

of these rabbits during the next few months, before the winter rains come; for a couple of thousand pounds spent now will save a hundred thousand pounds in a few months time.

Mr. Green: Why not try to get a cut out of the Imperial order for rabbits for soldiers?

The PREMIER: It would never do to send them poisoned rabbits. I know this question of the rabbit pest is of great interest to all hon. members, particularly those of the Country party, and I can assure them that the Government will take further steps at once to cope with this pest. It is not my intention to delay the House any longer. I thank hon. members for their indulgence, and I trust the work of the session may proceed along lines coinciding with the interests of the country. I am sure that hon. members opposite—and I hope the same may be said for members of the third party on this side—will not endeavour to harass the Government at the present time, but rather will assist them in carrying out those duties which they have to perform. Our desire is to practise the strictest economy in the interests of Western Australia, while at the same time not sacrificing the industries of the country.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 29th January, 1918.

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

### CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES, TEMPORARY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that I have appointed the members for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse), Leonora (Mr. Foley), and Hannans (Mr. Munsie) as temporary Chairmen of Committees.

[For "Questions on notice," and "Papers presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [4.53]: Last week the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) was proceeding to give notice of motion for some information relative to the Industries Assistance Board. I then assured the hon. member that I was actually engaged on preparing a statement in

that connection, which I said I should be glad to submit to the House on the following Tuesday: that is, to-day. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make the statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister has permission to make the statement.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: I shall read the statement and afterwards move that it lie on the Table. It is as follows:—

With the object of supplying detailed information to the public on the question of assistance rendered to farmers under the Industries Assistance Act, I have had prepared tabulated figures setting out the position in a general way. It will be remembered that, with the advent of the Liberal Administration in August, 1916, the policy of the board's operations was remodelled on the basis of decentralisation, and providing for inspection and payment on the farm. The change in policy has exceeded even the most sanguine expectations, and to-day, on the whole, the farmers assisted are far more satisfied and contented than ever before, and the Government feel assured that the payments now being made are supported by actual value in the work advanced upon.

Hon. P. Collier: This is not a statement, but debatable, controversial matter.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: The leader of the Opposition will have an opportunity of debating it later.

Hon. P. Collier: That is just the trouble; I shall not have the opportunity.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: The hon. gentleman will have an opportunity of debating it probably to-day. The statement continues—

The amount advanced by the board at the 31st March, 1917, was £1,257,184. Against this amount proceeds amounting to £737,770 have been received. These proceeds have been dealt with in the following manner: Recoup of board's advances, etcetera, as provided for in Section 14 of the Amendment Act of 1917, approximately, £595,770; Payment made to creditors, or to be made during the next few days, approximately, £142,000; total, £737,770. The advances at the 31st March, 1917, have therefore been reduced by proceeds to £661,414. If further dividends are declared on the 1916-17 pool totalling 1s. per bushel—and this amount, I am pleased to say, my colleague the Honorary Minister controlling the wheat scheme considers should be available in due time—this amount would be further reduced by £190,000; but it is hardly likely that this money will be available before the close of the board's financial year, namely, the 31st March, 1918; hence it will probably be included in the distribution of the 1917-18 crop, should it then be available. Since the 31st March, 1917, further advances have been made of £490,000; but this figure will be set off by the proceeds of the 1917-18 crops. Early in the year it was estimated that creditors would have their claims of £522,000 reduced by approximately £200,000; but this estimate has proved too liberal. However, the sum of £142,000 has

been paid in this direction, and fully justifies the amendment of the Act last year. The payment in the previous year was £74,588; thus the amount has been doubled. As regards the doubtful settlers, totalling 671, the manager informs me that a separate report has been called for from the inspector as to each settler's chance of success, and on receipt of this information he personally investigates the pros and cons, and, if necessary, submits his report to the board. Assistance is being continued only in those cases where it is considered that the farmer has a chance of winning through. The policy adopted by the board is to grant a clearance so soon as the settler has cleared the board's account, paid his creditors in full, and can manage unaided. The clearance is not compulsory, and if the settler desires to remain under the board's scheme his account is dealt with on a similar line to a current account with a bank. He does not pay interest whilst his account is in credit, and he is not allowed interest by the board on his credit balance. In every other way he is dealt with as an ordinary settler. The policy assists in the financing of the board's requirements, which is of considerable assistance to the Treasurer. It is estimated that £30,000 is held in this way. Last year 110 clearances were granted, representing settlers who have met their liabilities in full, including creditors' claims. In submitting the figures as per attached schedule, I desire to make clear the following points: (a) The districts enumerated represent the divisions under the decentralisation scheme. (b) The various figures are based on the position at the 31st March, 1917, this date representing the closing day of the board's financial year. (c) The statement does not include settlers who have been assisted only under Section 9, paragraph (c), of the Act. This paragraph covers advances for payment of Government indebtedness only. (d) The accounts have been divided into four groups: good, fair, doubtful, bad. The good accounts are those in which the advances made were actually recouped, or having sufficient proceeds in sight to do so. The fair accounts represent those where the indebtedness to the board does not exceed £1 per acre on the area proposed to be cropped during the 1917-18 season. The doubtful accounts represent those where the advances exceed £1 per acre on the area proposed to be cropped during the 1917-18 season. The bad accounts represent those where abandonment has taken place, and where the advances made are considered lost. In other cases assistance has been stopped by the board, and the recovery of advances made is considered extremely doubtful. (e) The proceeds of the 1916-17 wheat have been calculated at 3s. per bushel, the amount actually advanced by the wheat board to date. (f) The item "total proceeds" represents proceeds of the 1916-17 pool at 3s. per bushel, the last two dividends of 6d. and 3d. on the 1915-16 pool, and any proceeds received for the sale of chaff, hay, oats, etcetera. (g) If a further payment

of 1s. per bushel is received from the 1916-17 pool, another £190,000 will be the result, and of this amount approximately £175,000 would be in further reduction of the board's advances.

I have here a long schedule which gives all the information in detail to which I have referred, but I will only treat it shortly. It will be impossible for me to read out a schedule like this, but I can explain it briefly. I have several copies, and if hon. members desire that it shall be printed, it can be printed and circulated amongst them. In the first column we have the districts of Perth, Beverley, Kellerberrin, Bruce Rock, Narrogin, Northam, Katanning, Geraldton, and Kununoppin. In the next column we give the number of settlers in each district, and following that the amount of the advance to settlers in each district. These are of the "Good accounts," and it will be sufficient for me to say that the total advanced, amounts to £318,896. As against that the total proceeds received during the period referred to was £369,144, so that the recoup is greater than the advance. The total owing to creditors is £120,000. The next set of figures to deal with are what are called "Fair accounts." The amount of the advance is £375,000, and the proceeds received came to £212,110, while the creditors were owed £149,601. The next set of figures refer to "Doubtful accounts." The advances amount to £487,799, but in round figures there has been paid £140,000 by way of proceeds, and their creditors total £181,599. The "Bad accounts" have been treated similarly. The amount of the advance is £75,172, but even against those bad accounts proceeds to the extent of £16,520 have been received, and the creditors' total is £67,996.

Hon. P. Collier: Some of those will have to get work.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: They have gone. The next set of figures comprises a summary of the whole. For instance, the total advances is a million and a quarter, the total proceeds is £737,770, whilst the total creditors' amount is £520,232. The number of clearances granted is 110. At the bottom of this tabulated statement hon. members will find a series of percentages. For instance, take the total amount of the "Good accounts" and it will be found to be 25 per cent. of the whole, whereas the number of settlers is 33 per cent. of the whole. The bags of wheat returned is 50 per cent. of the whole, and the creditors' total is 23 per cent. of the whole.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the percentage of the bad ones?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: The number of bad settlers is 10 per cent. of the whole and the amount of advances six per cent. of the whole. The proceeds amount to two per cent. of the whole. I think this is very satisfactory. The whole return is from the inception of the board to date.

