bill, I shall be prepared to withdraw my amendment. However, seeing that the Attorney General supports the amendment, the Committee might well carry it. The members of the board should not be out of pocket over doing their duty.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I suggest that the member for Katanning adopt the language used in Section 4 of the principal Act, which refers to "fees and prescribed travelling allowance."

Mr. THOMSON: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Leave refused.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. PICKERING: I move an amendment—

That after the word "fees" there be inserted "and prescribed travelling allowance."

Mr. HOLMAN: Is the intention to make it the ordinary travelling allowance, and would this cover expenses while in Perth? "Travelling allowance" I take to mean railway fare and ordinary expenses on the journey. A member of the board might be compelled to remain in Perth for three or four days, and in that case he should receive a fair deal.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move a further amendment—

That the following words be added to the proviso:—"That the fees payable to any member shall not in any one year exceed £150."

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

Clause 5—Ratification of agreement, first schedule:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If we pass this clause we pass the agreement. I have a doubt as to whether the agreement provides clearly who is to pay for the roofing and the covering of the sides of the stacks. I would draw attention to Subclause 3 of Clause 2 of the agreement, which states—

Stacking, protecting, caretaking and unstacking at country sidings other than wheat

depôts in a manner approved by the Minister from time to time. Stacking sites and dunnage to be provided by the Minister or with his approval at his expense.

That clause provides definitely that the stacking sites and dunnage have to be provided by the Minister. On referring to Clause 8 of the agreement dealing with stacking, we find that the agent is to be responsible that the stacks shall be properly erected and dunnaged, provided that the necessary dunnage required by the agent is supplied by or at the expense of the Minister. Then it goes on to say that the agent will not be required to provide protection or cover either as regards supplying material or placing the material on or around the stack, excepting as provided for in Clause 11. On referring to Clause 11 of the agreement, we find that it deals with roofing, but whether that includes material or not I cannot say. Does it mean labour only? There is a doubt as to who is to provide the material for the covering and roofing. The word "work" in that clause can be construed to mean that the work shall be done completely, and that means that we have to provide the material for the work. That clause states—

For the work of roofing, screening, protecting and caretaking till the end of May, 1919, such stacks as may be nominated by the Minister, the payment shall be one farthing per bushel of the wheat contained in the stacks.

Whether that farthing per bushel meant only the wheat in the stacks or all the wheat that they took, is not stated. It was not until the Royal Commission made a few inquiries that this was made clear. The Solicitor General had no opportunity for perusing the agreement before it was signed. On the second reading we were told that Mr. Sayer had drafted the agreement. The Royal Commission put this question to Mr. Sayer, "You did not have the agreement a sufficient length of time to enable you to recommend that it be signed?" And in his answer Mr. Sayer said that a copy of the agreement was brought down to him shortly before the meeting of Cabinet, but that before he had an opportunity of perusing that copy it was sent for and taken away, and so he had no opportunity of critically examining it. That is the agreement we are asked to ratify tonight. In answer to further questions, Mr. Sayer said that it was impossible for him to deal with it, because the time was too limited. He was asked did the farthing include roofing, and he said it seemed to him that the agent would have to provide the material. He said further, that the farthing per bushel referred only to the wheat in the stacks. The agreement was signed on the 24th October. The Government say they believe in assisting co-operation. They would be acting contrary to that principle if they did not hand over the work to the Westralian Farmers, Limited. The Minister has not told us that at one time, not very long ago, the Government entertained the intention of doing the work themselves.

[Mr. Foley took the Chair.]

The Attorney General: Have you any evidence of that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes. Since it was discovered that the Government were likely to do the work themselves, in a letter dated 8th September, the Westralian Farmers, Limited, instructed all their co-operative societies not to act as sub-agents unless the Westralian Farmers, Limited, were appointed sole receiving agents. It was

this that secured the contract for the Westralian Farmers, Limited. I have this in a letter signed by a member of a co-operative society. This is signed by a gentleman who is the secretary of a co-operative society.

The Attorney General: Whether that is true or not has nothing to do with their getting the agreement.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am showing the Government the position they are in. We have men in Fremantle to-day who are almost starving through the action of the Government. I may say that this letter thanks me for looking after the interest of the farmer. This indicates the action taken by the Westralian Farmers, Limited, in respect to the agreement.

Mr. Pickering: Is there any confirmation of that letter?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Do not let the hon. member make any mistake about that. The Westralian Farmers, Limited, did their utmost to stop this society from coming into existence, urging the Prime Minister to prevent it under the War Precautions Act. I am merely showing what was done to induce the Government to give this agreement as proposed to the Westralian Farmers, Limited. What is the clear position of the points I have just raised? Is it clear as to whether the Government or the Westralian Farmers, Limited, have to provide the roofing? There are many alterations in the agreement as compared with that of last year. These have been made with the idea of the Scheme carrying out the work to the best interests of the State. The Westralian Farmers Limited, however, have defied the officers of the Scheme in almost every case. That is the reason why the Hon. Mr. Baxter has been condemned when he has endeavoured to protect the interests of the State. Last year the agreement was only signed the day before the second reading of the Bill was moved in another place. This firm began to handle the wheat in December, and the Bill was only brought in during the latter part of the following March. The clause in the agreement relating to books and accounts has not appeared in any previous agreement. Apparently the Government found that the books were not being written up. Up to within a few weeks ago the affairs concerning the 1915-16 crop had not been put into order, and the audit for the 1916-17 crop had not been completed up to a week or two ago.

Mr. Brown: That is not the fault of the Westralian Farmers, Limited.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: All the other firms were found to be correct with the exception of this particular firm. It was therefore necessary that this clause should be inserted in the agreement. I hope the Government will put the penalty into effect if necessary.

The Minister for Works: Does this appear in the evidence?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It appears on the files, which we had an opportunity of perusing. With regard to the clause in the agreement concerning instructions by wheat inspectors, none of those instructions were carried out last year. If I was offered the position held by Mr. Keys, and given £2,000 a year to manage the Wheat Scheme this year, I would not accept it after all that he had to go through last year. His life was made a burden.

