

## BILLS (2)—FIRST READINGS.

1. Narrogin Recreation Reserve.

2. Industries Assistance Act Continuance.

Received from the Assembly.

*House adjourned at 11.27 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Assembly, Wednesday, 8th December.*

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

## QUESTION—APPLE CROP, FRUIT CASES.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Honorary Minister: Will he have the necessary inquiries made as to the prospect of the apple crop 1920-21, with a view to ensuring adequate provision of fruit cases particularly with regard to export?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: The matter is receiving consideration.

## QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY, METROPOLITAN AREA.

*To Subsidise Erection of Windmills.*

Mr. DUFF (for Mr. Veryard) asked the Minister for Works: In view of the shortage in the water supply of the metropolitan area, which is causing considerable loss to the florists' and nurserymen's trade and great inconvenience to the general public, is he prepared to subsidise the erection of windmills, with the object of relieving the water supply difficulty?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: No. If any person desires to erect a windmill for the purpose named, and will apply to the Water Supply Administration, a permit will be granted.

## QUESTIONS (2)—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE BOARD.

*Commission on Clients' Machinery Purchases.*

Mr. HARRISON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has any commission been paid to the Industries Assistance Board on machinery and implements sold to clients of the board? 2, If so, what is the amount?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes, on sales of spare parts only. 2, September, 1918, to June, 1920, £36 9s. 2d.

*Advances under Part III. of Act.*

Mr. HARRISON asked the Minister for Mines: Will he supply the House with a list of the advances made under Part III. of the Industries Assistance Act, showing (a) name of industry, (b) amount of advance, (c) rate of interest, (d) security given for such advances?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Yes, a list showing the advances in accordance with (a), (b), (c) and (d) is attached hereto: Advances made under the Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Act, 1911, Section 3.—Geraldton Co-operative Butter and Bacon Co., £3,000; first year, free; second year, 2 per cent.; third year, 3 per cent.; fourth year, 4 per cent.; fifth and subsequent years, sufficient to cover interest at bank rate; sinking fund to redeem loan within specified period of 25 years from that date. Mortgage over land and buildings; floating charge over stock and book debts; bill of sale registered 28th August, 1920. Gnowangerup Co-operative Butter and Bacon Factory Co., Ltd.; £700; ditto rate of interest; ditto security given; bill of sale registered 21st August, 1920. Avon Butter and Bacon Co-operative Co., Ltd., Northam; £5,000; ditto rate of interest; ditto security given; bill of sale registered 5th December, 1919. Narrogin Co-operative Butter Co., Ltd.; £1,500; ditto rate of interest; ditto security given; no bill of sale yet registered. Albany Co-operative Butter Factory and Trading Co., Ltd.; £1,500; ditto rate of interest; ditto security given; bill of sale registered 21st August, 1920. Advances made under Part III. of Industries Assistance Act.—Bunbury Returned Soldiers' Industries; turnery works for producing axe and other handles; £2,758; 6 per cent.; the whole of the assets in the hands of or under the control of the Bunbury Returned Soldiers' Industries; bill of sale expires 10th September, 1923. Riverina South Gold Mining Co., mining for gold; £2,000; 6½ per cent.; mortgage in favour of Colonial Treasurer for £2,000 and interest 6½ per cent.; collateral to bill of sale No. 2221/18. The W.A. Fresh Fish Preserving Co., fish canning; £950; 6½ per cent.; the "Torrens" and plant loaned under agreement, which is registered as a bill of sale. James Chesson and Haydon, mining for gold; £2,000; 6½ per cent.; secured to Government, mortgage of £2,000 to Minister for

Mines, bearing interest at  $6\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., collateral to bill of sale No. 2938/19. Premier Coal Mining Co., mining for coal; £3,500;  $6\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.; secured to Government by mortgage for £3,500 to Colonial Treasurer, bearing interest at  $6\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., collateral to bill of sale No. 1720/20. North-West Meat Works; £30,000 and £12,000; bill of sale of assets, including book debts, also mortgage of leases; bill of sale expires on 24th November, 1923.

#### QUESTION—CHAIRMANSHIP OF COMMITTEES, CENSURE MOTION.

Mr. STUBBS (without notice) asked the Premier: When will he give the House an opportunity to discuss Notice of Motion No. 3 appearing on the Notice Paper in the name of the leader of the Opposition, and reading as follows:—

That the action of the Chairman of Committees in preparing a ruling in anticipation of a motion not then formulated, and the terms of which were unknown to him, on the fixing of the price of wheat for local consumption, and on his own initiative ruling the said motion out of order, in accordance with his predetermined intention, thereby preventing full discussion of the subject, and further his subsequent voting on a close division to justify his own conduct upon which the judgment of the House was being sought, is deserving of the censure of this House.

The PREMIER replied: At an early date.

#### RETURN—WHEAT 1919-20 SEASON.

##### Disposal and Quality.

On motion by Mr. Griffiths ordered—That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing—1, (a) The quantity of wheat delivered overseas for the season 1919-20. (b) Deductions for inferiority at overseas port in respect of such shipments. 2, (a) Quantity of wheat sold locally. (b) Deductions for inferiority at local point of delivery. 3, Balance of wheat on hand of 1919-20 season. 4, The cost per bushel of cleaning smutty wheat at the reconditioning plant, North Fremantle.

#### BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX. Third Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.36]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time. I have consulted the Solicitor General in regard to Clause 6, referring to the super tax of 15 per cent.; and I find that the position is as I stated yesterday. I will read Mr. Sayer's notes referring to the matter—

Income Tax Bill.—The effect of the proviso to Clause 6 is that in order to ascertain whether an income is subject to the

super tax or not the question is whether the taxpayer's income exceeds £252 without any deduction under paragraphs 3, 7, 10, and 12 of Section 30. If the income, without such deductions, exceeds £252, the super tax is payable, but the tax and the super tax are only assessed on the "income chargeable"; that is to say, on the taxable amount after all deductions are allowed under the Act. In other words, we have first to ascertain whether an income bears the super tax without making the deductions I have referred to; but, in arriving at the income chargeable upon which the tax is to be collected, the deductions must, of course, be taken into account, because the tax is only levied on the income remaining after making all deductions.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.38]: So far as I have been able to follow the opinion of the Solicitor General, which the Premier has read, that opinion bears out the point I raised yesterday. As I understand the matter now, the position is that anyone who is in receipt of an annual salary or income of £252 will be subject to the super tax, but will not be taxed on the £250, and that the usual deductions will be made.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Suppose a man was in receipt of a gross income of £252 and had two children in respect of whom he was entitled to make a deduction of £26 each. That is a deduction of £52. He still comes within the purview of the 15 per cent. super tax, but of course he does not pay on the £250, in respect of which he is allowed the same deductions as every other taxpayer. Having been allowed a total deduction of £52 for the two children, his actual chargeable income would be £200.

The Premier: Exactly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is how I took it yesterday, and that is what I am opposed to. That is the very point I had in mind yesterday, if I did not express myself clearly enough to be understood. In other words, I stated yesterday that although a man may have an income of £252 after the allowable deductions have been made, he may have only a chargeable income of £150 and yet will be subject to the 15 per cent. super tax.

The Premier: No. Then he would not pay at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, he would. Suppose a man had a gross income of £245. He would not be subject to the 15 per cent. increase at all.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He would not be subject to it, although he might not be entitled to any deductions whatever from the £245. He might have a net income of £245. Take the case of the other man, with the gross income of £252, who, in view of having a number of children, and insurances and other things to pay, would be entitled to a total deduction of £100; so that his chargeable income would be only £152. That man

would pay the 15 per cent. super tax, whilst the other man with £245 net income would not.

The Premier: The first man would go free.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, he would not. The ruling given by the Solicitor General is precisely in accordance with the view I took of the clause yesterday.

The Minister for Works: Make the net income £170, instead of £150; and that would show your point just as well.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. I had in mind yesterday to move an amendment to the clause. Of course I cannot move it now, on the third reading, unless there is a re-committal. What I had in mind yesterday was to move the striking out in the proviso to Clause 6 of the words "without any deduction under paragraphs 3, 7, 10, or 12 of Section 30 thereof, except in respect of rates and taxes of business premises occupied by the taxpayer," and inserting in lieu "subject to all deductions under Section 30 thereof." In that way I would attain my object of providing that this proviso to Clause 6 shall not apply to the income of any taxpayer which, subject to such deductions, does not exceed £250. My desire is that no person shall be subject to the super tax unless after making all deductions he has a chargeable income of not less than £252 a year. That is my point, and I think it is a fair point.

The Attorney General: There are not two assessments; there is only one assessment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that.

The Attorney General: The taxpayer gets his deductions in any event.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but my object is that a man should not be subject to this super tax unless he has a chargeable income, after the making of all deductions, of at least £252 a year. If a man has an income of £300 a year and his deductions bring him down below £252, he should not have to pay the super tax.

The Premier: He would have to pay now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Under this Bill he would.

The Attorney General: This clause deals only with the ascertainment of a class, and you object to that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I say that no man should be subject to this super tax unless his net income exceeds £252 after the making of all deductions set out in Section 30 of the assessment Act.

Mr. Davies: I think that was the intention of the House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That was the intention I had. The view that the clause does not allow for the deductions is now confirmed by the Solicitor General.