Mr. Thomson: The spoon feeding was not so bad after all.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: Let me say once more that the debts I have referred to as being a million and a quarter

were the debts on the 31st March, 1917. The proceeds have been coming in during this year and we have them all now with the exception of the last shilling. When we get that other shilling, which Mr. Baxter, the Honorary Minister, assures me we will get, the debts of the board will be under half a million, with, of course, the exception of this year's advances against the wheat, which are in the neighbourhood of £490,000. But as against that we have this year's wheat, which my officers tell me will about set off the advance, so that I am hopeful in March of this year, when we close the board's accounts, to be able to show the total indebtedness of the board from all sources to be under half a million pounds.

Mr. Minister: Then you will have to advance again.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: In the following year, but sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. The scheme is gradually eliminating itself.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: So the policy of the Labour Government was a good thing for the country after all.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: I am stating facts. We all supported the Labour Government when they introduced this Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was no Bill at all.

Mr. Stubbs: We know you did good work.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES: I move—

"That the papers do lie on the Table." Question put and passed.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT — BRUNSWICK STATE ORCHARD.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister) [5.9]: With the permission of the House I desire to make a statement on a subject which has caused a good deal of controversy lately—I refer to the Brunswick State orchard.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no objection whatever to offer to the hon. member placing the House and the country in possession of full facts in connection with the Brunswick State orchard, but I rather think if we allow the statement to be made we shall adopt a practice which has not hitherto been followed. The action of the Honorary Minister is a debatable one, and if he makes a statement now setting forth his side of the case, we shall be precluded from debating the matter for some weeks, at any rate until we reach the Estimates.

The Minister for Works: It can be dealt with by motion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no desire to take up the time of the House by discussing this matter on a motion when there will be ample opportunity of dealing with it on the Estimates. The point I raise is—I do not know whether it is contrary to the Standing Orders—that it is not fair to the House that on every administrative act of a Minister in regard to which criticism has arisen, that the Minister should take advantage of the Standing Orders by making a statement explaining his side of the case and giving the

reasons which actuated him in doing so, a statement which cannot be debated for some weeks to come.

The Minister for Works: I do not think so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am giving my opinion and I know that the Minister for Works is going down to that orchard to have a look at it and to pass judgment on it. At any rate, that is what the Press this morning stated. The Honorary Minister will be better advised to defer making his statement until we have an opportunity of debating it later on.

Mr. SPEAKER: A Minister has always been permitted to make a statement in the House. I do not know what the hon. member's statement is likely to be until I hear it. I will allow the Minister to proceed, and I hope that he will confine himself to facts.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I cannot understand the action of the hon. member opposite. I simply propose to lay all my cards on the table, and the hon. member will have weeks in which to go through them if he thinks fit, and then he can deal with them extensively. I have been accused from time to time of having acted hastily and even wantonly in regard to the uprooting of a portion of the Brunswick State orchard, and I am sorry to say that in some quarters people believe this to be a fact.

Hon. T. WALKER: Mr. Speaker, it is very evident from the commencement of the hon. member's statement that he is going to introduce controversial and debatable matter, which should only be introduced by motion. The House is entitled to a statement of facts, but no Minister has ever been allowed to introduce a controversial question, a question to which there are two sides, and which contains debatable matter from beginning to end. That is decidedly a breach of the custom of this Assembly.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course it is.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have only to draw attention to the difference between a statement affecting administration and a communication simply of bare facts, which places the House in the position of understanding the conduct of the Government and the defence of a Minister against accusers, but the placing of his side of a controversial matter before the Assembly will silence every member who may disagree with him. If a Minister introduces debatable matter, it is the privilege of the House to debate it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Kanowna is perfectly correct so far as a statement containing controversial matter is concerned. I took it, however, that the Honorary Minister was going to make a statement of fact and that he was going to deal with something which happened and give information which would be of some value to the House. But if hon. members raise the question that controversial matter is being introduced, I will have to rule the Minister out of order.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I will proceed to make my statement in as few words as possible and I will confine myself to facts.

Hon. P. Collier: Then do not argue in support of your own actions.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): When I made my first visit to the orchard at Brunswick in August last, I stated then that I was not satisfied with what I had seen. Mr. Moody was optimistic and informed me definitely that he expected the proceeds of the orchard for 1917-18 to pay working expenses. In view of that definite statement I waited until the trees had set, or rather failed to set, their fruit, so that I might have an estimate made to prove or disprove Mr. Moody's statement. I had that estimate made by the manager of the orchard, an official appointed by Mr. Moody himself. According to that document, 10½ acres of apple-trees were estimated to be carrying 130 bushels; 2½ acres of pears had no fruit; 3 acres of peaches were estimated to be carrying 15 bushels; 1¾ acres of plums, 3 bushels; half an acre of nectarines had no fruit; 1½ acres of apricots had no fruit; 4¼ acres of prunes had no fruit; 3½ acres of oranges were estimated to be carrying 100 bushels; those orange trees are there to-day. A half acre of lemons was estimated to be carrying 30 bushels; those trees are there to-day. Five acres of grapes were estimated to be carrying the equivalent of 1,400 lbs. of dried fruit. Being so light the crop was an easy one to estimate, and as the acting manager was appointed by Mr. Moody himself it was not likely that he would underestimate it. I am quoting these figures to controvert Mr. Connor's statement.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the unfair part of it. That is what I object to. You should have taken advantage of the Address-in-reply debate.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Is it not a statement of fact?

Hon. P. Collier: No, you are setting out to controvert Mr. Connor.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not argue.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Well I will confine myself to statement of facts. When I visited the orchard on the 12th December I found that the total sales of produce from the orchard to the 30th November amounted to only £44 4s. 7d.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What was the age of the orchard?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Five years and six years. Certain dried fruits and apples exhibited at the Royal and other shows were placarded as having been grown and processed at the Brunswick State orchard. In reality they were grown in privately owned orchards and were purchased by the Government and sent to Brunswick to be processed. As a matter of fact it was necessary for the Fruit Industries Commissioner to contravene his own regulations to enable those fruits to reach the Brunswick State orchard to be processed. I did not act off my own bat regarding this orchard. Mr. Wickens, the chief inspector of fruit industries, visited this orchard alone prior to my visit, and went down again with me on the 12th December. After consultation and a rigid inspection of the orchard,

extending over two days, we arrived at the conclusion that with the exception of certain varieties, such as figs, almonds, oranges, and one row of apple-trees, there was only one thing to be done in the best interests of the taxpayers, namely, grub up the orchard. Some £5,000 had been spent on the orchard. The wages sheet alone ran into £10 8s. 7d. per week, and the estimated expenditure on the orchard for the year approximated £1,000, while the return, as I have already stated, was practically nil.

Mr. Jones: Were those wages exclusively for the orchard?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes. The Brunswick State orchard had nothing to do with the Brunswick State farm. Each was under separate control, with one manager for the orchard and one for the farm, one set of implements and horses for the farm and another for the orchard. Everything was treated in that way, a most expensive arrangement. The chief fruit inspector advised the retention of all the oranges, lemons, figs, almonds, and choice varieties of grapes, and they are there to-day. The fig-trees, which were growing well, we have kept for an especial purpose, namely, to retain the wasp, a tiny insect of great use to the growers of Smyrna figs. Mr. Wickens and myself examined the die-back on the apple-trees, and he was emphatic that it was due to unsatisfactory soil conditions. I am entirely of that opinion also.

Hon. T. Walker: All this is debatable.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Not at all. We have here a map and a pamphlet issued by the late Fruit Industries Commissioner in which he himself states that the land is unsuited for the purpose.

Hon. P. Collier: You are arguing the whole position. It is most unusual for a Minister to take advantage in this way of the privilege of making a statement.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Mr. Breen, district orchard inspector, was also called in to give his opinion and report. His report bore out the views of Mr. Wickens and myself, namely, that the trees were suffering seriously from die-back because they were in an unsuitable locality.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is die-back all over the State.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Of course there is.

Hon. T. Walker: There seems to be a little of it in the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They require grubbing out.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I have been taken to task for what is termed my hasty action. I have here figures showing that the working expenses of the orchard amounted to £62 18s. 4d. per month. The sum expended during the five months ended 30th November, 1917, was £314 11s. 9d. The expenses of the orchard were heaping up all the time, and backed by the advice of the expert officers I have named, and supported by the opinion of commercial fruitgrowers of local renown, I have nothing to regret on the

score of my action in respect of the Brunswick State orchard. If I were to go there now and find what I found then, I would do exactly the same thing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But why did you say that the late Minister planted the orchard without the advice of his experts?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I did not say anything of the sort.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It was reported in the Press as a statement given by you to one of the reporters.