Mr. Pickering: Do you not think he did something to make other people's lives a burden?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I would not accept the position because I know what occurred. The

acquiring agents under the agreement have to load in trucks. I regret that the Government did not go further. I am borne out by Mr. Shillington and Mr. Lord when I say that the persons who are responsible for loading the trucks should also be responsible for unloading them. The only way that can be done is for the acquiring agent to unload the trucks at the depôts, and stack the wheat there. I have been told that this would mean the employment of an army of inspectors. At Spencer's Brook last year the Scheme had 13 men employed checking weight. If those 13 men did nothing but check the Westralian Farmers, it would not cost the Government a penny more than the cost under the present agreement. Knowing what I do, I dare not move that such a provision should be included in the agreement. However, the position last year was that the Scheme had only one acquiring agency, and had to give way. From my experience of the Westralian Farmers, I would not trust them. Last year about 2,000 trucks were on the road under load at one time.

The Attorney General: That was owing to the strike.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not entirely. A considerable amount of demurrage might be saved, and the rolling stock made available for other railway purposes. I cannot support the motion to increase the remuneration in respect of the extra work. As to roofing, one farthing per bushel was being paid to the Westralian Farmers, and they demanded a half-penny. The previous year the cost had been one-eighth of a penny per bushel. I propose to move amendments under which the Westralian Farmers would be paid separately for the actual checking of samples and verifying of depôt tally notes at the rate of one-eighth of a penny per bushel, and for the issuing of certificates at the rate of one farthing per bushel, instead of at the rate of three-eighths of a penny per bushel for all three services.

Mr. Foley: You propose to give the equivalent in two separate amounts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Mr. Sayer, the Solicitor General, in giving evidence said that if the work was not "actually" done it should not be paid for. According to the evidence of the manager, the work was not done, but he made an arrangement with the acquiring agent. We know this year they are going to handle three million bushels more than was handled last year, which means that we will pay over £5,000, as against £3,000 last year. The estimated yield is 12 million bushels, which means that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., will handle 10 to 10½ million bushels. One-eighth of a penny on that quantity will give £5,000, and we are going to make a present of that sum to the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., for work which will not be performed. The paragraph in the clause of the agreement dealing with remuneration reads "for issuing certificates, checking sample, verifying depôt tally notes, three-eighths of a penny per bushel." That will mean that if they only check three bags they will check samples. I wish to have the agreement made quite clear, and I am going to ask hon. members to separate the two amounts, so that if the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., do not perform the work they will not be paid.

Mr. Pilkington: How can we alter the agreement now that it has been signed? You cannot compel them to agree to something else.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This agreement has been entered into contrary to the wishes of Parliament.

Mr. Pilkington: You cannot refuse to ratify it. You cannot amend it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Similar agreements have been amended repeatedly.

Hon. P. Collier: The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., can refuse to carry out the contract.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I want to make them do the work they are going to be paid for.

Hon. P. Collier: If they do not accept the alteration we can get some other agent to do the work.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Parliament of this State last April or May refused to allow the Government to enter into an agreement for 1918-19. A Bill was introduced providing that the agreement should apply to the forthcoming harvest, and the people who entered into the agreement did so with their eyes open. As a matter of fact, we can cut out the agreement altogether. I have not the slightest doubt that the two items have been put together this year for the purpose of allowing the work to be done as it was done before.

12 o'clock, midnight.

Mr. FOLEY: If we carry this clause the agreement will be ratified. It is questionable whether it is not too late to do anything. Hon. members who should know something about law say that it is too late. We have been given to understand that any agreement made with the company would be subject to ratification by Parliament. If it is not so, we have been wasting time discussing the Bill. I want a fair deal from the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. The member for North-East Fremantle has said that the company have not delivered the goods. It is yet to be proved that the price to be paid to the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., is as low as any other firm would be prepared to accept for the work. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., are not a co-operative company. If we ratify the agreement we ratify the methods of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., in sweating the men employed on the wheat stacks. In one instance the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., paid to their sub-agents £310 for work for which the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., had received from the Government the sum of £937. The agreement provides for the giving of a monopoly to a company of that character! The sweaters at the head of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., have filched money from the pockets of indigent farmers to put it into the pockets of St. George's-terrace farmers. To give to such a firm a monopoly of the handling of the State's wheat is not in the best interests of the State. If Parliament has not the right to review this agreement in the interests of the farmers, we have been made the victims of a confidence trick. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., know more about wheat handling and the business connected with it than the poor farmers for whom they are handling it, or the poor benighted individuals who are not members of their organisation, but are the real and only true disciples of co-operation so far as the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., are concerned.

The Minister for Works: You make out that they are rooking the farmers.

Mr. FOLEY: I do say that. This is one of the ways in which more than half the money has gone. I am of opinion that in this connection the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and the Country party are one and the same organisation. Although they say

that co-operation is their guiding principle in every phase of wheat handling, the small co-operative societies have "the boot put into them" by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., as heavily as possible. If it was not put into them, the Westralian Farmers could not pay the money they do for the salaries of their administrative heads, neither would the gentlemen occupying those positions have left the insurance business to go to a place where they could make more out of the benighted farmers, who are gulled into believing that they have something in the way of co-operation. There is a small co-operative movement involving big money, but that movement begins and ends in the administrative power exercised by the heads of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. We are asked to ratify this agreement. If a pistol was held at the head of the Government last year I have not heard of any amendment which will take the gun away from the head of the Government this year. The people enjoying this monopoly would be foolish if they did not put the gun at the head of the Government when they have an opportunity of doing so. Supporters of this organisation have put the gun at the head of every Government of this State since they have been a party. They did it in the case of the Scaddan Government, and cannot deny what I have said. I do not want to see this agreement again ratified. There are 70 of these co-operative societies in the State, as well as the principal company which has been referred to as the parent company. I may say that the parent has brought up his sons "on the belt." These administrative heads are not in the business for a joke, for there is a lot of insurance work to be done in the different districts. The farmers are being bled, because they are gulled into the belief that they have a co-operative movement. Instead of the handling of wheat costing £310, as in the case I have instanced, it is costing the farmer £937.

The Minister for Works: Where has the balance gone?

Mr. FOLEY: To the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., who charged it up to the Government. The Government paid that amount from the money belonging to the State for £310 worth of work.

The Minister for Works: It is the farmers' money.