The Attorney General: You want to raise the taxable income.

Mr. Pilkington: You want the criterion of taxable income raised.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes. No man should be subject to the super tax unless his taxable income is £250. That is not provided for in the clause.

The Premier: If you say you misunderstood the position, I will give you another opportunity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No, I understood the position all right, and the Solicitor General's opinion bears out my view. We all agree now with the opinion as to the interpretation to be placed on this proviso, but I do not agree with the principle embodied in the proviso.

The Premier: If you say there was a misunderstanding last night, I will recommit the clause.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should not have allowed the clause to go through last night without an amendment. I had an amendment drafted, but as there appeared to be a misunderstanding I let it go.

The Attorney General: I understand what the hon. member means.

The Minister for Mines: Under the Bill, if the gross income is £250, the super tax has to be paid on the taxable income.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I understand that, but I want the £250 to stand after deductions.

The Attorney General: You want the deductions made before you ascertain the class.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is so. If a man's taxable income is less than £250 he ought not to have to pay the super tax. I had intended to move that last night.

The Premier: I will give you an opportunity now. I do not want the House to be misled by what I said.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not say the Premier misled the House, but there was a misunderstanding as to the real meaning of the clause, and it had been my intention to move an amendment until the Premier said he would consult the Solicitor General.

The Premier (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.50]: I have already moved the third reading of the Bill, but I want it re-committed for the purpose of further considering Clause 6.

Mr. SPEAKER: Standing Order 297, dealing with third readings and passings, reads as follows:

No amendment shall be made in and no new clause shall be added to any Bill re-committed on the third reading, unless notice thereof has previously been given.

The Standing Orders have been suspended, but I do not think we can reasonably assume that we have suspended Standing Order 297. To comply with that Standing Order it will be necessary to adjourn the debate and give notice of an amendment to be moved to-morrow.

The Premier: That will be quite convenient.

On motion by Attorney General, debate adjourned.

# **BILL--NARROGIN RECREATION RESERVE.**

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

# **BILL--BAYSWATER DRAINAGE WORKS.**

Second reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.53]: From the statement made by the Minister for Works in moving the second reading it would appear that we have no alternative to granting the requested powers to the Bayswater road board to enable them to get out of the difficult position in which they are. If certain persons in the district have secured a judgment and damages against the board, that money will have to be paid, otherwise those concerned will be able to put in a receiver, or take other steps in order to satisfy the judgment. It is proposed that this loan to be raised shall not be subject to some of the provisions of the Roads Act governing the borrowing of money, that is to say, Sections 284 to 287. Those sections give to the property owners in the district the right to veto any proposal to borrow money. Under the Bill those sections shall not apply. That is to say, the road board shall have power to raise the money, subject to the approval of the Minister, but not subject to the endorsement of the property owners in the district. It is questionable whether the House ought to agree to that proposal, questionable whether the property owners ought not to have a voice. I scarcely see the necessity for preventing the property owners from having a voice in the matter. They will realise the position the board find themselves in, and will judge the matter fairly. If it is right that the money should be borrowed for the purpose, the property owners will not withhold their approval.

The Minister for Works: Suppose they did.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, they would be the persons most concerned, because those who have secured the judgment against the board would take such steps as are open to them to recover the money, and if the property owners turn down the proposal to borrow the money, it will be the property owners themselves who will have to bear the consequences if a receiver is put in. But I think the property owners will view all the circumstances in the light of their knowledge, and if they consider the money ought to be borrowed they will not withhold their consent. I will not oppose the second reading, but I offer the point of view as

to whether we ought to deprive the property owners of the district of the right to endorse or reject the proposal to borrow the money.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Power to borrow:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is a dangerous precedent to establish. It is the first time it has ever been proposed to take away from the ratepayers the power in regard to a loan. The provisions of the Roads Act should apply, as the leader of the Opposition stated, and if these people did not comply with the order of the court someone should be put in to compel them to do so. When the local board realise that they have to take the opinions of the ratepayers—in this case it is only the owners of property in a certain area—they would be much more careful before they launched out on works. This is a question of a work which has been done and which, it has been decided, has been wrongly done. I have no objection to the Bill, but I do object to take away the power from the ratepayers. It is a bad precedent to establish.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I agree that this will create a bad precedent and that it might be used later on in circumstances not quite like those of the case in question. Personally I admit that if the circumstances of the case can be met without Subclause (2), it could be deleted, but the Solicitor General assures me that the urgency of the case demands that it should be included in the Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Do you not think that the persons concerned would be more satisfied to shoulder the burden of the loan, or to approve or disapprove of it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I am correctly informed, there has been a fair amount of direct speaking in connection with this affair. When the members of the road board interviewed me they told me that unless they were given power to get the money, there would be nothing else for them to do but to resign in a body.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That would be running away from it.

Mr. VERYARD: I happen to know something about the need for the Bill. I am satisfied that if reasonable care had been taken by the board in connection with their drainage operations, there would not have been any need for the Bill. Drains have been opened up in various directions but proper provision has not been made for the outlet for the water. There has been an indifference on the part of the board towards the interests of the ratepayers.

The Minister for Works: Not on the part of the present members of the board.

Mr. VERYARD: Some of the members of the board who were concerned are still on it. The Minister will find that if they do not resign they will not have an opportunity to repeat this kind of work in the future. The feeling is very strong in the district.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (2) be struck out.

We might as well leave the matter to the judgment of those concerned, and if the case is genuine and urgent, it can be left to the property owners and ratepayers to demand a vote. If they should do that it will be the right of the majority to decide as to the result. The proposals contained in the clause will establish a precedent, and it may encourage other bodies to carry out works carelessly, knowing that Parliament afterwards will agree to the ratification of them. If there is a good case, the ratepayers will give the necessary authority to borrow the money.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

## BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th November.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [5.13]: The country has reason to congratulate itself on the position in which the affairs of the Industries Assistance Board are found to-day. A great number of clients got on the Board in seeking for relief from distressing conditions which arose from the drought, and a certain amount of chaos resulted after the commencement of the Board's operations. It is not to be wondered at therefore that there was criticism of the method of administration. The opinion has been expressed in many quarters that the time is opportune for the abolition of the board, but I contend that it is the only provision we have by which assistance can be rendered not only to farmers but to others engaged in industries in case of emergency. It is wise that we should have this measure always on the Statute-book. Statements have been made that by virtue of the fact that farmers have been under the protection of this Act they have been able to gamble in wheat growing in the way that other people have not been able to do. Wheat growing whether with or without the board is a venturesome proposition. I cannot follow the argument that a man on the board will gamble on wheat more than any other farmer. He certainly cannot do so under the present system of inspection. The administration several years ago encouraged men to put in as much wheat as possible

under the quickest conditions, whether the ground was fit for cultivation or not. If that is gambling with seasons, the contention of certain hon. members may be borne out. That is nothing more or less than execrably bad farming. I am pleased to know that owing to the improved system of inspection that position has now been eliminated. Attempts have been made by the member for Sussex to have the provisions of the Act brought into application for the South-West.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It does apply there now.

Mr. MALEY: Yes, but the actual recognition of the South-West as coming under the Act is still wanting. Due recognition, of course, may be given to claims in that portion of the State in the future. We had the pleasure to-day of listening to a man who, if we are to believe all he says, is going to make a vigorous effort to develop a portion of the South-West of this State. I have no desire to be pessimistic, but the future may bring about a time when a scheme such as the I.A.B. scheme may be very necessary.

Hon. P. Collier: For Kendenup?

Mr. MALEY: Even for Kendenup.

Hon. P. Collier: Good gracious!

Mr. MALEY: In the distant future perhaps a board of this description may be wanted. We all like to hear what we want to be told. It is pleasing to know that a man can build on the basis outlined in this scheme. The people interested seem to be very sure of success. We always like to feel that success is assured for every venture. One scarcely ever enters into a venture whose success is not said to be assured. It is, however, just as well to make provision for the future. Things go right and sometimes go wrong and one's calculations are frequently upset. It is as well to be prepared for failure as for success. I have no desire to alarm hon. members with regard to this venture, but the assistance of the board may yet be required by those who embark upon the scheme. In the event of such a thing happening the Industries Assistance Act, which has been so beneficial to hundreds and thousands of farmers in other parts of the State, may be brought into application in this particular case. The agricultural industry has been referred to as being in a flourishing condition, and it has been stated that the farmers are in a position of extraordinary prosperity. The number of farmers on the Industries Assistance Board affords a striking testimony of the poverty-stricken condition of the wheat-growing industry. No better illustration could be found than that.

Hon. P. Collier: Many of the farmers are fairly financial although they are still on the board.

Mr. MALEY: I do not agree. There are some who think that a man has no right to remain on the board after he has paid his creditors. I do not know that it is a bad thing for farmers to remain on the board

if they are in credit, because the State has the use of their money. A farmer is doing no one any injury by remaining on the board. In fact, he is curtailing his own liberty to a great extent by doing so. Of course, he receives money at a cheaper rate of interest due to the fact that the board buy his jute, and goods and materials for him. The truest reflex of the agricultural industry is the fact that there are almost 2,000 farmers still on the board. Their position is certainly improving but very slowly.

Hon. P. Collier: Not so slowly as during the last year or two.