Hon. P. Collier: On a point of order, I submit that the hon. member is going beyond the privilege accorded to a member of making a personal statement or making a statement to the House. It is unfair to the House and to other members that the hon. member should be permitted to argue in support of his action, seeing that we cannot debate the question.

MR. SPEAKER: I must draw attention to the position. The hon. member tried to confine himself to a statement of facts but was drawn off by interjection. I hope the Minister will confine himself to facts.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister: I have nothing further to say, except that when statements having no foundation in fact are made I cannot help replying to them. When the Estimates come before the House I shall have an opportunity of dealing fully with this matter, and I feel sure that when I am allowed to make a full explanation, every unbiased member will agree that I was right in my action.

#### BILL—BROOME LOCAL COURT, ADMIRALTY JURISDICTION.

##### Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [5.24] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill for an Act to confer limited admiralty jurisdiction on the local court at Broome and for other relative purposes. Admiralty jurisdiction is conferred on the Supreme Court under the Colonial Courts of Admiralty Act, 1890. Cases in the past have arisen where a very considerable amount of delay and expense has been devolved upon the State, and upon individuals, through having to refer claims on seamen's wages and claims of a similar nature to the Supreme Court at Perth for consideration. The object of this Bill will be clearly seen from Clause 2. It is to confer a limited jurisdiction in Admiralty on the local court at Broome in respect of seamen's wages and masters' wages, and the disbursement of ship's accounts. Hon. members will see by the Bill that the limitations are clearly fixed; firstly, the ship is not to exceed 150 tons burden, and secondly, that the claim is not to exceed £100. If this Bill is passed, under the Colonial Courts of Admiralty Act, it will require to be reserved for the signification of His Majesty's pleasure. I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

#### BILL—SEWERAGE WORKS VALIDATION.

##### Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [5.36] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is really more than anything else a formal Bill. It is to validate certain actions taken by the Department of Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage some time ago, which actions were not quite in accordance with the laws of the land. Unfortunately, the officer concerned omitted on two or three occasions to include certain matters in an advertisement in the "Government Gazette," and afterwards as these particular cases were passing through Cabinet and Executive Council. There has, consequently, been some little trouble in connection with the matter, and to put the thing on a straightforward basis it is desired that this Bill should be passed. We had the necessary power under the Act, and this is really to remedy the omissions of an officer of the department, only a small matter in its way.

Mr. Draper: What was the omission?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The omission was to include certain matters in an advertisement in the "Government Gazette."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You had to pay some damages.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was some little case in which damages were given.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Have they been paid yet?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. There is nothing in the matter, so far as I am aware, that is not absolutely straightforward. I am not sure that the questions concerned did not arise during the period when the leader of the Opposition (Hon. P. Collier) was in charge of the Mines Department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There have only been damages to pay since you have been there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The case was tried before I became Minister, but just as a legacy has to be paid after the death of the person bequeathing it, so have we had to pay this legacy from what was left by the previous Government. I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—CURATOR OF INTESTATE ESTATES.

##### Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [5.40] in moving the second reading said: Hon. members will recollect that some time last year a select committee of the House was appointed to investi-

gate the affairs of the department of the Curator of Intestate Estates in the Supreme Court. I think you, Sir, were one of the members of that Committee. A report was made by that committee to the House concerning the conduct of that office, as well as a number of recommendations, some of which I propose to go through. It is, in fact, owing to this report that this Bill is now before the House. All the recommendations made by that committee have been dealt with. For instance, the first point raised, that of the inadequacy of the salary received by the Curator himself, has been dealt with, as hon. members will see when the Estimates come along, by the provision for an extra or special allowance to that officer. The staff itself has been increased, and the equipment of the office altered. I think I am right in saying that there were two clerks in that department, but now there are seven.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have a great deal more work to do now on account of the war.

Hon. T. Walker: The soldiers' estates occupy a great proportion of their time.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: These alterations have been made to the staff and in the method of running the office, after consultation with the Treasury as to an improved system of the keeping of accounts. The select committee found that the accounts were kept in a bad way, and a new system is now in course of being followed. We were in a difficulty with regard to the new system in applying it to those of the old estates which had not yet been finalised. In order, however, that matters should not be confused, it was determined that the old system should be left alone so far as it affected the old estates not yet finalised, and that the new system should, when introduced, apply to every estate from then onwards, the old estates being gradually eliminated from day to day. There should not be many of the old estates left, and I hope that, in the near future, the old system will be entirely abolished. Another recommendation of the select committee was that the old bookkeeper should be got rid of. He has, however, been kept on for the purpose of winding up old estates, about which it was thought no one else knew more than he did. We have had a new accountant in from the Treasury, who has placed the whole department on the lines to which I have referred. The select committee also suggested that the Curator took a long time to wind up estates. The Curator, however, said it was not his fault but was, rather, the fault of the system. It was thought by the committee that some procedure should be found whereby the estates could be wound up cheaply and quickly, and when we come to examine the provisions of this Bill I think hon. members will see in what direction we have given effect to that opinion. There is also a number of minor matters dealing with valuations, jewellery and its disposal, and so on, in the committee's report, which have been dealt with in accordance with it. The report also dealt with the duties of officers at out-stations. Practically every representative of the Government, or civil servant, situated in these out-stations, has been called

upon to act as agent for the Curator. The committee complained that these agents were not sufficiently instructed. Clear and precise instructions have now been drawn up and sent to each of these out-stations, and there should be no possibility of a mistake occurring there in the future. The Curator has been instructed to make inquiries within reasonable limits with a view to tracing next of kin. Arrangements have also been made with the Treasury whereby moneys for the purpose of financing any estates having no liquid assets will be made available, to enable them to be carried on for the time being. The Curator said that if estates had no liquid assets with which he could wind them up he himself possessed no funds for the purpose, and no means of getting them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is that provided for?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. In the meantime, carrying out the recommendation of the committee, the Treasury has found a fund for use from time to time in respect to such estates, as hon. members will see from the provisions of the Bill. I may say, in answer to the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker), that a temporary staff has been specially appointed to deal with the numerous soldiers' estates which are now going through that office. I have very full and detailed answers connected with each of the recommendations of the committee, and if any hon. member desires further information I shall be only too happy to supply it. I have now dealt with the matter in a general way. Dealing with the provisions of this Bill, I wish to inform hon. members that the office of the Curator himself takes its origin from "An Act for the better protection and better administration of the estates of deceased persons," passed away back in 1883. The provisions of that Act were in the year 1903 either repealed or incorporated, with some amendments, in what we know as the Administration Act of 1903. Under the existing law the Curator is not charged with the administration of any estates of deceased persons to such an extent as to enable him to complete the administration by distributing the assets among the beneficiaries. His functions are to protect the estate, and to pay the debts of the deceased pending the grant of probate which may be made by the court to executors or next-of-kin or representatives of the deceased. Speaking again of the present time, the first thing done is that the Curator applies to the court for an order to collect, which order is granted. Then, after an interval, three months in small cases and six months in cases exceeding £100, as a rule, an order to administer may be obtained, which order enables the Curator then to pay debts. But, notwithstanding the order to collect and the order to administer, no part of the estate can be distributed amongst the legatees or next-of-kin until ordinary probate or letters of administration have been issued by the court to one of the persons entitled, other than the Curator. That explains the existing law. The object of the present Bill is to enable administration with all the powers of an administrator under letters of administration, with or without a will annexed, to be

exercised. As regards all those cases in which under the existing law partial administration can be granted to the Curator, administration can under this measure be granted to the Curator subject to certain conditions, which are: that the court may at its discretion, instead of granting administration to the Curator, make in the first place a temporary order for collection and protection, or may limit or restrict the grant, and that on the grant of probate or administration to the executor or the next-of-kin the Curator is thereupon superseded. It will therefore be observed by hon. members that, without in any way interfering with the rights of an executor or the right of next-of-kin, in all cases where the Curator thinks proper to intervene administration is granted by the Court, in what is known as its simplest form, to the Curator himself, conferring upon him all the powers and duties of an ordinary administrator, and enabling him as Curator to carry out the administration to its very completion, except, of course, so far as probate or letters of administration issuing in the ordinary way may be applied for and granted independently of the Curator, in which case his duties cease, and he hands over the estate to the person appointed by the court.