Mr. FOLEY: I have never yet heard in this Chamber of an instance of work being done at a cost of over 200 per cent. above what it should cost without some severe criticism from those hon. members who are now acquiescing in this agreement. I believe it is a bad thing, and I do not know how we are to get the value for the money, such as we would get in the case of open competition. It would be better not to enter into the agreement at all. Parliament would not be breaking its word if it did not ratify it, for it has always had the right to ratify or reject any agreement made by a Government. The wheat growers are not getting the best possible deal in this matter, and the work is not done in the most economical way. There must have been some big money going into the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., which started about 2½ years ago on a very small capital. See the large premises they have now, and observe the huge salaries they pay their leading officials. I contend the wheat growers are not getting the best results from this agreement, and have not obtained the best results from past agreements. The Westralian Farmers are waxing fat and rich on the good conditions of their arrangement with the Western Australian Government. I

prefer open tendering, and let the best man get the work. It has been publicly stated that prices have been asked by the Government for various classes of work, and that when the prices have come along the officers of our State departments have asked the Westralian Farmers to quote. In the case of that company the industrial and political ties are inextricably interwoven. A few men are battenning on the farmers, working on their gullibility to induce them to believe that they are obtaining something in the way of co-operation.

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

That after the word "confirmed" there be inserted "Subject to the following amendment:— 'Section 11, Subsection (1), paragraph (d)', by striking out the words "checking sample, verifying depôt tally notes, three-eighths,""

I desire a definite price for each class of work.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Were we now drafting the agreement, I would be disposed to accept the advice of the mover of the amendment; but the agreement has been entered into and signed, and is now being carried out, and if the Committee altered it as here proposed, and if the Westralian Farmers were not agreeable to the alteration, a position of much difficulty would be created. I have no hesitation in saying that if the agent either does not issue certificates or does not take samples or does not verify tally notes, he will not get his three-eighths.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It happened last year.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not care what happened last year. If they do only two of these jobs they will be paid for what they do. I do not think there is any intention on the part of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., to avoid discharging any part of the agreement. As a matter of fact, it was I who had the privilege within the last three or four days of putting the finishing touches to the agreement. I received an assurance from Mr. Stirling Taylor that the agreement would be carried out in its entirety. I can assure members there is no intention on the part of the Government to let the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., off in connection with any part of their duty, nor have I heard that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., want to shirk any part of their duty. The agreement has been entered into in good faith, and if it had been possible to consult Parliament the Government would have been glad to do so. The Minister had power under the Wheat Marketing Act to make this agreement. The splitting of the payments into two might cause some annoyance to the Government in their relations with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., which relations to-day are very cordial.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In my opinion we shall not know whether the work is done in the future, and I am going to ask the Committee to make the position clear and distinct. I have it on the evidence of the Solicitor General that the word "actually" is essential on this question. They must do the "actual" work. If they do not perform the "actual" work they cannot be paid. I will ask hon. members to support the division of paragraph (d) of Clause 11 of the agreement, and if the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., do the work they will not be handicapped at all. I want to so fix it that if the company do not do the work of sampling in the depôts they shall not be paid for it.

[Mr. Foley took the Chair.]

Mr. HOLMAN: It is difficult to understand the opposition to the amendment. It has been

pointed out that there is possibility of an evasion in the carrying out of the agreement.

The Attorney General: If they fail to perform any part of the work they will not be paid the three-eighths of a penny.

Mr. HOLMAN: There will have to be very different Ministerial control if there is to be an improvement in the methods of the past. Marked favouritism has been shown. We have to protect the wheat-growers, who should not be compelled to pay for services which have not been performed. The duties here grouped together ought to be separated. If the company fail to carry out any of their duties, who is to say that they shall not be paid?

The Attorney General: We will say it.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Attorney General will have no say in it whatever. If he had the control of the Scheme, I should be prepared to let the business go without any agreement whatever. But it is beyond even the admitted capacity of the Attorney General to impart any ability to the Minister in charge of the Scheme. The Attorney General is evidently going to watch affairs to see that every clause in the agreement is carried out.

The Attorney General: The whole Government are bound to see that the agreement is carried out.

Mr. HOLMAN: Hundreds of thousands of pounds are involved in this agreement, and a great deal of care will have to be taken to see that those who put the wheat into the Pool do not lose money. The guarantee of the Government of 4s. or 4s. 4d., per bushel at sidings may mean a loss to the people concerned in connection with the coming harvest, and it is incumbent upon the Government to see that the greatest care is taken in the matter. I would like to say that no one in this Chamber has given more attention to the working of this Scheme than the member for North-East Fremantle, and no one knows more about the subject than he does. The Minister should be guided by him to a greater extent than he apparently is, for the hon. member knows what is likely to occur in the carrying out of this agreement. Is there not some likelihood of litigation arising if the Government do not pay these people the whole of the amount involved? If they got £3,000 last year for doing nothing we should see that they do not get anything this year.

Hon. P. Collier: Why not make it clear?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is quite clear. They have to perform three services before they get a penny. If these services are split up into two lots they might say, "We have performed one service, give us a farthing. They might also say, "We have performed the other service, give us an eighth of a penny." Unless they perform all the services they do not get the money. The amendment making the amount a lump sum was put in at the instance of the Wheat Scheme.

Hon. P. Collier: Does the Solicitor General endorse it?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: It does not appear so in the evidence.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He discussed the whole terms of the agreement with me.

Hon. P. Collier: After it was signed, but not before.

Mr. HOLMAN: One can well imagine the Solicitor General in the hands of the Attorney General after the agreement had been signed.

The Attorney General: The Solicitor General is a very learned and clever man.

1 o'clock a.m.

Mr. HOLMAN: Certainly; and far too courteous a gentleman to criticise this agreement in such a manner as would hurt the fine and delicate susceptibilities of the Attorney General. From the Solicitor General's evidence before the Royal Commission it is quite plain that he had no opportunity of considering this agreement adequately. The agreement was, in fact, signed before it was submitted to him.

Hon. P. Collier: It was approved by Cabinet that day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And signed the next day.

Mr. HOLMAN: If some of the wheat sent down is not in accordance with the check sample, then, if payment for this work is split up as proposed by the amendment, it will be possible not merely to block payment for the work but also to penalise the agents.

Amendment put and declared carried.

The Premier: Divide.

Mr. Holman: There cannot be a division, there was only one "aye."

The Premier: What was the question?

The CHAIRMAN: The question I put was that Clause 5 stand part of the Bill, to which an amendment was moved by the member for North-East Fremantle to add the words—"Subject to the following amendment in Clause 11, Subclause 1, paragraph (d) by striking out the words 'checking sample, verifying depôt tally notes, three-eighths,'" and the question was that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause. There was only one "aye" and I gave it to the "noes."

Point of Order.

Mr. Maley: On a point of order, the question before the Committee was the agreement set out in the schedule.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We were dealing with Clause 5 of the Bill.

Mr. Maley: Clause 5 cannot include the whole of the schedule as well; the schedule is a thing apart.