Mr. MALEY: I do not see that they can improve so quickly. In regard to the forthcoming harvest, he is being told that his wheat will realise 10s. or 12s. a bushel—when, I do not know—but all he will be paid in advance on delivery is 2s. 6d., in three months' time another 2s. 6d., and this will not pay the cost of production. How is his position to improve materially in the immediate future? Some day in the distant future when this particular pool is wound up, and the dividends are distributed, the farmers may find themselves in a fairly good position. It is a sort of Kathleen Mavourneen business.

Hon. P. Collier: Last year they received in cash considerably more than double the amount they received in any year since 1915-16.

Mr. MALEY: Wheat represents the definite wage of a considerable portion of the people of the State, but they have to receive their wage in dribs and drabs; 2s. 6d. to-day with a promise of another threepenny bit later on. In these circumstances I do not know how the farmer will recover his position so quickly as is stated. The Bill has my entire support.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.37]: I am glad of the support of the member for Greenough of my advocacy of the extension of the operations of this measure to the South-West. It is true there is in the measure a provision which applies it to the whole of the State, but the fact remains it has not been put into operation in the South-West. I have had the privilege of sitting here for more than three years, during which I have had to suffer from the obloquies and aspersions cast upon the development of the district I represent. Since the time when Mr. Wilson was Premier, Governments have enunciated a broad and sweeping policy of the development of the South-West, but I have yet to see this policy bear fruit.

Hon. P. Collier: We will make a move shortly.

Mr. PICKERING: The Premier has been doing something in the way of constructing roads towards Nornalup Inlet and a considerable sum of money has been spent there. In the district I represent there is a considerable territory adjacent to exist-

ing railways which might be developed very much more, if favourable conditions were extended to settlers.

Hon. P. Collier: It is the older settled portions of the State which need development.

Mr. PICKERING: That is so. If we make our railways remunerative—

Mr. Johnston: Is not the railway being built?

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing in the Bill dealing with railway construction.

Mr. PICKERING: We ought to develop the country which is adjacent to existing railways.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing in the Bill referring to country. This is a Bill for the continuation of the Industries Assistance Act of 1915. The hon. member can discuss whether it should be continued or not.

Mr. PICKERING: I am advocating its continuance and its extension to the district I represent.

Hon. P. Collier: Its continuance subject to its application to the South-West.

Mr. PICKERING: Exactly so. My support of this measure is in a sense contingent on the receipt of an assurance from the Premier that it will apply in the South-West in exactly the same way as it does in other parts of the State. We have heard from members of other districts in which it applies that it has been extremely beneficial to those districts. I have not heard one complaint from any member interested in country districts as to the operations of the board, nor any desire for their discontinuance. The member for Williams-Narrogin expressed the desire that the board should be made a permanent institution. I find from the report of the board that the general result of the year's operations has been very satisfactory. The report shows that 729 settlers have taken advantage of the provision for getting their clearances from the board, but that there does not seem to be a desire generally on the part of settlers to withdraw from the control of the board. This is clearly evidence that the board has been and is of assistance to the settlers.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not disputed.

Mr. PICKERING: If there is so much benefit accruing to the farmers in the wheat areas, why should not the farmers in the south-western portion of the State receive that benefit as well? Another point is that 497 soldiers have availed themselves of these privileges, and there is not one of the returned soldiers in the south-western portion of the State who has come within the scope of the board.

Hon. P. Collier: It speaks well for the South-West that there is no necessity for any of the settlers there to come under the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. PICKERING: It is true that I have not had to ask for much assistance for those

in the district I represent. To-day I have to ask for assistance on account of the great prosperity evident throughout the South-West. Owing to the abundance of potatoes, the growers are threatened with serious difficulty. The growers produced potatoes to meet the requirements of the people generally, and the result to-day is that so much has been grown that the settlers are threatened with ruin. It will be necessary for the Industries Assistance Board to come to the assistance of these settlers in order to enable them to get a fair return for their production.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion does not deal with potatoes.

Mr. PICKERING: Under the Industries Assistance Act superphosphate is evidently supplied to the clients of the board, and my constituents have to pay for their food supplies through customary sources.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is getting wide of the mark. This Bill does not say anything about superphosphates or potatoes.

Mr. PICKERING: May I deal with the question of sustenance.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can do that in Committee by moving an amendment to the Bill. The present debate is on the motion for the second reading of the Bill, and the general principles of the measure may be discussed. If it needs amendment, that is for the Committee stage.

Mr. PICKERING: In the circumstances I will not trespass much more on your generosity. The settlers in some portions of the State have been paid sustenance at the rate of 9s. a day, but the struggling settlers in the South-West have not been able to receive that.

The Premier: It is not sustenance; it is an advance against the crop, and the farmers repay it.

Mr. PICKERING: They receive a sustenance allowance of 9s. a day, and if there is no crop they do not refund it. If there are any of these advantages to be obtained, I desire to secure them for the settlers in my part of the State. On several occasions I have submitted requests for assistance under the Act, and on each occasion I have been turned down.

The Premier: I have not turned you down.

Mr. PICKERING: Your Ministers have turned down the applications.

The Premier: The board deals with applications.

Mr. PICKERING: I want an explanation as to why this Act is not in operation in the South-West. The member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) has stated that it was because there is good country in the South-West. Yet the other day he could not say anything good about that part of the State.

Mr. Harrison: I never said anything bad about the South-West. Look up "Hansard" and show me where I did.

Mr. PICKERING: My support of the Bill depends in a measure on its extension to the South-West.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [5.35]: The admission by the last speaker that his repeated requests for assistance for struggling settlers in the South-West had been turned down, is rather good propaganda material. My object in referring to the Bill under discussion, which we are asked to pass in order to continue the operations of the Industries Assistance Act, is to point out that the probable reason the Act has not been applied to the South-West is that requests have not been made directly with that object in view. I approached the Government to assist the timber industry in its struggling stages by furnishing relief under the Act. The Government considered the request but did not afford the help. The Act was made so comprehensive that it can be applied to every industry in every locality. I do not know of any member who could not rise in his place in this House and acknowledge the benefits that have accrued from the Act and the operations of the board. One member has advocated that the measure should be made permanent. I believe that we should get the necessary assistance through the Agricultural Bank, because the Industries Assistance Board is really a huge, expensive department, for the maintenance of which the general taxpayers have to provide the money. I have a good deal of knowledge of the working of this board. The formation of the board was the salvation of hundreds of settlers in this State, and naturally they are reluctant to leave it, although they are out of debt to-day. Why is this so? It is for the reason that the member for Sussex has given, namely, that settlers on the board can get concessions and privileges which are denied to settlers who are not clients of the board. They get cheaper superphosphate —

Mr. Pickering: And jute.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is an important consideration. In addition to that, they get sustenance advances to keep them going until their crops bring in returns, and, furthermore, they secure valuable assistance from the board's inspectors, who periodically journey round the districts and advise the farmers regarding their operations. The inspectors are a good type and the farmers secure excellent advice from them. I have brothers who received assistance from the board. They have not been asked to get off it, although they could square up to-morrow. The board has ample security for the advances and concessions it has made. The value of the board is not realised to-day to the extent it was at first. Without the Act which we propose to continue, wheat production in Western Australia would not have advanced. I will support the continuance of the Act, but I do not want the member for Sussex to think that the board has been responsible for turning down the South-West. The board is not confined to any locality. If

the South-West has not received attention in the direction the hon. member desires, it is due to the Government policy. Perhaps they have decreed that the Act shall apply only to the wheat belt. If we could get to the bottom of it we would find that there is a Government pronouncement on the point.

Mr. Pickering: Yes, if we could get to the bottom of it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The board, of its own volition, will not turn down deliberately any application for assistance in the South-West or the North-West.

Mr. Harrison: Can they furnish good security in the South-West?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Undoubtedly we can. The hon. member by inference suggests that the South-West cannot offer that security. It has been pointed out that the South-West is so hampered by its production that the suggestion has been raised that an application should be made to the board for assistance.

Mr. Harrison: Where is the security?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In the South-West we are dependent on Providence for the garnering of our crop, just the same as the hon. member is dependent at Doodlakine. If there is a failure, then there is a loss to the board, just as would be the case in the wheat belt. In the South-West we are faced with the same problems and vicissitudes which confront all rural production. If we continue the Act indefinitely we will still have to face the huge expense of a department which, having accomplished its original mission, is, in a sense, not necessary because the whole of the work could come under the Agricultural Bank, where we could concentrate the expenditure.

Mr. Thomson: They are concentrating more in the Agricultural Bank now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the hon. member goes through the Industries Assistance Board he will see that there are a great number of clerks working there, and they should not all be necessary. Economies can be effected, particularly if people, who are in a good position, were discharged by the board.

Mr. Thomson: You would have to broaden the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If it is necessary to broaden the Agricultural Bank, let us pass the necessary legislation.

Mr. Thomson: I am with you there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If we broaden the Agricultural Bank, we will be able to go much further with our assistance.

Hon. P. Collier: We should only have one institution to deal with this sort of assistance.

Mr. Money: If the money is once repaid, it is never lent again. There must be a fresh application every time.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: When the Industries Assistance Board was established it was for the purpose of saving the settlers and the State in times of stress.