Hon. T. Walker: Of course these powers would only come in where the executor under the will or the next-of-kin could not be found, or in case of intestacy.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am coming to that. The effect of the new Bill is that so long as the parties interested in the deceased's estate either approve of administration by the Curator, or do not bother to take a hand in the administration, an additional order of the court to collect will suffice, and the delay and expense of the procedure under the present Act—namely, first an order to collect, secondly an order to administer, and thirdly probate or letters of administration for distribution—are all avoided. Moreover, under the order the Curator will be able to proceed forthwith to realise on the estate, and if necessary to divide it. Heavy loss is frequently occasioned by the holding over, and the delays become exasperating to members of the public who may be interested in these estates. Let me point out that the Curator does not intervene on the death of any person except upon the happening of one or more of the following cases:—Where the deceased person leaves no executor, widow, husband, or next-of-kin, resident within the jurisdiction, willing and capable of acting in execution of the will or administration of the estate; where the executor named renounces probate of the will, and all the persons primarily entitled to administration by writing filed with the Master decline to apply for administration; where probate or administration is not applied for within three months after the death of such person; where, after the expiration of 30 days from such death, there appears to the court to be no reasonable probability of application being made within such period; where the estate or any portion thereof is unprotected, or liable to waste, and the executor, or widow, husband, or next-of-kin is

absent from the locality of the estate, or of such portion thereof, or is not known, or has not been found; where the estate or any substantial portion thereof is of a perishable nature, or is in danger of being lost or destroyed; where by the will of such person the Curator is appointed to act in the administration of the estate. Under the existing Act there is power to deal with estates of a perishable nature, but no power to deal with estates that are in danger of being lost or destroyed. In several Eastern States the office of Curator has given place to that which is known as the public trustee.

Hon. T. Walker: Would it be better to create a public trustee organisation here than to make these provisions?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In answer to the hon. member, I have made a considerable number of inquiries regarding the working of public trustee offices in the Eastern States, and have carefully considered the creation of such an office in Western Australia. I have not yet arrived at a conclusion, although the matter is continually under consideration, as to what is the proper thing to do; and, rather than see these matters go on in the way they have for years gone on, causing dissatisfaction to the public by delays which are unavoidable by reason of the statute, I decided to bring down to the House this Bill, which will cure those defects for the moment. The question of establishing a public trustee office here will receive further consideration. I may say that quite a quantity of literature in favour of the public trustee system has been submitted to me by various residents of this State. I am carefully perusing it all. I do not propose to go the length of establishing a public trustee under this Bill, but I suggest that several clauses should be inserted enabling the court to appoint the Curator, if it thinks fit, to some of the following offices: committee of the estate of a lunatic; curator of a prisoner's estate; to take charge of the estates of insane persons in place of the Master in Lunacy; to exercise any of the fiduciary powers of the Master in respect of any funds or moneys under the control of the court. But any such orders will only be made by, and of course can be revoked by, the court.

Hon. T. Walker: Are you not overloading the Curator's office?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think so. The object is to give the court the opportunity, if it wishes to do so, to have this, that, or the other estate handed over for convenient dealing with to the Curator. I do not think this would overload the Curator. One of the recommendations of the select committee is to that effect. Personally I would not care if those clauses were eliminated entirely, because they represent what is rather an innovation and would somewhat trench upon what might be called public trustee functions. I have as far as possible followed the recommendations of the select committee, who went very exhaustively into this subject. Some question was raised by them as to the desirability of the investing of funds by particular offices. I myself would like to see a business man appointed

to take charge of the investment of funds in, say, the Curator's office and the Supreme Court. Hon. members can deal with those clauses as they please. Next as regards audit. The Auditor General will be responsible for the auditing of the accounts, which are to be kept in what are known as the prescribed forms. These forms have been set out by the Treasury. Provisions have been adopted from the Acts of the Eastern States and New Zealand for reciprocity to regulate dealings with the offices in the several States, whether the death occurs in Western Australia or elsewhere, and to facilitate the payment of moneys and the transfer of moneys as between public trustees in the Eastern States and our Curator, or vice versa. The fees of the Curator, also in accordance with the select committee's report, have been slightly increased. At present the fee for administration is one per cent. on the value of the estate, which, as everyone who has ever administered the department knows, is far too small. That is increased to 2½ per cent. The four per cent. allowed on the collection of moneys is raised to five per cent. The clauses of the Bill upon which I have not touched may be called supplementary clauses, and do not materially alter the existing law. Any rules that are required to be made under the statute for the governance of the Curator's work will be made, not by him, but by the judges. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

On motion by Hon. T. Walker debate adjourned.

#### BILL—LOCAL OPTION CONTINUANCE.

##### Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [6.0] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill for an Act to continue until the month of April, 1921, the licensing districts as constituted by the Licensing Act, 1911, and the local option resolutions in force thereunder. Under Section 76 of the Licensing Act, 1911, a local option vote was to be taken in every district in Western Australia, in or before the month of April, 1911, and in the month of April in every third year thereafter. The provisions of Sections 77 and 78 and the following sections of that Statute reduced the resolutions to be taken before 1921 to the questions dealing with the increase of licenses and State control. The full local option dealing with the reduction of the number of licenses, discontinuance of licenses and no renewals was held over until after the year ending the 31st December, 1920. Those are the provisions of that Statute. Hon. members will remember that a vote was taken in 1911, and resulted in all districts, with the exception of one only, Gascoyne, voting for no increase. Gascoyne voted for an increase. By the Act 35 of 1913 it was enacted that the local option vote should not be taken in the year 1914 and every third year thereafter, but should be taken in the year 1915 and every three years thereafter.

Hon. P. Collier: In what year was that vote taken?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In 1911.

Mr. Draper: Why was the poll postponed to 1915?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know; I was not here at that time, and it is not shown in the Statute. I am only placing before hon. members the information disclosed by the Statutes. By the Act No. 4 of 1915 it was decided that the vote should not be taken in 1915, but that the original vote taken in 1911 should remain in force until the year 1918. The present Bill provides that the vote shall not be taken in 1918, but that the vote taken in 1911 shall continue in operation and be effective until a vote is taken in 1921, for very much the same reasons that the voting was postponed three years ago. Hon. members will understand that it is necessary that the electoral districts or the boundaries of electoral districts shall coincide with the boundaries of the magisterial or licensing districts. As the years have gone on, whilst the electoral district boundaries have not been altered, the magisterial boundaries have, for various reasons, been altered from time to time, and the first reason I am giving hon. members for the introduction of this Bill is that before we can take a vote, say in April of this year, the boundaries of the existing magisterial districts will require to be altered, to be made co-terminous with the electoral districts, otherwise the rolls used for the electoral districts will be of no use in the referendum. There is no doubt that when eventually a poll is taken, that particular work will have to be put in hand, and it will be somewhat of an expense in itself. In the year 1911 the State was fortunate enough to be able to induce the Commonwealth Government to permit the local option vote to be taken at the same time as the Federal referendum was taken, and the Commonwealth only charged the State what was called the actual out of pocket expenses, which amounted to £954. It was estimated, and I have no reason to doubt that the estimate would to-day be any less—in fact I think it would be more—that to take a local option poll, assuming it would be contested in every district, as I have no doubt would be the case, the cost to the State would be between £1,000 and £5,000. Some officers have stated that it would cost the State £6,000. Hence for the reasons I have given it is proposed that the period for the taking of the poll should be postponed from April of this year to 1921. In the meantime we can go on as we are doing, respecting the vote taken in 1911, which, in effect said, “No more licenses.”

Hon. T. Walker: No increases.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No increases, and it is well known that no new licenses can be granted in any district within 15 miles of licensed premises. In 1921 the whole of the local option provisions under the 1911 Act will come into full working order. Local option will then be a fact.