The CHAIRMAN: When the member for Murdochson was discussing the question, I clearly stated that there was an amendment proposed, not to the schedule, but to Clause 5, which we were dealing with, and I added that the hon. member had divided the amendment into three parts. I read the first part, and it was that to Clause 5 it was proposed to add "subject to the following amendment in Clause 11, Subclause 1, paragraph (d) of the First Schedule by striking out the words 'checking sample, verifying depôt tally notes, three-eighths.'"

Mr. Maley: It is necessary for you to put the amendment to Clause 5 and declare that carried first, and at a later stage submit the amendment to the schedule.

The CHAIRMAN: It was quite in order to put the amendment in the way it was put to the Committee.

Mr. Holman: And the amendment to the schedule would be consequential.

The CHAIRMAN: My ruling is that the amendment was properly put.

The Premier: I want to know exactly where we are. You, Mr. Chairman, put the question in this way—"That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question." I called "aye."

Hon. P. Collier: Yours was the only "aye" called. There was no one else sitting on your side of the House.

The Premier: I want the Chairman to be the judge. The Chairman has not said whether he has decided to allow the "noes" to have it, or

'whether he will allow the division to take place. I called "divide." I do not know whether anyone else said "aye."

Hon. P. Collier: There was no one else on your side of the House.

The CHAIRMAN: When I put the question there were several "noes" and I heard only one "aye" and that came from the Premier.

Mr. Holman: That "aye" was called by the Premier after the "noes" had spoken.

The CHAIRMAN: Immediately afterwards the Premier and the member for Greenough rose simultaneously. I declared that the "noes" had it. It is not possible to divide the Committee on the question because there was only one "aye."

Committee resumed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move a further amendment—

That in paragraph (d) "one-fourth" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think this is regular. The only amendment that can be made to Clause 5 is the addition of words. We cannot alter the agreement; all that we can do is to add words to Clause 5. It is only on Clause 5 that an amendment can be made.

Hon. P. Collier: We are on Clause 5 now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not possible on Clause 5 to strike out words from the agreement. The amendment was to strike out certain words from the agreement, which is not possible.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment was to add to Clause 5 certain words, which will have the effect of striking out words from the agreement.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, the amendment was an amendment to the agreement.

Hon. P. Collier: How do you know? You were not in the House.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I was.

Hon. P. Collier: You were not; you are telling an untruth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I ask that that be withdrawn. You, Mr. Chairman, said the amendment was to strike out words. Obviously no words can be struck out from Clause 5.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: On a point of order. The Minister for Mines said that he was in the House. He was not. On the Government side there were only the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston), who was asleep, and the Premier, and the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell).

Mr. Draper: You are wrong there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not. You were behind the screen, and so were not actually in the House. The Minister for Mines is not here at all.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: My point of order is that the Minister is trying to bamboozle you.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, I am here to look after myself. I have told the Committee what the amendment is. If any hon. member thinks it is irregular, he has the opportunity of moving to dissent from my ruling.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But we cannot go back now, since we are on another amendment.

The Minister for Mines: The decision was given for the "Noes," and therefore, the words stand part of the clause.

The Attorney General: Yes. You had us in the same way last week. I know from your demeanour that you are wrong.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If we are to conduct the business in an amicable way, it will not help if the Attorney General, who was not here, is to suggest that he knows by our demeanour that we are wrong.

The CHAIRMAN: If anyone wishes to move to dissent from my ruling, he may do so now. But we are past the first amendment, and we are on the second amendment, which is the amendment the Committee will be asked to vote upon. I cannot allow any hon. member to hold an inquest on what has been done in this Chamber. We have passed that amendment, and are now dealing with another which I have read out from the Chair. That is the question before hon. members.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The amendment that I have to move is to insert the words "one fourth."

The Attorney General: I am opposed to that.

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

Ayes ...	...	...	8
Noes ...	...	...	17

Majority against 9

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Holman	(Teller.)
Mr. Lutey	

#### NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Draper	Mr. Money
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Mullany
Mr. George	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Hudson	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move a further amendment—

That there be inserted a new paragraph, to stand as paragraph (f), as follows:—"For actual checking of sample and verifying of depot tally notes, one-eighth of a penny per bushel."

Mr. HOLMAN: I would suggest that the Minister should report progress and tell us later exactly where we are. There will then be a better chance of our putting this clause through in a sensible form. I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes ...	...	...	7
Noes ...	...	...	18

Majority against 11

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Holman	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Draper	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Pickering
Mr. George	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)
Mr. Mitchell	

Motion thus negatived.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Mr. HOLMAN: Upon the discussion of a matter of vital importance to the farming community in particular, it is interesting to observe that, with one sleeping exception, not a member of the Country party is in his seat. Members come trooping in from outside to vote, without knowing what the Committee is dividing on. The same imposition is to be practised on the wheat growers this season as last season, when the Western Australian Farmers were paid some £3,000 for doing nothing at all. The question now is, shall we state definitely what remuneration is to be paid for each of certain duties? What does "actual checking of samples" mean? In the northern areas the wheat ripens a few weeks earlier than in the south, and is somewhat superior in quality. Therefore it possibly does not need so much checking. If there has been a little extra rain in the Midland district, the danger of rust in the Midland wheat has to be taken into account. The persons who sampled the wheat in the northern districts might take that wheat as representative of all the wheat grown in Western Australia. It is absolutely necessary that the Committee should pass the amendment. I am sorry that my suggestion was not taken and progress reported, so that we might have an opportunity for a thorough consideration of the position. However, I will support the amendment. The Solicitor General has not even seen this agreement, but when hon. members point out certain difficulties in connection with it, we get no support. It is a disgrace to any legislature to allow a measure of this nature to pass. The amendment sets out exactly what work shall be done before a certificate is received. It may be that samples do not require to be checked so far as the northern wheat is concerned, and that this would mean a saving of a large amount of money. On the other hand, in the southern areas, owing to wet seasons and other causes, a double check may be necessary, and this may involve the expenditure of double the amount, though I do not know if that would be the case. I hope that those who have some consideration for the hard worked farming community will ensure the passing of the amendment.

2 o'clock a.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Unless the system is altered, we are liable to pay £5,000 of the State's money for work which will never be performed. I have the Solicitor General's opinion that the word "actual" is essentially needed, in order to ensure that the work shall be performed. I bring forward these amendments because I honestly believe the agreement to be defective. In view of the price guaranteed for the wheat, this £5,000 will have to come out of the taxpayer's pocket; hence my insistence.