The Premier: That is better.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: And if those times come again, whatever Government may be in power, the same assistance will be rendered. The Premier will admit that the great majority of clients on the Industries Assistance Board are now on their feet. There were bound to be a certain number of failures, and I know members who had knowledge of farmers getting assistance who never had the slightest intention of repaying. It would have been better to cut the loss in those cases straight away. The board has done good work, and clients although out of debt, will not leave it because they can get advantages which others do not enjoy. Apart from the assistance to which I have already alluded, they get their cheque every month, which is a powerful factor in assistance. I will not specially complain that the Act has not been applied to the South-West, because we have our difficulties there. The Premier, as did every other Premier, has talked about what he will do for the South-West, but development there has been very slow.

Mr. Money: It is the individual who has done the development.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: To a great extent that is so. It has to be remembered that there is more than one industry in the South-West. The Labour party dropped 2½ million pounds into the South-West altogether, in the direction of railway construction and the establishment of sawmills. These will be, as they have been, big factors in opening up this portion of the State; and providing a market for the people who have settled there. I listened to-day to one of the most optimistic utterances regarding the South-West that I remember. It was very good. I hope the optimism which was shown in that speech will be borne out by results. It must be borne in mind that the problem in the South-West is not the same as in the Eastern States. The speaker to-day referred to Clare, the district in which I was born. One can go for 100 miles in that district and find absolute uniformity of soil. One could not go 20 miles in the South-West with the same result.

The Premier: I think you could.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: You could not go five miles. We may as well be candid about it. Take the country down to Bridgetown. For mile after mile there is the rich land on the river banks, and then you come to the sour country which grows a coarse vegetation. That is our difficulty here. We should make the most of our river bank country and find some method of using the poorer land. The Industries Assistance Board did excellent work in the advancement of settlement in the early stages.

The Premier: The Agricultural Bank does that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not wish to speak disparagingly of the bank, but I think the policy of that institution is too circumscribed. Money is advanced on works which are not altogether necessary. Many advances have



been made to settlers for the purpose of fencing, although there is not half an acre cleared and ready for a crop.

Mr. Thomson: That is one of the weaknesses of the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Once the fence is put up and the settler has his money for the labour of erecting the fence, the place is abandoned and the bank has a loss on its books. That has been the case in hundreds of instances from Denmark to Busselton and the Margaret River. The member for Sussex knows of a place which was abandoned after it had been fenced. There was no one to control it, no one to supervise it, but the Industries Assistance Board would have had an inspector going around to see that things were kept in order. When a demand comes for the application of the Industries Assistance Board to this part of the State, it will be time to seriously consider the matter. I hope the Premier in his reply will definitely assure the member for Sussex that the board is not circumscribed in the allocation of funds, but that it has power to advance money north, south, east and west wherever it is required by deserving settlers and where the security is ample. Advances were made to settlers in the wheat belt when the security was not ample. I wish to pay a tribute to the people who originated the Industries Assistance Board. A debt of gratitude is due to the powers-that-be for carrying on this board, but I must express the opinion that the assisted settlers, who have overcome their difficulties and are to-day solvent, should be freed from the board and that the board should automatically go out of existence. Thus we would be able to curtail the huge expense involved in its upkeep. The Agricultural Bank can afford any assistance required, and it is no longer necessary to have an army of clerks supervising accounts which should not be on the books at all, because the men who owed the money are now able to pay. We shall pass the Bill this year, but before next year—

The Premier: I am really much obliged to you this time.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Premier knows that he can pass any Bill through this Parliament; he had evidence of that last night. However, the time may come when his majority may not be so big. This Bill can be justified on its merits as a temporary provision. As a permanent provision, powerful arguments can be brought against it.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [5.47]: With the member for Forrest I admit that good work has been done by the board, but the time should be within measurable distance when the board should come to an end. We have heard a lot of talk about duplication of services in Government institutions. It has been said that the State has no control, that the State must have certain institutions and that the Federal authorities hold that they too must have certain institutions and thus a duplication

of the same business occurs. We have a duplication in connection with the Industries Assistance Board and it is time we took stock of the position. The Agricultural Bank does practically the same business as the Industries Assistance Board and, with comparatively small amendments, the Agricultural Bank Act could be amended to cover all the legitimate business which should be and is being done by the Industries Assistance Board at present. When speaking on a similar measure last year, I likened the board to Tennyson's "brook" in that it goes on for ever.

The Minister for Works: That is out of date; we have a new brook.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Pickering Brook; that goes on for ever. The Labour party found it necessary to liberalise the conditions of the Agricultural Bank, but even before the conditions were liberalised, it was claimed that our Agricultural Bank was the most liberal institution of its kind in the world. I have not heard of that statement having been refuted. It was blazoned all over the United Kingdom. All that is now necessary is to make some slight amendments to the Agricultural Bank Act which would be sufficient to enable that institution to assist settlers in their work on the land. I believe that a majority of the community are of opinion that some indication should be given as to when the Industries Assistance Board will be terminated. It can fairly be claimed that these two institutions are doing practically the same work, and that there is a duplication of services which should not be permitted to continue.

Hon. P. Collier: The two institutions are doing work which is capable of being done by one.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes. The position this year is rather different from that of last year when the measure was introduced much earlier than it has been this session. On that occasion I said there was a belief that a lot of people on the board were making no effort to get off. Since then these settlers have had a good season and have received record prices for their wheat. Some of them thought their position hopeless and were wilfully extravagant, but they have awakened to the fact that they still have an opportunity to make good and they are now bewailing the fact that they were so extravagant.

The Premier: How many, and where are they?

Mr. WILLCOCK: All over the place.

The Premier: Give us a specific instance.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier always wants specific instances.

The Premier: Can you give one?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes, but the Premier does not want me to mention a man's name or to hold any individual up to scorn in this House. This sort of thing does occur.

The Premier: Give it to me privately; I should like to know the name.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not think I shall. One of the members of the Ministry in discussing the matter, said so himself. If the Premier wants to know which Minister, I shall tell him and he can get the information first hand from him instead of second hand from me.

The Premier: I should like to have it.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The board is constituted in a manner which lends it to political influence. This is a temporary measure to overcome temporary difficulties, and under a temporary measure we give powers which we would not think of granting under a permanent measure.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the point.

Mr. WILLCOCK: In times of stress, something must be done and done immediately, and we give Ministers credit for being honest and above board; but if we were laying down provisions in a permanent measure, they would be entirely different. The Minister at his own option would not be permitted to grant one man 9s., another 8s., and another 7s. a day for sustenance. This is not a right thing.

Hon. P. Collier: Too much power.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The member for Canining (Mr. Robinson) resigned his Ministerial portfolio because he could not grant a certain amount by way of sustenance, and another Minister took his place because he was prepared to grant more assistance. When the leader of the Opposition makes his policy speech, it would be quite possible for him to tell the country that the Labour party, if returned to power, would be prepared to grant 15s. a day, and thus practically buy the support of settlers under the board.

Hon. P. Collier: And if I were returned to power there would be no Act to prevent me from doing it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The only thing would be that the Government would not have the money.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Owing to the good seasons and the high prices a considerable amount of the money advanced by the board is being repaid. The provisions I have in mind are capable of being used for the same disgraceful purpose as was the question of the soldiers' gratuity at the last Federal elections. One party offered cash; another party offered bonds—

The Premier: In this State?

Mr. WILLCOCK: Of course; a certain political party said they would pay the gratuity in bonds. Other people thought it could be paid in cash. If we could raise money for war expenditure, I think we could have raised the money to pay the gratuity, but I disagreed with the actions of political parties in making this a question at the Federal elections.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must keep to the subject matter of the Bill.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am merely drawing an analogy to show the influence which can be brought to bear politically. It would be a

disgraceful state of affairs if two political parties set out to bid for support on the question of payment in cash or bonds or the payment of 9s. or 7s. sustenance allowance.

Mr. Thomson: This is all right.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is quite wrong, and I do not wish these provisions to be perpetuated. When money is advanced to people on the land, it should be advanced on the security offered.

Hon. P. Collier: In normal seasons, at any rate.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes. This measure was introduced to assist settlers during times of stress, and the times of stress being over we should have some indication that the operations of the board will be terminated. I would like the Premier to inform me when there is likely to be finality regarding the payment of dividends to storekeepers. I have urged the need for a pronouncement on this question at every possible opportunity, and I would like to be informed whether the Government intend to do something, in order that the people who have been kept out of their money for so long may be able to get it. So far I have not been able to learn when finality is likely to be reached.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There will be no chance for a long time if the Grain Elevators Bill goes through.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I shall strongly oppose that measure.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss that Bill at this stage.

Mr. WILLCOCK: There were certain creditors whose debts were taken over by the board. A composition amounting to about £40,000 was agreed to. The Premier will admit that this proved to be good business from the point of view of the board, the farmers and the country, and I believe also from the point of view of the machinery people. I think the composition amounted to 15s. in the pound and that the aggregate amount was about £40,000. I am referring to the debts of Wills & Co. and the International Harvester Co., which were taken over by the board.