Mr. Hickmott: How would it be to take the poll in 1920, and not make it operative until 1921? In that way it could be taken in conjunction with the general elections.

Hon. T. Walker: You forget that there is bound to be a general election before then.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member told me that he would be back in this seat within three months and that was 18

months ago, so I do not value his prophecy. But if hon. members suggest that the poll should be taken in 1920 instead of 1921, I am quite willing to consider that phase of the matter. The first thing that strikes me is that all Governments have objected to a liquor question referendum being taken at the time of a general election. Our friends opposite opposed it, and it has been generally agreed by Parliament that the idea is not a good one. Without entering into reasons for or against it, it will be admitted that there are enough issues before the people at a general election without having this dominating issue for the time being confused with the return of a member. That is why I would be inclined to oppose the poll being taken in 1920.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I can give you a stronger reason. The Act of 1911 provides for ten years.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: At the present time the cost of an extra election would be a serious matter to us, but what it will be in 1920 or 1921 I do not propose to guess. I think we had better deal with the facts as we have them to-day. The present is not the time in which to have another referendum in this country on any subject, let alone on a liquor subject, and the state of affairs might very well be left as it stands until 1921. That is the whole object of the Bill. I have a good deal of information here about the numbers, and the cost of the last poll taken in the various districts, and I can supply it to hon. members if they desire to have it.

Hon. P. Collier: That vote gave a strong expression of opinion in favour of State control for new licenses.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have all those figures, and they are available to hon. members.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the Attorney General proceeds I should like to draw attention to the Title of the Bill and to ask whether he thinks it covers the Order of leave. At first sight it does not cover Clauses 2 and 3. Standing Order 261 reads as follows:—

Every Bill not prepared pursuant to the Order of leave, or according to the Rules and Orders of the House, shall be ordered to be withdrawn.

I should like to hear the Attorney General on this question.

The Attorney General: You mean, Sir, as to whether the Title of the Bill covers the purpose of the Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER: As to whether it covers the Order of leave. Clause 3 reads as follows:—

Section 2 of the Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1911 (as amended by Act No. 4 of 1913), is hereby further amended by omitting the words "one thousand nine hundred and eighteen" in subsections 1 and 2 thereof respectively, and inserting in place thereof "one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one."

The Order of leave is for an Act to continue until the month of April, 1921, the licensing districts as constituted by the Licensing Act,

1911, and the local option resolutions in force thereunder.

The Attorney General: You mean, Sir, as to whether there should not be in the Title something to indicate that the Bill is to amend the Act of 1911?

Mr. SPEAKER: Quite so. I shall be pleased to hear the hon. member on that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: First of all the two statutes to which I have already referred, namely, No. 35 of 1913 and No. 4 of 1915, bear exactly the same Title as the Bill before us. Of course I realise that two wrongs do not make a right. Still those Acts have passed this place and another place. However, I take it, Sir, your point is as to whether the Title of the Bill covers Clause 3, which is obviously an amendment of the Act of 1911.

Mr. SPEAKER: Quite so.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In answer to that I say that the Title of the Bill, although it does not use the word "amend" obviously means an amendment of the Licensing Act of 1911; because on reference to the Act of 1911, as I explained before tea, the referendum or poll was to be taken in the year 1914 and every three years thereafter until 1921. The first amending Act altered "1914" to "1915" and in 1915 it was again postponed until 1918. Now I am asking to have it postponed till 1921. After some consideration of the matter I submit to you that the Title clearly indicates that there is an amendment, in that it says "an Act to continue until the month of April, 1921." Obviously that is an amendment of the Act of 1911. I quite agree that the Title of the Bill might be "an Act to continue the licensing districts and the local option resolutions, and to amend the Act of 1911," but I contend that an Act continuing till April, 1921, the licensing districts and the local option resolutions which the Act of 1911 said would take place at recurring periods, is in itself obviously an amendment. There, I should say, the Title itself covers any amendments indicated by the clauses following on it. Have I made myself clear?

Mr. SPEAKER: Quite clear.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is no contentious point involved; it is, rather, an academic point. Still, if you think the Title is not sufficient I am willing to withdraw the Bill and re-introduce it under any other Title that would meet with your approval. In all seriousness I think the Title which the Solicitor General himself has drafted and which has appeared before the House on three different occasions indicates an amendment of the Act. To quote the Standing Orders, "The clauses of a Bill must be indicated in the Title." Have we not indicated in the Title the amendments contained in the clauses? With all respect I think we have. As the Minister for Railways reminds me, we could not very well "continue" without an amendment. However, I am entirely in your hands and, subject to your ruling on the point raised, I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. SPEAKER: I accept the Attorney General's statement on the point raised. I

would like to remind the House that there are fresh in the memory occasions on which Bills with incomplete titles have passed this House and have been ruled out in another place. On reading Clause 3 it occurred to me that the Title did not quite cover the subject-matter of the Bill, and so I have drawn attention to it. I am satisfied with the statement of the Attorney General.

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [7.40]: I regret that the Government should have deemed it necessary to bring down the Bill. It is a breach of faith with the electors. Why should there be any fear of the voice of the people on the question of liquor traffic? This question is of all importance at the present juncture. It is not what is vulgarly termed a "wowser" question, but it is a financial question. We have been told that the Government were elected to straighten out the finances of the State, and we have been told also that the approximate deficit for the coming year will represent £3,000 per day. We spend nearly £8,000 per day on alcoholic liquor, so it is not hard to see that if the liquor traffic were placed under the control of the people the State would be very much better off. Speaking in round figures, I think the amount received from all sources for licenses in connection with the traffic is about £40,000 per annum, and that to obtain that sum we spend £350,000 in the upkeep of gaols, charitable institutions, and asylums, for which, we are told, the liquor traffic is responsible in a very large measure. The people were promised that they should have a voice on this question in 1918. It is now sought to put off the question for another three years, and we have no proof that at the end of that period it will not again be put off until 1924. Although it is a matter of very great importance, the moral or immoral aspect of the question need not very much concern us at present, but, as I have said, the financial aspect of the question should be regarded as of paramount importance. I am not asking the liquor traffic to give away anything, neither am I asking the Government to introduce any drastic measure; but I do ask the Government to keep faith with the people. I do not think that is too much to ask of any Government. Comparing the amount being expended with what we are receiving we find it is scarcely what one would expect from a Government claiming a monopoly of "business acumen." We have been told that at the last poll all the electorates, with one exception, voted for no increases in licenses. From that it is evident that the liquor traffic fears the voice of the people. As a democrat I demand to hear the people's voice on every question of great importance, and at the present time I know of no domestic question which concerns our nation to the same degree as that of the liquor traffic. We have been told that we must increase production, must eliminate all waste and must conserve all shipping space in order to provide food for the nation. The insincerity of those who speak to us on this question can be gauged by the fact that hundreds of millions of bushels of grain, which could have been turned into food for the nation,

have been used in the manufacture of alcoholic spirits. And, likewise, shipping space has been used which should have been used for the conveyance of other merchandise. Against the people engaged in the traffic I have nothing to say. I have met men connected with it who are, many of them, well worthy of gracing a far nobler calling in life than that provided in the liquor traffic; but I do say that, at this juncture particularly, the traffic is a menace to the community and that the people should be able to speak, as has been promised them, on this all important subject. The question which was to go before the people this year, and which the Government are now seeking to put off again, is one in which every member who is returned as a representative of the people should be interested, particularly, I think, those who profess to represent the working classes. It may be interesting to members to know that the first licensing system was introduced in about the sixteenth century, when words something like these were used, "That on account of the arrogance of the workers, and their utter contempt for the nobility, it becomes necessary to open up a channel down which the wages, or the money of the worker, must be poured, so as to sap his independence." We find in almost every industrial dispute, wherever the workers are defeated, that it is because of the lack of finances. If the money which goes into the coffers of the liquor traffic was distributed in a better way amongst the people we would never have the difficulty which arises from time to time in the industrial world. We have been told by the Commissioner of Police that the curtailment of the trading hours of the traffic has been beneficial to the people; so that by closing up in a small degree the mouth of the sewer, which was opened to sap the life of the worker, we find that benefit has accrued. I thought from this that the Government would hasten, not only to place this matter of local option before the people, but would of its own initiative seek to put the traffic on a basis similar to that on which other businesses stand. It may be urged that other businesses do not pay license fees such as the traffic pays, but, on the other hand, the traffic in return enjoys a limited monopoly in business. Apart from this, however, we have the fact of the debasing influence upon society brought about by the drink traffic, and particularly the debasing influence upon the rising generation, and upon the children yet unborn. I very much regret that the Government are pushing this matter, and taking away from the people that which should be their inalienable right to express their opinion upon this important question. For that reason I shall oppose the Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [7.50]: Whilst many members will perhaps agree with the remarks of the last speaker as to the influence upon others of these who drink intoxicating liquors to excess, at the same time I fail to recall any promise having been made that a local option vote would be taken in 1918. According to the Act passed in 1911, the year 1921 is mentioned, and that is the year in which the

people were promised that a full local option vote would be taken. The Attorney General is justified, under these conditions, in introducing this Bill. There is not the least doubt in my mind that an honourable understanding was arrived at at the time the 1911 Bill was introduced, providing for time compensation in lieu of money compensation.