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

Ayes	...	...	...	7
Noes	...	...	...	17

Majority against ... 10

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Collier	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Holman	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Draper	Mr. Money
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Mullany
Mr. George	Mr. Plekering
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Hudson	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I notice that the agents are not to be called upon to pay railway demurrage. I ask the Minister whether he can give me an idea as to what amount this country has had to pay for demurrage through the negligence of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., last year. Have the Railway Department been paid demurrage? Every other agent handling the wheat for the Scheme has had to pay for the trucks out of their charges. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., have never had to pay anything, or if they have paid, the amount has been very little. Then we are asked why our railways are not paying. Can we not see how it is that the country is going to the dogs? We have a company here which is exploiting the finances of the State and exploiting every person who pays taxation. The Government have not the backbone of a louse in matters affecting the wheat Scheme. They are afraid to do anything for fear they will offend their political masters. They have made a scapegoat of the Honorary Minister.

The Minister for Works: Who has?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some of the members of the Government.

The Minister for Works: They have not done anything of the kind.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have. The Honorary Minister has been compelled to carry the baby, and he has had to stand up and protect the interests of the State while other members are doing everything they can to get some popularity, perhaps with the idea of becoming Premier or something else. Some Ministers will do anything for the purpose of getting political control.

The Minister for Works: Who will?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some people will.

The Minister for Works: I wish you would name them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not referring to the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: You are making a nasty insinuation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am stating what is true. If the Minister for Works had seen some of the papers that I have seen he would soon come to the conclusion that the Honorary Minister had been made a scapegoat. The Honorary Minister has fought with his back to the wall, and his

reputation has been taken from him, and his colleagues have not been man enough to protect him from the base accusations which have been made against him. Then we are asked to make the agreement which will draw on the funds of the State for work which has never been carried out.

Hon. P. Collier: It will be the last agreement they will ever have the opportunity of making; they have overreached themselves.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some of the stringent provisions which have had to be put into the agreement this year are the result of last year's experience. Those provisions were never required before the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., secured the monopoly. I say it without any reservation, that the agreement has been prepared in such a way as to prevent the House pointing out that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., got £3,000 for nothing last year, and it has also been worded in such a way as to enable the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., to get £3,000 this year in a similar manner.

The Minister for Works: Who made this agreement?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The agreement was made when the Honorary Minister was in the Eastern States.

The Attorney General: It was not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I can prove that the finalising of the agreement was done while the Honorary Minister was in Melbourne.

The Attorney General: The Honorary Minister returned before that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was done while the Honorary Minister was out of the State.

The Attorney General: I say that he had returned.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is not so. I have seen the papers, which the hon. member tried to block me from getting.

The Attorney General: I think the hon. member is wrong in making these statements, even if it is early morning.

Hon. P. Collier: It is owing to the attitude you are adopting.

The Attorney General: It is owing to the attitude you are adopting.

Hon. P. Collier: And you will get a lot more of it before you get the Bill through.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are in the Bill some heavy penalty clauses, which were never previously required. Then there is the provision for a bond. Last year there was only three weeks of their time to go when they were asked to fill in their bond.

The Minister for Works: Oh, make it a want of confidence motion and have done with it.

Hon. P. Collier: I would not take office on sufferance, with my followers talking about me as your followers talk about you.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The company's profit is the extent of their liability, and so too in respect of their commission for supervising the work. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., cannot make a loss. In previous years the acquiring agents had to put up £20,000 to cover their liability. Yet we are told there is no favouritism going. Is it any wonder that people are saying that, instead of the Government being in control, a few outsiders are successfully pulling the strings. The country should not be run, as it is being run, in the interests of one section of the community. This very agreement is evidence of the position. No member of the Chamber would care to pay out of his own pocket for work that is not done, but all of those on that side are prepared to vote the State's

money away for nothing. No private company should be permitted to build up its finances from the State Treasury. This agreement has been drawn up exclusively in the interests of a private trading concern. The co-operative societies will not be paid a fair thing for the work they have to do.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move—  
That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	9
Noes	...	...	...	15
Majority against				
				6

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Collier	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Holman	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Maley
Mr. Draper	Mr. Money
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Pickering
Mr. George	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If nothing else comes out of the debate, it should at least reveal to the people of the country the manner in which the government of the State is being conducted. Some months ago the Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into all matters concerning the handling of the harvest, and presumably they selected those men in whom they had the greatest confidence. The members of this Commission have devoted themselves impartially to the consideration of every aspect of the matter with which this Bill deals. It is years since any member of this Chamber has made such a close analytical examination of the subject as has been done by the member for North-East Fremantle. Not even the Minister in charge of the Bill would pit his detailed knowledge of the Scheme against that of the Chairman of this Commission. What attention has been paid to that knowledge by hon. members? Some have not even listened to what he had to say, and others who did listen were not influenced by it.

Mr. Maley: What heed was paid to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Apparently the information placed before hon. members has had no effect upon them, because of the dishonest combination or influence existing between the Government supporters and the members of the Government. There can be no escape from that charge. It is probable that the Pool will be exploited to the extent of £4,000 or £5,000 for work that has not been performed, and the Minister does not attempt to refute the argument of the member for North-East Fremantle on that score.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is the manager's statement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Government are content to cling to their offer to the last desperate moment

under any circumstances. They can only succeed in this by buying support from members on the cross benches through an agreement of this kind. The Government may well be likened to a rooster with its head cut off, flapping about and not knowing where it is going, and whose wings and legs represent the members of Cabinet. The members of the Country party have brought political pressure to bear on the Government in order to have included in this agreement clauses which are contrary to the welfare of the Wheat Pool and of this country, and the Government have yielded to that pressure in order that they may hang on to office a little longer. The longer they remain in office, the more discredited will they become in the eyes of the people. The member for Williams-Narrogin over and over again to-day buttered up the Premier for "his whole-hearted support of the farming community." With his tongue in his cheek, the hon. member did make a mild protest as regards the proposed executive board, but he did not carry his protest any further on the amendment of the member for North-East Fremantle, apparently because the Country party have obtained all they want under this agreement. The agreement was approved by Cabinet in circumstances which can only be described as most unsatisfactory. According to the evidence of the Solicitor General himself, that officer had had no opportunity whatever of closely examining the agreement prior to its completion by the Government. Who drafted the agreement?

3 o'clock, a.m.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Attorney General's name is at the bottom of it.