The Premier: Not in my time.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But the validating Act was passed in the Premier's time. The transaction was carried out, but it was illegal, and when the Premier found that it was illegal he inserted an amendment to validate this illegal act of the previous Government. Now that these transactions can be legally carried out under the Act, if the Government consider that the Industries Assistance Board should be a permanent institution, why do not they repeat these transactions with merchants and storekeepers all over the country? If it is a good thing on £40,000 worth of business, it is an equally good thing on £400,000 worth of business. I suppose the matter could be financed. During the past two or three years considerable amounts of money have been coming back to the board by way of

repayments. That money, instead of being used to fund the deficit, as I suppose it is, could be used for the purpose of making compositions with merchants and storekeepers; and that would be a good business deal for the merchants and storekeepers and also for the clients of the Industries Assistance Board. I am quite satisfied that if the Government offered a composition of 15s. in the pound in respect of the amount owing to merchants and storekeepers—£392,000 I think the Premier said it was—the offer would be at once accepted. Such an arrangement would be a generous one on the part of the merchants and storekeepers, who would be foregoing 25 per cent. of their claims as well as all interest over a period of possibly five or six years.

Member: Some of the merchants would jump at 10s. in the pound.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I do not suggest the making of that offer, but the Government should endeavour to arrive at some compromise in the matter.

Mr. Teesdale: The merchants and storekeepers should have been paid, like the machinery people.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I said at the time that I thought it was the political influence of certain people who had the ear of the Government that was responsible for the making of that machinery deal. The principle, once applied, should extend to every creditor of the farmers on the Industries Assistance Board. During the discussion of the Estimates I referred to the superphosphate business. The Premier was highly indignant at a statement I then made. The hon. gentleman said that my statement was quite wrong, and that he was sure he could prove me to be in the wrong, and that nobody had done any such thing as I had suggested. He said that I had made a very serious statement, and that he would have inquiries made into it, and that as soon as he had proved my statement wrong I ought to make the "amende honorable."

The Premier: You were right and I was wrong. I had never heard of the business.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Though the Premier makes that statement now, he took up a very strong attitude at the time. He absolutely rose in his seat to express his indignation at the monstrous character of the charge I had made.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think we can discuss that charge.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It had something to do with the question whether the existence of the Industries Assistance Board should be continued.

Hon. P. Collier: The hon. member is referring to a transaction of the board.

Mr. SPEAKER: I beg pardon. I misapprehended the position.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Premier said that I had no right to make such a serious statement on the authority of the man in the street.

Mr. Thomson: You know the position. You know that there was a deliberate attempt to kill the other company.

Hon. P. Collier: Kill them? Did their existence depend on getting the contract for the super?

Mr. Thomson: No.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILLCOCK: If there was such an attempt, then I say that any board subject to political influence in the manner suggested by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) should be done away with.

Mr. Thomson: I never said anything of that sort at all.

Hon. W. G. Angwin: Which company got preference?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Westralian Farmers, Ltd. I asked a question recently in the House as to what this meant.

The Premier: There is no question of politics this time.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I did not suggest that. I could see from the Premier's attitude at the time that he knew nothing about the matter.

Mr. Thomson: Who supplied you with your information?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Katanning must keep order.

Hon. P. Collier: The point is, is the information correct?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILLCOCK: If any member of this House has taken a close interest in the working of the Industries Assistance Board since I have been a member here, it has been myself. On reference to "Hansard" hon. members will see that I have had more to say about the Industries Assistance Board than any other member.

Mr. Harrison: You have been speaking for the storekeeper all the time.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I have been speaking for fair and honest dealing. I have the right to speak for a fair deal for anybody.

Mr. Harrison: Certainly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members are not in order in interjecting.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I said at the time that whoever was responsible in that superphosphate business had not looked after the interests of the clients of the I.A.B., because the board paid 2s. more per ton for super than they need have done. I wanted to find out why the extra 2s. was paid, and who was going to benefit from its payment. If the same conditions apply this year as applied last year, when the Westralian Farmers supplied 11,270 tons of super, it would mean making the Westralian Farmers a present of £1,127.

Mr. Thomson: What were the conditions laid down regarding the supply of that superphosphate?

Mr. WILLCOCK: I am not sure whether the hon. member knows, or does not know. If he does not know, I will tell him.

Mr. Thomson: I do not know.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Katanning is not in order in asking questions at this stage.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The I.A.B. asked for a quote for the supply of superphosphate to farmers on the board. An offer was made by a certain firm to charge a fixed price, or a list price, less 9s. rebate. Instead of accepting the offer of 9s. rebate and gaining that benefit for the farmers, the board in their wisdom or in their unwisdom accepted no tender whatever, but intimated that they would be pleased to guarantee payment of any superphosphate supplied to farmers on the board at a rebate of 7s. per ton, instead of 9s. as originally offered. I wanted to find out which, amongst the firms supplying superphosphate, applied the most, and therefore was likely to benefit most by the increase in price. As I say, the Western Farmers, if last year's conditions in this respect repeat themselves, will be receiving a present in this connection of £1,127.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No wonder the company flourish—robbing the farmers!

Mr. WILLCOCK: I acknowledge that most of the transactions of the I.A.B. have proved beneficent to the farmers; but I want every farmer who buys superphosphate through the board this year to know that he is paying 2s. per ton more for it than he need have done if the board had accepted the original tender. The member for Katanning suggests that certain people took the business for the purpose of squeezing other people out.

Mr. Thomson: You are not giving the true facts of the case. The House will get the true facts presently.

Hon. P. Collier: We shall be glad to have them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. WILLCOCK: I know something about this matter. If the member for Katanning knows more about the working of the I.A.B. than does the Premier, who, I have no doubt, has had the members of the board on the carpet—

Mr. Thomson: All I say is that there is another side to the story.

Hon. P. Collier: You have got the Western Farmers' side of it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WILLCOCK: I will leave that subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: It would be just as well to do so.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I merely wished to vindicate myself from the allegation that I stood up here and made foolish charges. This action of the Industries Assistance Board is having a very serious effect on the business people of this State. I said the same thing last session. If the business people find that through the action of any Government board they are going to be denied the right to obtain a fair share of business, they will not remain in this State very long. As I said

at the time, if this kind of thing is to go on, certain financial firms will close down on the credit of the considerable number of clients they have in this State. We have heard a great deal about the effect of the Labour Government's administration on the finances of the State. There has been much talk, in the same connection, about lack of business methods and about repudiation. We have heard it stated time and again that Queensland legislation has been responsible for the loss of confidence on the part of financial houses in the State of Queensland. I contend that such an action as that of the Industries Assistance Board is likely to land the present Government of this State in equally serious trouble with the financial firms of Western Australia. Such action should not be allowed to continue with the sanction of the Government. I suggest to Ministers that if it just about time they made some effort to rectify the matter. For one thing, it is about time the moratorium was wiped out.

The Premier: It has gone long ago.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But the effect of the Act persist as regards farmers on the board. A business man of Geraldton recently told me that a Wongan Hills farmer had got £27 worth of building material from him. A relative of the farmer came to the merchant and asked him to send the material on. The merchant did not receive payment for the material, and so he sent along to the farmer two promissory notes at three months and six months for a total amount of £30. That communication was ignored. The merchant then spoke to the man who gave him the order originally, and that man said, "You have no chance; the man is on the Industries Assistance Board." While that farmer is not in credit with the board, the storekeeper will have no chance of getting his money.

The Premier: Yes, he will.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. WILLCOCK: Farmers have more than fair consideration extended to them through the operations of the Act. They are allowed to considerably increase their capital account without having to meet current expenditure. If a farmer had been on the land for two years prior to the board coming into existence and if he was purchasing a farm worth £1,000 and then went on the board, his 20 years conditional purchase would represent about £50 per annum. In the six years that have elapsed since the initiation of the board he would have paid off capital account about £300, and still he may not have paid his creditors. If a worker was purchasing a house, or if any other person was increasing his capital by way of business, no such consideration would be given to him to allow him to keep on increasing his capital while continuing to owe money to storekeepers and other people. No wonder the board in their annual report say that many clients prefer to be allowed to

remain on the board. The board recommend an amendment to enable them, where desirable, to remove names from the register and take a mortgage for the amount of the indebtedness. That is an operation which could easily be carried out by the Agricultural Bank. The Premier on the second reading said we need not bother about outside creditors.

The Premier: No, I did not.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But I took a note of it.

The Premier: We do bother about them, as it is.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Nothing is done about the payment of accounts due to them. No man should be allowed to go on increasing his capital account while owing money to outside creditors. If the board is to go on for 20 years, at the end of that time a man would have the whole of his conditional purchase paid off, his farm free from encumbrance and yet, perhaps, all the time he might have unjustly withheld payment from his creditors. I trust the Premier when replying will indicate that the Government intend to take into consideration the desirability of making an offer of composition to the outside creditors of the board. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) when in charge of the board seriously considered whether this could not be done. However, since that hon. member relinquished control we have had no indication that the Government propose to go into that aspect of the question. In regard to the super contract, the Premier has given an indication that he was not correct. But he left it pretty late in the day to make the admission. I can understand what the attitude of the Minister for Works would be if an accusation of the sort were made against the Labour party in regard to some question concerning the Trades Hall.

Mr. Pickering: What has that to do with the Industries Assistance Board?