The Minister for Works: That is correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We must realise that in a State like Western Australia, where a large amount of money has been spent upon buildings which have only been in existence for a few years, the people responsible for their erection could legally—some say not legally—or morally claim some compensation for the large expenditure to which they have been put.

Mr. Thomson: Is there any guarantee in this Bill that they will not seek for compensation?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is in the 1911 Act. No compensation is to be paid for the closing of hotels after 1921. Before the hon. member interjected I was going to say that the 1911 Act has been the means of evoking many discussions in this House. My hon. friend, the late Attorney General, and the leader of the temperance party in this House, has on many occasions tried to introduce amending legislation for the purpose of doing away with what I may call an honourable compact. Unfortunately for him, those opposed to his ideas have been successful up to date in keeping the promise which, in my opinion was properly made and which was agreed to by all sections of the House, and by leaders of the temperance movement outside the House and others, and preventing him from carrying out his intention of interfering with the legislation with regard to the year 1921. If anything at all has been done to induce those engaged in the traffic to try and get an extension of the Act after 1921, it has been done by those who call themselves the leaders of the temperance movement in Western Australia. Having once entered into a compact of this kind and agreed to time compensation, they should immediately have endeavoured to honour that compact, and in 1921 should tell the people concerned that they have honoured that compact which they had entered into and expect them to do likewise in respect to any possible request for an extension beyond 1921. Many hon. members have been subjected to a great deal of abuse in this matter. The Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood) for one has been abused up hill and down dale. There has been some excuse so far as I am concerned, for I have been told that the reason why I opposed the alteration of the Act was that I lived near a brewery, that the fumes every morning affected me, and that I was not in a position to judge clearly upon the matter under consideration. I was instrumental in introducing the 1921 clause in the original Act, and I did so at the request of the temperance organisations in Fremantle. A perusal of "Hansard" will show this clearly and distinctly, and also that I was written to and asked to move for at least a 10 years' time compensation in lieu of monetary compensation. To this the House

agreed. As I remarked prior to the general elections, I intend to adhere to the honourable compact made, and to retain, so far as my vote is able to do so, the provisions of the Act regarding 1921. I do not want to go into the pros and cons of the position, but I have this to say to the member for South Fremantle: suppose a vote was taken in this House, and this Bill was not passed—the people are only to be asked the question as to whether the licenses should be increased—then the only means that those who wish to curtail the liquor traffic would have of doing so would be to remain as they are, and on the other hand the other side would have a chance of increasing the licenses. For those who, prior to the passing of the 1911 Act, engaged themselves in opposing licenses, this Act was a godsend. Some of us had to go from door to door to get signatures from the ratepayers to oppose licenses when they came before the licensing bench, and not only had we to do this but we had to attend the licensing court in order to swear that the person who signed the requisition actually did so. Immediately the Act was passed this was done away with and it became no longer necessary to attend the court in order to oppose the granting of any particular new license. There are some points regarding which the Act needs amendment: for instance, in regard to the transfer of a license from one district to another, because such license is not a paying one in any particular district. I hope, before the local option vote is taken, that the Government of the day will amend the Act in this direction. I should also like to see all wine and gallon licenses wiped out, as well as some other forms of licenses. If we are to deal properly with the drink traffic we should see that it is conducted in properly licensed houses, where the police can have proper control, instead of its being conducted by means of twopenny-halfpenny carts. We know that people will sometimes order a bottle of oil and get a bottle of whisky supplied to them for it, and that this sort of thing has been going on for a long time. The only possible thing we can do now is to continue this Act, and to avoid just now the expense connected with the submission of the matter to the people. No increase can take place in the number of licenses except outside a radius of 15 miles from an existing license. In the year 1921 the question of a full local option will be submitted to the people, who will then be able to say whether licenses should be increased or decreased. I hope the second reading of the Bill will be agreed to.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.59]: I feel somewhat like the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Roche) and regret the people are not having an opportunity of dealing with this matter. We have the Legislative Council elections taking place in May, and I see no reason why the question should not be submitted to the people then. I should have liked to have seen an amendment to this Bill. It is all very well for the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) and other hon. members to say that a compact was entered into in 1911. Circumstances have altered since then. In 1914 we entered

into the present great struggle, and the conditions to-day are not applicable to those existing at the time the compact was entered into. So far as I can see we have no guarantee that the people who are interested in the liquor trade will not be able to do as they did during last session, namely, exert sufficient influence in this House to nullify the the Act and have it repealed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The other side tried that.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): This House has supreme power.

Mr. THOMSON: I admit that this House has absolute and supreme control, and that has been proved in the past so far as this particular business is concerned. Let any hon. member stand up in this House and take up the cudgels on behalf of the temperance people, and he will find that despite the fact that the liquor question is not being placed before the people in the form of a referendum, the whole of the forces of the Liquor Defence League are combined to ensure that he is not returned. I make that statement without fear of contradiction. The question was, in fact, an important one, a burning one, during my recent election. The Liquor Defence League of Western Australia sent to all the hotelkeepers in my district a circular to the effect that the league looked upon the sitting member for Katanning as antagonistic to their trade, and that the hotelkeepers should use their utmost endeavours to secure his defeat. And undoubtedly those hotelkeepers did use every effort, because in every portion of my electorate I met with the very strongest opposition from that particular section.

Mr. Green: You were with them when the Labour Government were in office.

Mr. THOMSON: I contend that I was justified in the action I took. I admit that the people interested in the liquor trade were justified in the action they took. I am not cavilling at their exercise of their just rights. But what I wish to emphasise is that when this particular measure comes before the House in 1921 we shall have the whole fight over again, and that the liquor trade will not trouble itself very much about the compact of 1911. The fight will have to be gone through all over again.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have had the fight every year.

Mr. THOMSON: Certainly. I regret that the people are not to have an early opportunity of deciding whether the number of hotels shall be reduced. This Bill, as the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Roche) has stated, will merely decide whether licenses shall remain as they are or shall be increased. I am not at all in accord with the temperance people. For years I have been a consistent advocate of the nationalisation of the liquor trade. I agree with hon. members opposite who maintain that nationalisation offers the most equitable solution of the liquor problem. Under nationalisation, if the people decide to close hotels they will not be injuring any individual. I feel tempted to take the opportunity, in Commit-

tee, of testing the feeling of hon. members as regards allowing the people to express their opinions on the liquor trade at the Legislative Council election in May. The question we are dealing with is a large one, affecting the nation and certainly affecting the efficiency of our manhood and the efficiency of our soldiers.

Mr. Green: What rot!

Mr. Jones: A patriotic statement.

Mr. THOMSON: An officer occupying a high position on the military staff of this State said to me, "Well, Thomson, I am not a 'woser' by any means, or a teetotaler, but I want to say that the closing of the hotels when our troops are en route means a saving of tens of thousands of pounds to the Commonwealth Defence Department."

Hon. P. Collier: In what way?