The Attorney General: I did not draft it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Attorney General might tell us who did draft it.

The Attorney General: I cannot tell you.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Was a draft agreement sent over to the Minister by the Westralian Farmers?

The Attorney General: It was considered for some time in the Wheat Scheme office.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No doubt it was drafted by the Westralian Farmers. Why does not the Attorney General accept the amendment of the member for North-East Fremantle?

The Attorney General: Because I think the agreement is better as it stands.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does the Attorney General shut his eyes to the experience of last year?

The Attorney General: This agreement is much better than last year's.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Attorney General says this agreement cannot be altered; yet Parliament has altered agreements dozens of times.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Parliament last session refused the Government permission to go on with a wheat Bill until we had the agreement before us. Does the Attorney General contend that it is impossible for Parliament to vary this agreement?

The Attorney General: I said in my second reading speech that Mr. Baxter had power to make this agreement, but that Ministers thought the agreement should come before Parliament for ratification.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If this is a binding contract and cannot be altered by Parliament, why go through the farce of submitting it to Parliament for ratification? If Parliament has no power to alter the agreement, then the Government are censurable for not bringing the Bill before the House in time for hon. members to deal with the agreement. The Premier is recorded in "Herald"

as saying, in reply to a protest made by the member for Beverley, that this measure would be the first Bill of the present session. The Premier has made the same lackadaisical promise in respect of 25 Bills. We have been sitting since the 23rd August, and this is the 13th or 14th December. This is how the Premier's promise has been fulfilled—a delay of five months. If we make many more agreements of this description, before this time twelve months comes round, Western Australia will have been taken over by the Commonwealth as a bankrupt State. Can the Minister in charge of the Bill state whether the Westralian Farmers' request for remission of railway demurrage charges has been granted?

The Attorney General: I cannot tell you at the moment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is an important matter. From my experience in the Railway Department I am aware that private traders are not granted such remissions save in very exceptional circumstances. The money must be owing by the Westralian Farmers for many months past. Doubtless those who keep the Government in office will bring pressure to bear on the Government to grant the remission. The Westralian Farmers, Limited, have built up their business by exploiting the public interests of this country. The only satisfaction is that the Westralian Farmers, in forcing upon the Government such an agreement as this, have over-reached themselves. It is quite certain that not even a Parliament which has sunk so low in the matter of regard for the public interest and welfare, would dare to agree to a similar arrangement with the same company for the following season. An end must come to it. One clause of this Bill says that remuneration of the workers employed by the Scheme shall be at current rates of wages. What are the current rates of wages? Who is to determine what the current rates are in various districts? We may possibly have again this year a similar trouble to last year's—the men engaged at manual labour will have to go on strike for a wage on which they and their families can live. If they should be forced to strike, will the member for Greenough take the stand that if others come out with them they are merely loyal to one another? The Westralian Farmers circularised every one of the co-operative societies throughout the State asking their members, in the event of the Government's handling the harvest, to boycott the Government and not act as local agents for them. These local co-operative societies are composed of the local farmers and in the event of the Government refusing to come to heel, the Company will say—"You refuse to handle the harvest; boycott the Government" in other words—"Boycott your own grain." It shows how emboldened the Westralian Farmers, Limited, have become by their success with the Government through the political agency of members of Parliament who belong to it. The member for Greenough said, certainly they would be loyal to the company. When a local co-operative society refuses to work, that is a laudable action to take, worthy of the highest praise, but when the worker refuses to work because he wants an extra shilling a day the action is most reprehensible. One is loyalty to a colleague and the other is reprehensible. And hon. members would organise forthwith a body of farmers to come down and do the work. In the earlier years of industrial struggles that attitude was taken up. In those days, the employers having beaten the men refused to employ them

afterwards. That however has been abandoned even by the employers who are the strongest opponents of organised labour. It is now recognised that once a strike is over and men are defeated the employer wipes out all ill-feeling and takes the men back. This Government, however, says "Not one of you shall ever go back again." The work cost a great deal more by that attitude than it would have cost had they granted the increase asked by the men. Before the agreement goes through, I want to know what rate of wages it is intended to pay. I want to make some provision, if possible, to prevent industrial trouble similar to that which occurred last year. Can the Minister tell us the meaning of "current rate of wages?"

The Attorney General: The Arbitration Court rate.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It does not say so.

The Attorney General: It is the law of the country.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There are dozens of districts in which the award of the Court does not apply. Was there a similar clause to this in the agreement of last year? I do not want to again see the spectacle of farmers being marched down, housed in depots, fed at the expense of the Pool, and protected by a number of police at the country's expense. In any loopholes there may be in the agreement we do not want to heap up burdens of this kind. Why are the Government so determined to resist reasonable amendments? Why are the Government forcing this through in opposition to justice and in opposition to the weight of argument? The explanation is that they are forcing it through because they are compelled to do so. If the amendments were accepted, the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., would be deprived of some thousands of pounds to which they were not entitled and the Government would probably be told within the next few days by the men keeping them in office, to get out. Not that these men would have the independence to issue those instructions themselves. They would get their instructions from a higher body. There are members on the Cross benches who do not care twopence for the welfare of the country so long as they get their political wants satisfied. Their concern about £5,000 of public money so long as it suits their political interests to get it! The Government's troubles about the public interest so long as they secure the support of the members of the Country party by actions of this kind. It cannot go on without driving the country into bankruptcy. Although I have never been enamoured of the attitude of another place on many Bills, this is one of the few occasions when I can say, thank God we have an Upper House, because there will be a keener recognition of the sense of what is right and wrong in another place than there is here. That will be because there is in the Legislative Council a number of members who are not under the control and under the whip of a political organisation, nor is there a Government there who are kept in office by members of that organisation who are also members of Parliament. There are other clauses which require explanation. It is not a trivial matter that the House should ask what wages are to be paid or who is to have the deciding voice as to the current rate of wages.

Mr. Draper: Do you think an amendment can be made to Clause 5 now which will make that clause effective? It is impossible to amend it the way it is now, so as to make it intelligible.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is why I want to report progress so that we might consider it intelligently at the next sitting. If we sit here for the next ten hours and the Government succeed in passing the clause it will not even then be intelligible.

The Minister for Mines: Why not let the other clauses be carried, and then we can recommit the Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When can it be recommitment?

The Premier: We can recommit it on the report stage.

The Minister for Mines: At present it is in a muddle; no one knows what the position is.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is in just as much a muddle as the Government are in. If the Government had acted wisely when the amendment was carried against them, they would have reported progress or asked for the postponement of the further consideration of the clause.