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Industries Assistance Board and the Westralian Farmers Ltd. are more closely mixed up than are the Trades Hall and the Labour party. The Government should seriously consider the advisability of amalgamating the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank. As a protest against the Government doing nothing in regard to offering compositions to outside creditors, I intend to oppose the second reading.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.37]: I agree with the members for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) and Geraldton (Mr. Willcock) that the Industries Assistance Board could very well be amalgamated with the Agricultural Bank. Statements have been made to the effect that there is no need for the Industries Assistance Board, because assistance could be secured from the Agricultural Bank. That is not correct. The Agricultural Bank Act lays down what the trustees are allowed to do.

Mr. Willcock: We could amend that.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so. I am with the hon. member. I trust that at an early date the Government will bring down a Bill to amalgamate the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank. Unfortunately, under the Agricultural Bank Act the system has been and is that the bank is only permitted to grant assistance for specific purposes, such as clearing, stock, fencing and dam sinking.

Mr. Willcock: That is all that is necessary.

Mr. THOMSON: It is not. The only way I see of bringing into effect what I suggested on a previous occasion is to amalgamate the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board.

Mr. Willcock: Nobody thought of the board until we had a bad season.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so. It was initiated, not only to save the settlers, but also to save the assets of the State. Thousands of pounds of the country's money was at stake during the drought, and the farmers were in a most unfortunate position. If those farmers had been compelled to leave their holdings the State would have suffered materially. The Industries Assistance Board has justified its establishment. It has done good work. Still there are some very curious anomalies in connection with the board. I have in view a settler in my own district. Some three years ago the board refused him any further assistance. In the following season he had 19 or 20 bags of wheat, which he sent in to be gristed. That wheat was promptly collared by the miller, and the settler was notified that the wheat belonged to the Industries Assistance Board. He pointed out that the board had refused him further assistance and that of course he must have grist. He was 30 miles from a railway station. The board sat down tight and said they must collect the wheat, because it was theirs, and because it was distinctly laid down in the Act that all pertaining to the land belonged to the board. For over three years the board have refused to grant him any further assistance. In point of fact, the board are helpless. They cannot assist him. Section 15 of the Act states that advances to settlers are to be a first charge on the land, and on all crops, implements, stock and chattels. This man has spent some £4,000 on his property. His indebtedness to the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank totals £1,800. Under section 22 of the Act the board have no power to take that man's name off the list. The Act makes special provision to override the ordinary business procedure of a bill of sale being effected and registered. The Agricultural Bank and the board say to that man, "We will give you no more assistance." He cannot get assistance from anyone else, owing to his name being on the list. No private individual will help him. If anybody advanced him sheep to help him carry on there could be no guarantee that the board would not come down and take those sheep. It is

a most unfortunate position, and I trust the Minister will see his way clear to amend the Act. Unfortunately, at present we are only dealing with a continuance Bill, and so we cannot introduce the amendment I propose.

Mr. Willecock: The board in their report recommend that amendment.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so. In a letter which he addressed to the board the settler I allude to asked that his name be taken off the published list of assisted settlers and that the sum of money he owed to the board be amalgamated with the Agricultural Bank's account or alternatively made a fixed mortgage. Unfortunately, the board cannot amalgamate it nor can they make it a fixed mortgage. It is a most unfortunate position. He is not able to get relief in any shape or form. The business firms said, "If you get your name taken off that list as a client of the Industries Assistance Board, we will supply you with sheep and give you an opportunity of going ahead." I have discussed the matter with the Premier, and he has stated his preparedness to go into the matter.

The Premier: I have an amendment which I will submit.

Mr. THOMSON: I am glad to hear that, and I hope he will be able to give relief in the way desired. The work of the board, we must all recognise, has been done well, though in the earlier stages we must admit there were difficulties, mainly on account of lack of experience and the establishment of a separate department. If the board had been worked in conjunction with the Agricultural Bank a great many mistakes might have been obviated, and many thousands of pounds saved to the country and probably to the farmers as well. The member for North-East Fremantle the other night stated that 729 men had gone off the board because they had no desire to be any longer associated with a charity organisation, or words to that effect. Since the inception of the board I have had considerable experience of it, and I have not seen any evidence of charity. There may have been a few individual cases of hardship and possibly cases of imposition, but a majority of those on the board are imbued with the desire to become owners of the properties they are working. I am speaking from a knowledge of the men in my own district, men whose desire it is to become financial and to pay their way.

Mr. Willecock: The board say there are many who are not anxious to become free.

Mr. THOMSON: But there are many who are desirous of becoming free and there is evidence that 729 have gone off the board. Why say that they are imposing on the Government?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who said they were imposing on the Government?

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member referred to the board as a charity organisation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What I said was they wanted to be free men.

Mr. THOMSON: I regret there is a desire on the part of hon. members opposite to continually belittle what is done by representatives of the farmers who sit on these benches. One gets tired of hearing the constant criticism of our actions, and hon. members opposite have made those statements so often that they are now beginning to believe that what they have said is correct.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We make no statements other than correct ones.

Mr. THOMSON: Like the statement made by the hon. member that the Industries Assistance Board was a charity organisation. I deny that, because those who are on the board, as soon as they are in a position to pay off, are only too ready to do so. The Industries Assistance Board hold all the assets of their clients. Everything a man possesses, except perhaps his wife and children, belongs to the board. But the wife and children even have to work for the board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are working for themselves.

Mr. THOMSON: Admitted, but those who are there have to do what the inspectors tell them. Here I would like to mention that the inspectors of the board are doing very good work and offering good advice. One feels there are times when it is necessary to protest against the insinuations made by members opposite. I agree with the member for Geraldton, however, with regard to the position of the outside creditors. The hon. member said he believed they would gladly accept 15s. in the pound. I make the statement that the majority of those outside creditors would gladly take 5s. in the pound and give the farmers a clean receipt.

Mr. Willecock: Why should they be robbed?

Mr. THOMSON: I have no desire to see them robbed; I am repeating a statement which was made to me by storekeepers and others who are anxious to have the matter finalised.

Mr. Green: That the farmers are prepared to pay 5s. in the pound! What a lovely advertisement!

Mr. THOMSON: That is not the suggestion of the farming community; it is the suggestion of the merchants at Katanning and Gnowangerup. If this matter were arranged the farmers concerned would be given an opportunity to start off afresh. As things are they have no hope of going ahead simply because of the debts due to the Agricultural Bank and to the board. As a matter of fact some of these men's properties are over-capitalised. I would like to see an arrangement whereby these men would be given a clean sheet.

Mr. Teesdale: Will not they straighten up when they get 9s. a bushel for their wheat?

Mr. THOMSON: If the farmers under the Industries Assistance Board are going to be in the position of receiving 9s. for a decent crop, they will pay 20s. in the pound. Unfortunately, however, I know that in the district I represent there are Industries Assistance Board farmers who will not strip three bushels, let alone ten bushels, which is supposed to be the average of that country. To me it is a marvel how some of these men carry on, but they stay on their farms because of their British determination to ultimately succeed. Unfortunately, too, a lot of the land which they are occupying is not as good as it might be. The member for Geraldton referred to the high cost of the administration of the Industries Assistance Board. We find that the salaries, incidentals, rents, compensation and premiums, ran into £20,240. The hon. member, however, never looked at the other side to see what had been saved. What about the discounts which were received on behalf of the clients—who unfortunately do not get those discounts. There is a sum of £7,085 for discounts. If the farmer had been trading for himself he would have received his share of that total. Then there is commission on insurance, which comes to £3,026. In those two amounts, discounts and commission, we get half of the cost of administration. The member for Geraldton said, and I agree with him to a certain extent, that we should combine the two departments in order to save expense. The inspectors combine their duties at the present time; it is the expenses of administration at the head offices which are duplicated. One gets rather tired of the statements which are made so frequently that political influence has been used by a certain company to get business.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And that is so.

Mr. THOMSON: I give that a denial, and I repeat the statement I made the other night that never since I have been a member of this House have the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., endeavoured to influence my vote here.

Hon. P. Collier: They confine themselves to more influential members of the party.

Mr. THOMSON: I resent the imputation cast by the member for North-East Fremantle when he stated that political influence had been brought to bear by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They said it themselves.

Mr. THOMSON: I say the statement is incorrect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not care what you say; I repeat that they have said it themselves.

Mr. THOMSON: I repeat that the statement is incorrect and the hon. member

knows that. He is only making the statement for political reasons.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I read it out of their own circular.

Mr. THOMSON: It is a strange thing that that circular never came into my possession. Why does not the hon. member produce it? I repeat that never since I have been a member of this House have I been approached by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., in connection with the handling of the wheat by them.

Hon. P. Collier: They knew you were all right, and did not bother about you.

Mr. THOMSON: Hon. members have no right to cast such reflections on members on this side of the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You were not with the party when they got the wheat.

Hon. P. Collier: They change so often, you have to keep track of the dates.

Mr. THOMSON: My record is as good as yours. I have never changed my opinion.

Hon. P. Collier: I have never accused you of having any.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. THOMSON: We have heard a good deal about the money that has been lost to the farmers and settlers owing to the action of the Industries Assistance Board in refusing to confirm the contract. The member for Geraldton said the loss had been something like £1,127.

Mr. Willcock: Through one company.