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member knows that if troops passing through do not consume liquor they are amenable to discipline, and that therefore no trouble arises. We know as a fact that scores of soldiers have been left behind—quite without any intention of missing their ships—because, unfortunately for themselves, they met a good many friends, and in consequence were slightly elevated. I wish the House to understand clearly that I cast no reflection whatever on our soldiers. I have neither right nor desire to do so. I merely point out that the military authorities recognise the necessity for closing hotels when troop ships and hospital ships are passing through. For me that is quite a sufficient argument. It proves at least to me that the military authorities recognise the need for regulating the liquor traffic. In conclusion, I must again express my deep regret that the people will not be afforded an early opportunity of dealing comprehensively with the liquor question.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning—in reply) [8.6]: I wish to say a word in reply to the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Roche), who accuses the Government of breaking faith with the people over this measure. The hon. member, I feel sure, does not quite understand the trend of the law on the subject, which has been carefully explained by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin).

Mr. Roche: I thought you said the poll was promised for 1918.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Act of 1915 provides that the local option vote—the vote that is capable of being taken—shall be taken in the year 1918. But what is that vote? The member for North-East Fremantle explained that, but I do not think the member for South Fremantle quite grasped the position; and, as there may be other hon. members similarly situated, I shall say a few words on that point. The Licensing Act, 1911, provides by Sections 76 to 79 that local option conditions shall prevail, that a certain number of questions shall be asked, and that the questions shall be whether the number of licenses existing in a district shall continue, whether the number of licenses existing in a district shall be increased, whether the number of licenses existing in a district shall be reduced, whether

no licenses shall be granted or renewed. Subsection 3 of Section 77 reads—

Provided that Resolutions A, C, and D shall not be submitted to the electors until after the thirty-first day of December, One thousand nine hundred and twenty, and until after that date the voting paper shall be in the form in Part II. of the Fifteenth Schedule.

So that, Resolutions A, C, and D being cut out, there remains only Resolution B—

That the number of licenses existing in the district be increased.

As hon. members have already been informed, that was the question submitted in 1911, and that was the question which was answered, "No; you must not increase the number of licenses." If the hon. member for South Fremantle were to put the question to the people again, he would be playing into the hands of the publicans, because the question has already been answered in his favour.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not agree with the hon. member in that. The publicans do not want the number of licenses increased.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then I will say, the member for South Fremantle would be playing into the hands of a certain section of the community. It is possible that if the question were submitted again the majority might reply, "Yes; let us have an increase of licenses."

Mr. Thomson: It is not very probable, though.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is possible. Since the question has already been answered in favour of hon. members opposing the Bill, why disturb the decision? Therefore the introduction of this Bill does not represent a breach of faith with the people, but rather keeps faith with them, because they had been told in 1911 that these local option provisions, under which—let hon. members make no mistake about it—hotels can be closed absolutely without compensation, would be put into operation in 1921. To exercise now the right of closing would be what I and many others would call a breach of faith, and a real breach of faith. Moreover, to close hotels now, would mean compensation. In 1921 any hotel the people choose can be closed without compensation.

Hon. P. Collier: Provided existing legislation is not amended in the meantime.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: To that I reply, sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Hon. P. Collier: The Parliament of 1920 might decide to amend existing legislation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is only one other point I wish to mention, a point which shows how wise the Parliamentary Draftsman was in the particular form of title he selected—

An Act to continue until the month of April, 1921, the licensing districts as constituted by the Licensing Act, 1911, and the local option resolutions in force thereunder. That Title covers the Bill, but would not cover an amendment such as desired by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), altering the Act of 1911 so as to submit the local option provisions as a whole to-day. I shall have to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to rule such an amendment out of order as not being within the purview of the Bill. The Title would have to be

recast in order to permit of the introduction of such an amendment.

Mr. Thomson: I quite recognise that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for Katanning has given an additional reason, which I now urge, for maintaining that the Title of the Bill is a correct one. Whether the hon. member's views are correct is not a matter of debate now. The matter for debate now is, shall we hold a poll in April of this year, at a cost to the country of £1,000, to ask the question, shall the number of licenses existing in a district be increased? The alternative is to rest satisfied with the answer already given, that they shall not be increased. Then a poll taken in 1921—when the statute, as I presume and as we all presume, will still be in force—will decide the whole of the questions which can at that date be submitted. The questions which I have read out will be submitted in 1921.

Hon. T. Walker: Or some other questions.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Those four questions are provided for by the Act. I think I have now dealt sufficiently with the objections raised to this measure. I submit to the House that there are good reasons why the second reading of this Bill should be passed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Local option resolutions continued to April 1921:

Mr. THOMSON: I would ask the Attorney General to state the reason why this poll can not be taken in October, 1920. He has told the House that the poll should not be taken in 1918 on the score of economy, but I would like to know why it can not be taken in 1920. So far as I am personally concerned the matter of the liquor referendum does not worry me in the slightest.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The answer to the hon. member is the Statute of 1911, Section 77, Subsection 3 of which provides that the resolutions which I have read shall not be submitted to the electors until after the 31st December, 1920. That means that they cannot be submitted during that year.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

## BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUATION.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [8.21] in moving the second reading said: This Bill does not require much explanation; it speaks for itself. We have what is known as the Industries Assistance Act and the object of the Bill is to continue the operation of that Act for a further period of 12 months. For the information of hon. members it might be pointed out that the Industries Assistance Act itself has no time limit; it goes on. But there is

a provision in it whereby the operation of the Act so far as the making of fresh advances is concerned, is limited to particular periods, and the period in the existing Act expires on the 31st March of this year. Therefore, if the Bill before hon. members be not passed, it will not be possible to make further advances to farmers after that date. I shall be glad within the purview of the Bill to supply to hon. members any information that may be required. This afternoon I circulated a resume of the operations of the board, but whether it be in connection with this Bill or at any other time that I am asked to supply information, I shall be only too happy to furnish it. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.24]: I have no objection to offer to the passage of the Bill because I recognise it is necessary that this continuation measure should be passed to enable the Industries Assistance Board to continue to make advances beyond the 31st March of the present year. Of course, there are many matters of very great importance arising out of the statements submitted to the House this afternoon by the Minister for Industries. All of these, however, can best be discussed on the Estimates. As a matter of fact, I doubt whether we would be in order in raising a general discussion on the administration of the Act under the Continuation Bill.

The Attorney General: As I said this afternoon, I am willing to make an occasion for a discussion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If the Estimates were not ahead of us we might endeavour to avail ourselves of the Minister's offer, but as the House will have full opportunity of discussing all matters connected with the administration of the Act when the Estimates of the various departments are before us, I do not see that any purpose will be served in endeavouring to discuss these matters under the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

## BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [8.28] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is to amend the Electoral Act, 1907. There are two different objects aimed at in the Bill; the first is an amendment for the purpose of enabling economy to be exercised wherever possible in the printing and the issue of the rolls, and the second is for the purpose of making the Act more effective. At the present time by an amending Electoral Act, No. 56 of 1917, the amalgamated Legislative Council rolls for the Upper House elections must be printed in February biennially. This

means unnecessary printing as the roll has to be printed again as soon as the writ is issued in May. This happens every second year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Have you ever done it in the past?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No.

Hon. P. Collier: Then the Act has been evaded.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The suggestion has been made by the Electoral Registrar on the score of economy, and I came to the conclusion that it would be a wise amendment to submit to the House. At all events this amendment will enable one print to suffice, instead of the two now necessary. A further point is that the amendment will avoid the printing of supplementary rolls. At present the supplementary rolls have to be printed every three months.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Quite right too.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The amendment restores the subsection to what it was before the amendment of 1912.

Hon. P. Collier: Which gives the Chief Electoral Officer discretion as to their printing?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. Again, it is aimed to make the penal clauses more effective by reducing the penalty from two years to 12 months. Where a penalty is two years, offenders have to be committed for trial and take their trial before a judge and jury of the Supreme Court; whereas, if the penalty is 12 months the offenders can be dealt with summarily by magistrates. In the Commonwealth Act offences of this description are dealt with summarily, and we have merely copied the provision of the Commonwealth Act.