The Minister for Mines: The member for North-East Fremantle should not have snapped the vote in the way he did.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He did not snap a vote.

The Minister for Mines: I am not saying that nastily; perhaps I should say he took advantage of the position.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was not the duty of the Opposition to say to members opposite "Please remain in the Chamber and watch the Bill."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And I did not know the member for Murchison was going to sit down.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If interest in the clause dwindled so low that only the Premier remained in the Chamber, that is not my fault.

The Minister for Mines: It was not want of interest in the Bill, it was want of interest in the member for Murchison, who was talking.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should like to know what the Government intends to do.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No agreement can be made under the 1916 Act, because it applies only to the 1916-17 harvest.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then the Government have made an agreement for which there is no authority, and now they come to the House and say "You have no power to alter it, but you may ratify it." On the face of it, it is absurd.

Mr. Pilkington: We may refuse to ratify it, except in an altered condition. Then, until the other party accepts the amended agreement, it is not an agreement at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is perfectly clear. We may say to the company, "We are prepared to approve the agreement, subject to certain alterations." We should do that with the full knowledge that the company might not accept the amended agreement, whereupon the responsibility would fall on the Government to make some agreement with another company.

Mr. Pilkington: And possibly this company would have some claim for the lost agreement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then the claim will be against Ministers personally, for the Government had no authority to make the agreement. There can be no claim against the State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If it can be held that the company has a claim for damages under this, I have a charge against the Government for tying up the hands of the Committee in this way.

Mr. Pilkington: The agreement purports to be an absolute contract, without being subject to ratification by Parliament. The only way out of it is by way of repudiation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If that is so, it is a serious position to place the Committee in. It is wrong to place the Committee in the position of having to ratify the agreement or reject it at the cost of landing the State in damages for repudiation.

Mr. Pilkington: Repudiation by the State is an unheard of thing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When the Labour Government entered into a contract for the purchase of the Perth trams, we did it subject to the approval of Parliament. The present Government are open to censure for not having made that proviso in this instance. The Government should have brought down the Bill in time for it to be considered before the agreement was signed, or alternatively they should have entered into the agreement subject to ratification by Parliament.

The Minister for Mines: The agreement you made in 1916 had no such reservation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The agreement made with Metcalf & Co. for the bulk handling system was subject to approval by Parliament. So, too, was the agreement for the purchase of the trams.

The Premier: I do not think the agreement for the handling of the wheat was made in that way.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the first year it was almost wholly a question of experiment, and we were forced to make the agreement hastily.

The Attorney General: I suggest that you let the clause go through and that we afterwards recommit it.

Mr. DRAPER: I have tried to draft an amendment on the present position as it appears on the records of the House. I think it is impossible to draft any agreement, as the record now stands, which will make the clause workable in any way. In the first place it is difficult to ascertain what was actually put and passed. There is no doubt the "No" vote was carried. But there was some confusion. The member for North-East Fremantle moved to add words to the clause, which involved striking out words from the agreement. As the amendment was put, certain words were struck out, but what was added to the clause, it is impossible to say. It might be ascertained tomorrow by going thoroughly into the question. If the main point of the amendment is simply that payment shall be made only for work that is done, I should think that would be assented to by all hon. members as a matter of common sense.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is all we wanted.

Mr. DRAPER: This would only render necessary an alteration in the agreement such as would satisfy both parties. We can discuss this matter for hours without getting any further, and we cannot amend this clause, in the condition in which it is, in such a way as to make it satisfactory or intelligible to another place. I should like to see progress reported.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I suggest that the clause be postponed and that we take the remaining clauses of the Bill.

The Premier: I agree to that.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not sure as to one question. If the question was carried, as the then chairman says it was, I question whether we can postpone the clause.

The Premier: It was only partially dealt with and not passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some confusion has arisen regarding the manner in which this amendment was moved.

Hon. P. Collier: It is on record in that way.

**The MINISTER FOR MINES:** The member or North-East Fremantle, knowing that he could not amend the agreement itself, proposed to add words to the clause which would have that effect. If he had proposed that the words he wished to delete should be deleted, and other words inserted in lieu, then the amendment would have come before the Chair and have been put in this way, that the words proposed to be added be added. Unfortunately the hon. member stopped when he moved for the deletion of the words in question.

**Hon. W. C. Angwin:** That was done in connection with the Metcalf agreement.

**The MINISTER FOR MINES:** If the amendment had been put as one amendment it would have been treated as such. The method adopted led the Chairman to conclude that the amendment was to strike out certain words and he put the question, that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause. The effect of this was one of annulity. I hope the hon. member will accept a certain amount of responsibility for the manner in which the amendment was put.

**Hon. W. C. Angwin:** I accept no responsibility for so many of your supporters being out of the Chamber.

**The MINISTER FOR MINES:** The clause therefore stands as printed. I move—

That consideration of Clause 5 be postponed until after the consideration of Clause 11.

Motion put and passed; the clause postponed.

Clause 6—Authority to enter into gristing agreement, Second Schedule:

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** This is only a draft agreement and has apparently not been entered into by the millers.

**Mr. Pilkington:** Is it held by the Minister that the agreement has been signed?

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** On the day that the Minister said it had been signed, one of the millers said he would not sign it because of Clause 8. I suggest that the recommendation of the Royal Commission to adopt the bushel basis in connection with gristing be embodied in the Bill. If the matter is not fixed up in a proper manner it will be difficult to say what fair average quality wheat is. Who is to decide the quality, and the quantity of flour that can be turned out by the miller? Some of the mills are only able to turn out 37lbs. of flour to the bushel of wheat, whereas others can turn out 42lbs. Only two mills in the State are turning out 42lbs., but under the agreement on the bushel basis they can all do that. At all events such an arrangement might be made with some of the mills.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** I understand the agreement has been signed.

**Hon. W. C. Angwin:** Some of the millers have signed it.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** I do not know how far this can now be altered. I am quite willing to discuss that phase of the matter with the Wheat Scheme and see if it is possible to consider an alteration of the agreement on the bushel basis. If it is fixed at so much a bushel disputes will be avoided, whereas if the agreement is left as it is there is a possibility of disputes arising.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Storage accommodation:

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** There has been no power hitherto for the putting up of storage sheds. The Government have spent £100,000 of the farmers' money with only an implied power behind them. I move an amendment—

That there be added a new subclause to stand as Subclause 8 as follows:—"This section shall not be deemed to authorise the construction of silos for the bulk storage of wheat or of grain elevators.