Mr. THOMSON: In a reply made by the Premier it was shown that the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., supplied 11,270 tons of superphosphate; Geo. Wills & Co., 3,203 tons; Wigmore & Co., 784 tons; Paterson & Co., 722 tons; Elder, Smith, & Co., 605 tons; Dalgety & Co., 356 tons; Padbury's Stores, 243 tons; and Gardner Bros., 79 tons. The hon. member knows that the superphosphate companies are prepared to give their agents a rebate of 10s. a ton on every ton of super. they sell. No agent is permitted to give the farmers one penny of this rebate. Is that statement correct?

Mr. Willcock: No!

Mr. THOMSON: It is, and I can prove it. I defy the hon. member to contradict it.

Mr. Willcock: They could give it to the board.

Mr. THOMSON: The Industries Assistance Board called tenders for the supply of superphosphate for the year. The combination of agents with a keen eye to business went to the board and said they were prepared to supply them with manure at the schedule rates, and would give them a rebate of 9s. per ton. The Westralian Farmers, Ltd., also put in a tender and said they were prepared to give a rebate of 7s. per ton. That is the 2s. mentioned by the member for Geraldton. The Westralian Farmers have co-operative companies throughout the farming community of this State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have them!

Mr. Willcock: You have in one instance and not in the other.

Mr. THOMSON: These co-operative companies purchased goods through the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., and they in turn would naturally give their own companies the agents' commission that would be given by a private company to its agents. It would have been an injustice if the Industries Assistance Board had compelled the farmers to go beyond their own company. There was no compulsion at all. The member for Geraldton would have this House and the country believe that there was political influence at work amongst members of the cross-benches, that they went to the board, backed up by the Westralian Farmers, and told them that they must not give this contract to the other agents. What really happened was that the board in their wisdom decided not to give the contract to anyone. This would permit farmers to place their orders for super wherever they desired.

Mr. Willcock: Why did they call for tenders in the first instance?

Mr. THOMSON: They decided not to accept them.

Hon. P. Collier: Because other firms were offering better terms than the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Mr. THOMSON: Members opposite say they are in favour of co-operation. It is not possible for any firm to handle superphosphates for 1s. per ton. It was done deliberately with the idea of cutting out the co-operative companies.

Mr. Willcock: It was not within the province of the board.

Mr. THOMSON: It was not within the province of the board to compel farmers to buy where they did not wish to. They have a right to place orders with their own co-operative companies.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not with Government money.

Mr. THOMSON: It is their own money.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is an advance.

Mr. THOMSON: And they are responsible for every penny of it. It is nonsense to talk about this being Government money.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But it is.

Mr. THOMSON: One gets tired of that kind of thing. It is the first charge on the farmers' property. The member for Geraldton said that the outside creditors and the storekeepers were not being protected. I agree that they have not had justice done to them. The Government money, about which the member for North-East Fremantle so partly interjected, is a first claim against the assets of the farmer. It is his credit. The average farmer at the outset of his operations would not use more than five tons of super.

Hon. P. Collier: How much do you use?

Mr. THOMSON: As much as the hon. member.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not profess to represent the farmers.

Mr. THOMSON: The Industries Assistance Board permitted the farmers to purchase their super, wherever they liked, and the board would get a rebate of 9s.

Mr. Willcock: Oh no!

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. If they purchased through the Westralian Farmers they would get only 7s.

Mr. Willcock: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. THOMSON: The farming community, whatever their price was, would get no rebate at all.

Mr. Willcock: They beat themselves for £1,700.

Mr. THOMSON: No, they did not.

Mr. Willcock: They got £1,700 less rebate than they should have got.

Mr. THOMSON: Not a farmer derived one penny benefit.

Mr. Willcock: But the board did.

Mr. THOMSON: I am dealing with the farmer, whose money this is.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would not the farmer get it through the board?

Mr. THOMSON: It would come out of the expenses which are charged against the farmer. The Westralian Farmers handle the super. at bare cost.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am allowing a lot of latitude in permitting members to discuss the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., under this Bill.

Mr. THOMSON: I admit that. The member for Geraldton reflected grossly on members on the cross-benches, as well as the Westralian Farmers, Ltd. He said that political influence had been used. I am refuting and repudiating that statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe the point taken by the member for Geraldton was that this Bill permitted political influence. That was his objection.

Mr. THOMSON: Whether that was so or not, I have given the case as it is. Despite the statement of the member for Geraldton, the farming community would not have had one penny per ton so far as super: was concerned by purchasing through a private company. Therefore, they had the right to purchase where they liked. The price was £6 7s. 6d. per ton to the farmer, whether it came through the Westralian Farmers or Dalgety's or any other firm. Not one penny rebate was given. Was it not reasonable for the board to say, seeing that the farmers would not be getting the benefit, that it was better for them to allow the farmers to purchase where they desired? The farmers get their money through the co-operative companies. Through that order being placed with these local co-operative companies they, as shareholders, would get a profit and benefit from the transaction. The 7s. in this instance went to the co-operative companies and not to the board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: When it went to the board, to what account would it be placed?

Mr. THOMSON: The farmers would not have reaped any benefit.



Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would it go towards the expenses?

Mr. THOMSON: The board would have got it. As it happened the farmer got the benefit.

Hon. P. Collier: If they got it at a lower price he would have got the benefit.

Mr. THOMSON: The board would have got it.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the State.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, the State.

Mr. Willecock: It was £1,700 altogether.

Mr. THOMSON: The member for Geraldton has found a mare's nest.

Hon. P. Collier: You have.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased that the Premier has decided to amend the Bill to meet the case brought forward. It is a distinct hardship for a man who has been refused assistance for three years, not to be allowed to get any credit outside. I hope the day is not far distant when we shall be able to consolidate these two measures, and in the future derive a greater benefit from them than we have in the past.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [8.12]: I should like to make a statement to the House. Members seem to be disturbed in their minds in regard to the super contract. In 1917-18, seven twenty-fourths of the total profit made out of the handling of super by the Westralian Farmers, namely, £800, was handed back to the other distributors. In 1918-19 and 1919-20 all the super handled by the Westralian Farmers was handled at no profit whatever. In fact the Westralian Farmers were out of pocket.

Hon. P. Collier: They are having a great struggle! Nothing but good management is pulling them through!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Westralian Farmers handled the I.A.B. super at 7s. 6d. per ton, whilst on that portion handled by the other distributors these other distributors got over 6s. per ton. I do not think they have got very much to grumble about. The Westralian Farmers did the work for nothing. It was thought that the 9s. would go back to the farmers, but instead of that it went back into revenue.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: To pay the expenses of the board.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I suppose so. It cost them anything between £500 and £600 in wages to handle this super and they have been out of pocket. They are asking this time that there should be an allowance made of 3s. a ton.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.15]: I listened with a great deal of interest to the explanation made by the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) and the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson).

Mr. Griffiths: My statement was a statement of fact, and not an explanation.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was interesting to note that whilst the member for Katanning attempted to justify the action of the board

and said in effect that they did right, the Premier when he first learned of the action taken by the board, expressed himself as being amazed. He could not believe it. So outrageously unjust and so impossible a transaction was it from the Premier's point of view, that he absolutely refused to believe the statement made by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willecock). Although the Minister in charge of the Act was astonished to discover such a thing, the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) says that it was quite a correct action to take.

Mr. Thomson: So it was.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier does not agree with that.

Mr. Thomson: It is a matter of opinion. You do not agree with me either.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If there is a conflict of opinion between the Premier and the member for Katanning, I prefer to support the view of the Premier.

Mr. Nairn: I will support the member for Katanning.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Swan must be loyal to his new party. The Premier is entirely open and impartial in this matter. He is not associated with the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suppose he is a compulsory shareholder.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no necessity for the Premier to display his good feeling towards the Westralian Farmers. The member for Swan has a responsibility in connection with his new party.

Mr. Nairn: I think there is collusion between the two leaders.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This matter was first brought up by the member for Geraldton on the Estimates, and he said the manager of the Industries Assistance Board stated: "We will only give 7s." The Premier interjected, "I bet you he did not; if he did he had no right to."

The Premier: Fortunately he did not bet me.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier on that occasion said, "Who told you that? You may be certain that this matter will be investigated. You have made a statement and someone will have to answer for it." Hon. members will see the attitude that the Premier took up. He regarded the statement by the member for Geraldton as a rash one and he said, "If anyone rushes to you in the street and tells you something, you believe it." The Premier was chastising the member for Geraldton because the Premier believed it was kerbstone information. Later the Premier said: "At any rate this is a matter which must be investigated. If you"—that is the member for Geraldton—"had regarded it as a serious matter you should not have waited until to-night." The Premier later still said, "I have listened with a good deal of interest and amusement to the statements made by the member for Geraldton." The Premier was amused, be-

cause he could not believe the statement to be true. Not only is it true, however, but the member for Katanning says that it was quite the correct thing to do.

Mr. Thomson: So it was.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: So long as you take the farmer down, it is all right.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am surprised that the Premier did not take the first opportunity open to him to reply to the statements made by the member for Geraldton. I regret that he overlooked what I conceive to be an obligation cast upon him to explain the matter, so as to exonerate the member for Geraldton from the suggestion of making reckless statements.