Hon. P. Collier: Have we had any prosecutions at all?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, we had a number last year for wrong claim cards, and offences of that sort. No jury feel inclined to convict a man of anything so trivial. We require to reduce the penalty from two years to 12 months so as to take these cases from a higher to a lower court.

Mr. Munsie: Reference is made in the Bill to subsection 2 of Section 24. There is no such subsection in the principal Act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is probably a misprint.

Hon. P. Collier: It does not seem to be apropos of Section 24.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Act was amended in 1911, and the amendments became part of the principal Act, as provided for.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think the section has been wrongly quoted. However, I will look into it. There is a further provision for summarily dealing with minor offences where the evidence that the statement was wilfully made is answered. That is to say where wrong statements have been made they can be dealt with, without their having been wilfully made. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

# BILL—DENTISTS ACT AMEND- MENT.

## Second Reading.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [8.36] in moving the second reading said: More than once have I had the privilege of introducing a Bill framed practically in the same words. I am not going to weary the House by any lengthy introduction of the measure, because I think it will commend itself to the sound judgment of those who are desirous of seeing an advancement in our professional as well as in our ordinary social life. In 1909 a Bill was passed to amend the Legal Practitioners' Act. At that time the entrance into the legal profession could be obtained only by serving articles and passing the necessary examinations. That Bill received the approval of both branches of the Legislature, and it has been found to work no evil whatsoever; in fact it has admitted into the ranks of the legal profession some very able men indeed. Now, what is good for the legal profession cannot be of injury to the dental profession. As a matter of fact I venture to think more public good will accrue from the passing of the Bill before the House than has accrued from the passage of the amendment of the Legal Practitioners' Act. At present the bulk of the responsibility to the public for proper treatment in dental operations rests, not with the members of the board, not with the registered dentists, but with the operators they all employ. One cannot enter any large dental establishment without finding the management of the work, the real operations, the real treatment of the public, in the hands of operators, men of intelligence, of education, and of long experience, skilled in all training necessary for the practice of mechanical and surgical dentistry. The registered dentists are comparatively few, and they enjoy the easy time of supervision, and scarcely supervision at that. The public are in the hands of the skilled operators. Yet the Dental Board in this State have so closed themselves in that they will not admit the skilled men into the profession, preferring to continue to enjoy an absolutely close preserve. Moreover, by the Dentists Act we have given to this board powers which I venture to think are given to no other professional body in the world. Such is their discretion that, to the knowledge of all of us here, they have refused admission to the most skilled and accomplished of men, while admitting others of lesser accomplishments, merely for a whim, or because in some way or other it suited their interests. The only way at present in which a Western Australian can be admitted into the profession is to article himself and serve articles after passing his preliminary examination. And the board by their methods of examination — for they are the examining body; it is not like a University — can by their very tests exclude persons they do not want within the ranks. If they liked to act tyrannically there never would be a more tyrannical body.

Mr. Harrison: Whom do you suggest should examine?

Hon. T. WALKER: I suggest that we should hasten along our facilities in the University so as to get an impartial body of those who understand dentistry from the University on its learned side. At present the examiners are all interested parties.

Mr. Harrison: The Bill does not alter the examining board.

Hon. T. WALKER: No, but it compels them to set the examination in a certain manner, compels them to hold a practical examination as against a theoretical or book examination. These people to whom I refer are already doing the work.

Mr. Harrison: You are going to open the gate too wide.

Hon. T. WALKER: The gate is open now. Those who are doing professional work now are the persons I want to admit and bestow upon them professional rank.

Mr. Harrison: Do you mean that the inferior man can get through now and that the superior man cannot?

Hon. T. WALKER: No. I mean to say that the good men, the men who are capable and are actually doing the work, the men upon whom the public have to rely, are by the law as it stands now prevented from receiving recognition and doing work on their own behalf. They may only be the hirelings of those who are registered.

Mr. Harrison: Can they pass their examinations?

Hon. T. WALKER: They are not allowed to sit for examination, nor are they given any hope of entering into the profession as the law now stands. This Bill provides that if these people have a good character, and have served for 10 years, they may sit for examination. I would be willing to accept an amendment for even a lesser number of years.

Mr. Harrison: Will these men be qualified when they are let in?

Hon. T. WALKER: They are qualified now. They are the actual men in charge; they do everything from drawing a tooth to turning out the latest brand of new teeth. They also do everything with regard to the treatment of patients.

Mr. Pickering: What is the present system of examination?

Hon. T. WALKER: The present system of admission into the profession is by serving articles after passing a preliminary examination, and this Bill does not prevent that course being now followed. I know of the case of a man who attended a university course in England, and because of his health was unable to complete his final examination, and came to Western Australia. Unless this man is willing to serve his articles here, although he had reached the stage of his final examination in a university in the old land, still he cannot be admitted to the dentistry profession in this State. I propose that if a man shows his fitness by his actual service and work, and then passes an examination in practical and surgical dentistry, he may be admitted to the profession. This is only what we have done in the legal profession already. There is an evil in

making a board, such as this board, supreme and above the law, and in its being able to do as it likes. It is a positive danger to the community. As the law now stands, anyone outside a certain radius of Perth can draw a tooth, which is a dangerous operation, and can perform a surgical operation in dentistry in which there is risk of life, but he cannot come to Perth and make a set of teeth, because that is where the profits lie, and where he is entering into competition with those who have this great and narrow monopoly.

Mr. Davies: Do you include mechanical assistants?

Hon. T. WALKER: Any person who proves to the satisfaction of the board that he is of good character, and for not less than 10 years has been engaged in the work as an operative assistant to a registered dentist in Western Australia, and then after that passes an examination in practical and surgical dentistry. If he has been for 10 years an operative, doing the work, and has proved his fitness, and then passes an examination, he is entitled to be registered.

Mr. Mullany: What number of persons will be affected?

Hon. T. WALKER: I think they could be numbered on the fingers of both hands. At the same time if only one man was concerned it would not be justice to keep him out. We should recognise those who have the burden of the work on their shoulders and are entitled to the distinction of registration, and give them an opportunity of practising for themselves. No doubt some of them will remain as operative workers, employed by some of the big firms, and will not want to be independent, but others may require to start for themselves. If their character is right and their skill is right, and if their intellectual attainments are right, we should not shut the door upon them. The principle is a simple one. I am only following the course already adopted in other lands. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

On motion by the Attorney General, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.55 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th January, 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.”]

## PRIVILEGE—PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTS.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.45] asked the Speaker without notice: Is Mr. Speaker aware that the annual departmental and other reports have not been distributed to members this year, as has been done in previous years? Will Mr. Speaker make inquiries into the matter, and see that the reports are distributed to members for their information when discussing departmental matters, particularly the Estimates, as surely it is not intended to prohibit members having information regarding the administration of the various departments?

Mr. SPEAKER [4.46]: In reply to the hon. member I desire to say that I was not aware that the reports were not being printed and circulated until my attention was drawn to the matter just before the House met. I was, however, aware that the Treasurer, who controls the Government Printing Office—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But not this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Treasurer had issued instructions, on the score of economy, that reports, which might have been considered superfluous, should not be printed. I suppose the subject-matter of the hon. gentleman's question comes within that category. I feel sure it is not the intention of the Treasurer to prevent hon. members getting necessary information, and I believe arrangements have been made for an hon. member who desires to have a departmental report, to have that report furnished to him in the House for purposes of reference and convenience and for the conduct of business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [4.48]: With reference to the reports of the Public Works Department and the Water Supply Department, these have been ready for the printer for some time, but under the circumstances detailed by Mr. Speaker, the printing of these documents has not been carried out, and the reports have been laid on the Table of the House in typewritten form. If the House desires that they shall be printed, a motion to that effect may be moved, and they will be printed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you want to prevent hon. members seeing what you are doing?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has no right to make a remark like that. The reports have not been printed for the simple reason given by Mr. Speaker.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Treasurer is not going to take charge of this House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I feel rather strongly on this matter because I find that the report of the Railway Department and also other reports have been printed, yet the reports of two departments which, to my mind, are very important, have been presented to the House only in typewritten form.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The report of the Railway Department has not been distributed either.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.49]: Seeing that the Government have decided to make a departure from a practice which has obtained hitherto in this House, regarding the