**The Attorney General:** I agree.

**Mr. JOHNSTON:** It appears that we are giving the Government very big authority here. I should like the Minister to explain. Apparently we are confirming the action of the Government in spending £100,000 of the farmers' money.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I can only allow the hon. member to discuss the amendment. The Committee have already agreed to the clause as far down as subclause 7.

**Mr. JOHNSTON:** I can speak to the whole clause if the amendment is carried.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We must first decide the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

4 o'clock a.m.

**Mr. JOHNSTON:** Why are all these powers being asked for?

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The Solicitor General, advising the Wheat Scheme in days gone by as to the erection of sheds, was of opinion that there was ample power in the Wheat Scheme to spend Pool money in that work. On consideration, he came to the conclusion that it was safer to make precise provision to that effect; and he recommended asking Parliament for that power, and, at the same time, asking Parliament for ratification of the expenditure already incurred in this connection. Additional shed accommodation is being put up now.

Clause as amended, put and passed.

Clause 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Wheat not to be gristed unless with previous consent of the Minister:

**Mr. HOLMAN:** I strongly oppose this absurd clause. It would prevent a farmer with a grinding engine from grinding a little wheat for a neighbour to make wheaten meal for porridge, or from crushing a little wheat for chicken food.

**The Attorney General:** You want the household miller excepted?

**Mr. HOLMAN:** Yes.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** I will consider the point. Accordingly I move—

That consideration of Clause 10 be postponed.

Motion put and passed; the clause postponed.

Clause 11—Power to extend operation of Acts to 1919-1920 season:

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN:** I hope the Committee will delete this clause. There is no necessity for the power sought. Things are not unlikely to improve considerably in the way of shipping, and this measure might not be wanted at all after this year. The Commonwealth Government appear to be getting pretty sick of the Pool.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The clause appears in the Bill because the Wheat Scheme desired continuity of policy. This provision has, in fact, been adopted from a Bill introduced in 1916 by the member for Northam.

**Mr. Pilkington:** A similar clause was negotiated in a subsequent Bill.

**The ATTORNEY GENERAL:** Yes; but then we were not in the same settled condition about the Scheme as we are now. The clause has been a good deal discussed by the Advisory Board. I made up my mind to leave the Committee to accept or reject the clause.

Clause put and negatived.

New Clause :

Mr. PILKINGTON : I move—

That the following be added as a new clause :—

“Section 9 of the principal Act is hereby repealed.”

This, if carried, will leave it open to holders of certificates to deal with them in the same way as with any other property.

The Minister for Mines : Are not these certificates negotiable in the Eastern States ?

Hon. W. C. Angwin : Yes ; and the farmers there are taken down hand over fist.

Mr. PILKINGTON : I understand the Government are agreeable to this.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : The member for Perth is quite right. Some three or four months ago, whilst the Premier was in Melbourne, I myself received a deputation from, I think, farmers and the Chambers of Commerce which raised several points connected with the wheat scheme, including this one of the negotiability of wheat certificates. The deputation contended that persons should be left free to deal with these certificates where they themselves were free. In many cases, of course, wheat certificates are pledged to the I.A.B. or to bankers. In this State the larger number of farmers are protected by the Industries Assistance Board and the certificates cannot be dealt with.

Mr. HOLMAN : A man may have certificates and they are practically lying idle and he is paying interest in nearly every case. The opportunity should be given of negotiating those certificates wherever it is desired to do so.

Mr. WILLCOCK : It has been suggested that the publication during the past three or four weeks of alarmist telegrams with reference to the selling of wheat in England at 4s. and 4s. 6d. a bushel has been done for sharebroking purposes. The telegrams of course were bogus and were published with the object of scaring holders of certificates and causing them to sell so that others might buy them at below their value. The people who deal in these certificates are shrewd business men who make a profit on such transactions. I would prefer not to allow these certificates to be dealt with.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : Mr. Keys, in giving evidence before the Royal Commission, was asked several questions in connection with the negotiation of certificates. He said—

Speaking from memory we have given permission in only two instances to negotiate certificates. I cannot say off hand how many applicants have been refused. Heavy trading in certificates has taken place in the Eastern States and I personally know of a number of individuals who have made large sums of money by speculating in wheat certificates.

Then he went on to quote instances showing how the farmers lose large sums of money by speculating in certificates. The clause was therefore embodied in the measure for the protection of the farmer in the country who cannot get information as can the person in town. If it is necessary for him to sell he applies to the Minister for advice. The Minister will point out the actual value of the certificates and in that way perhaps save the farmer from loss. The clause will prevent speculation in certificates and it will prevent the sale of them at a rate lower than their actual value.

Mr. DRAPER : The British law forbids property from being tied up. When the Wheat Marketing Act was passed originally there might have been

good ground for preventing farmers from assigning their certificates without the consent of the Minister. Those grounds were that we were in the midst of a war, that it was owing to difficulty of transport to foreign markets, and that, owing to the then financial conditions, it was possible that anyone with command of money would be able to purchase wheat cheaply and speculate to his own advantage. Now we have reasonable grounds for believing that the war is over. In regard to next year's harvest, war conditions will have ceased, transport will be available, and there will be less reason for speculation in wheat in Australia. In those circumstances, are we justified in maintaining a provision which was of an emergency character, and which interferes with ordinary business operations, when the reasons for that provision have disappeared ?

Mr. MALEY : I have no objection to the farmers negotiating their certificates. The argument based on false reports in the newspaper is equally applicable to many other lines of commerce.

New clause put and passed.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 4.36 a.m. (Saturday).

## Legislative Council,

Monday, 16th December, 1918.

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

### SITTING HOURS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.5] : I desire to intimate to hon. members that it is my intention, at the end of to-day's proceedings, to move that the House at its rising adjourn to 3 o'clock to-morrow afternoon instead of the usual meeting time of 4.30.

### URGENCY MOTION—PNEUMONIC INFLUENZA, QUARANTINING CONTACTS.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.5] : In accordance with Standing Order 58, I desire to submit a motion relating to a matter of urgency.

The PRESIDENT : I have received a copy of the motion the hon. member desires to move and if the requisite number of members stand up in their places, it may be proceeded with.

Four members having risen in their places,

Hon. J. DUFFELL : I move—

That the Council at its rising, adjourn till 3 p.m. to-morrow (Tuesday) for the