The Premier: I am sorry to say he was right.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When the Premier found out that the member for Geraldton was right, in justice to that hon. member the Premier should have made a statement in the House. At least he should have made some reference to it in moving the second reading of the Bill. If the statement by the member for Geraldton had not been correct, I can imagine how he would have been taken to task. He would have been caned for making a reckless statement. The Premier now admits that the whole charge made on that occasion was true. Regarding the point as to whether the board was justified or not in the action it took, the member for Katanning says that he has not been approached by any member of the Westralian Farmers and he does not know anything of their methods.

Mr. Thomson: That is correct.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know where he got his information from, but he came here to-night armed with a reply.

Mr. Thomson: I did not get it from the Westralian Farmers. I got it from a department.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is not stretching the imagination to come to the conclusion that he got it from the department concerned, namely, the Industries Assistance Board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They would not give us any information.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There is no necessity for the hon. member to hide his source of information, but he was primed up, although I do not think he has a good case.

Mr. Thomson: I made it my business to make inquiries when the statement was first made.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He has endeavoured to make the best possible case so far as the Westralian Farmers Ltd. are concerned. The member for Katanning says it does not matter whether these firms made an offer of 2s. per ton more for rebate than was offered by the Westralian Farmers. It does not matter, as the farmers would not get the benefit from it.

Mr. Thomson: They did not benefit.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the hon. member's point of view. Yet he has no interest in the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Mr. Thomson: I have no shares.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Or interest, political or otherwise?

Mr. Thomson: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Here was an opportunity of saving £1,826, assuming that the quantity of superphosphate required for the farmers was the equivalent to that purchased last year.

Mr. Thomson: That was not a saving to the farmers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It was a saving to the Industries Assistance Board; that is to the revenue of the State. The member for Katanning says, "What does it matter?" He prefers the Westralian Farmers to get that profit rather than the State.

Mr. Thomson: They did not get it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is his attitude. If that does not disclose confirmation of the statements which have been made by Opposition members regarding those on the cross benches mixing politics and trade, I do not know where we can find it. There is a clear line fixed by the member for Katanning. He says that we could have saved £1,826 to the farmers this year for the revenue of the Industries Assistance Board but that this should have gone to the benefit of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Mr. Thomson: The farmers did not get that benefit.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member cannot bluff through it in that way. He knew something but not enough of the subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Katanning must keep order. He has already addressed himself to the House on this subject.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is the substance of his defence. He contends that the amount of £1,826 would not have gone to the farmers.

Mr. Thomson: I never mentioned £1,826.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I fixed the sum on the strength of what the hon. member said. The amount purchased last year was 18,260 tons, which, at 2s. per ton, was £1,826. Those figures are correct.

Mr. Thomson: You said that I made that statement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member did not, but on his own statement that is the conclusion to be drawn. He states that he prefers the Westralian Farmers to get the benefit of that £1,826 and not the Industries Assistance Board and the State.

Mr. Thomson: I did not say anything of the sort.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That was his argument. Surely it is a transparent fact that if this superphosphate could have been purchased at 2s. per ton less than it was purchased at, there must have been a saving of £1,826 to someone. The member for Katanning

ning says it would not have been saved to the farmers. I accept his statement but it must have gone somewhere. It would not have gone to the funds of the board. Surely this shows preference to the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., which preference should have been exercised differently, and the State's interests should have been served.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The farmers pay for the administration of the board.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course they do. Why did the board call for tenders? Clearly it was because they were prepared to accept the lowest tender. There could be no object in calling for tenders for superphosphates in any quantity unless it was the intention of those concerned to accept the best offer. The best offer in this case was 2s. less than the Westralian Farmers' offer. The board declined to accept that or any tender. Is that not clear evidence that there is favouritism exercised in the interests of the Westralian Farmers? If the tender from that company had been the lowest, the same methods would not have been adopted. Undoubtedly the Westralian Farmers' Ltd. would have secured the contract. There can be no question about that. Being 2s. per ton higher than other tenders, the board decided not to accept any. If that is not preferential treatment I want to know what is. The members on the cross benches deny that there has been any influence brought to bear on the Government. I do not assert that any member of the Primary Producers' Association has approached the board, or had anything to do with it, but apparently it has come to the knowledge of those responsible for the administration of this Act that preferential treatment to the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., will be received with approval by those who govern the country and those who sit on the cross benches.

Mr. Willecock: There will be no carping criticism.

Hon. P. COLLIER: So long as the Westralian Farmers get preferential treatment it will be all right. I am rather surprised to learn of such an instance and to know that it is possible for such an incident to occur. I ask them whether business methods have been adopted with regard to this supply of superphosphate? Is it in accordance with the recognised rules of trading? It is not. Had the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., been the lowest tenderers—

Mr. Harrison: Each client—

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Avon cannot explain the matter away.

Mr. Harrison: I do not wish to.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There can be no satisfactory explanation. Would anyone regard the explanation of the member for Katanining (Mr. Thomson) as satisfactory? Would it satisfy any open-minded member when he says that it does not matter because the farmers would not have benefited? It does not matter that the Industries Assistance Board's funds have lost £1,826, according to

the hon. member. The funds of the Industries Assistance Board would have been in credit to the extent of £1,826 more than they are to-day had they accepted the lowest tender offered.

Mr. Thomson: Who gained the £1,800? I say the farmers did.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member said the farmers had gained nothing.

Mr. Troy: How did the farmers gain it?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Having regard to the astonishment expressed by the Premier when he first learnt of this matter, I say that if this transaction could have been defended not on the grounds of honesty and fair dealing but on fair business lines, the Premier would have availed himself of the first opportunity to defend it. We would not have reached this stage in the discussion of this Bill without a defence from the Premier from a purely business point of view if it were not, in his knowledge, indefensible.

Mr. Johnston: The farmers prefer to do their business through the Westralian Farmers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We know all about that. The plain, simple fact is that the board desired to obtain super for this season on the best possible terms, and to accomplish that they called for tenders. The best tender was 2s. better than that of the Westralian Farmers, but the best tender was not accepted. No tender was accepted; they could not possibly accept a higher tender. That would have been too flagrant a breach of business trading principles. They decided not to accept any tender. Why? Because the Westralian Farmers Ltd. could not get it. That is the whole thing in a nutshell. Because it could not be given to the Westralian Farmers Ltd., no tender was accepted. This is another instance where we have reason to complain. I do not care whether the member for Katanining is getting tired and weary of this sort of thing or not. I reiterate my opposition to this method of conducting business, to this method of mixing trade and politics, because if there were no politics in this matter, we are entitled to a reasonable explanation to satisfy an ordinary jury as to why the best tender was not accepted. I protest against preferential treatment being accorded to a concern which is an off-shoot or an associate or a member of the family of the political organisation to which members on the cross benches belong.

Mr. Harrison: They disclaim any connection.

Mr. Pickering interjected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No member of the party to which I belong, advocating State trading, got any individual or personal profits out of State trading. That is the difference between State trading and the trading carried on by the Westralian Farmers Ltd. In view of what has taken place in connection with this transaction, a flagrant breach of open, honest, ordinary business trading methods, and in view of other instances which

have been brought under our notice in connection with the Westralian Farmers Ltd. and their dealings, it is imperative Parliament should see that so soon as the men now on the Industries Assistance Board reach a financial position which will enable them to get off the board, they are put off and the board ought to wind up its affairs. It was never intended that the board should be a permanent institution. The very preamble to the measure stated that it was designed to relieve temporary distress that had arisen, and, as the member for Geraldton has pointed out, the Act grants powers which would never have been conceded by any Parliament in a permanent measure. It opens the doors—I do not say it has been done—to political corruption of all kinds. When it is open for one man to offer 7s., another 9s., another 10s., and another 12s. by way of sustenance, where is this kind of thing going to land us? I say it opens the door to all kinds of possibilities, and these powers ought not to be continued when an almost unlimited sum of money—a million pounds a year, and in one year I remember it was a million and a quarter—is placed at the disposal of the board or of the Government of the day.

The Premier: At the disposal of the board.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but the Government lay down the policy. The board have to carry out the policy laid down by the Government. The question whether this Act could be made to apply to the South-West is one of policy. The board could not be expected to extend the operations of the Act to the South-West unless they received instructions from the Government of the day. This is a matter of policy. If the Government said this Act should apply to the South-West as well as to other portions of the State the board would proceed to give effect to that policy as they have done in the wheat areas. We should not have two Acts as we have at present covering largely the same field. Under the Industries Assistance Act a measure of assistance and necessary assistance is given to the farmers which could not be given under the Agricultural Bank Act. During the time the Industries Assistance Act has been in operation the assistance given has made all the difference between success and failure to thousands of our farmers. All that is required is to amend the Agricultural Bank Act and extend its provisions to fields of activity which are now excluded. We should not have two Acts administered by two staffs and in some cases overlapping. The Agricultural Bank Act is drawn on sound lines which enable the trustees of the bank to proceed on business lines. They can command and obtain security for all money advanced under the Agricultural Bank Act, excluding of course unavoidable losses, but under the Industries Assistance Act the question of security does not come in. The board take all the farmer has to offer in the way of security, but in the bad years the security taken from the farmer for money advanced under the Industries

Assistance Act did not come anywhere near the value of the assistance which was given. The simple reason was that the farmers did not have the security to offer. Most of the farmers were mortgaged up to the full value of their securities to the Agricultural Bank, and the Industries Assistance Board came to their assistance and advanced money to enable them to carry on. The board advanced £500 or £1,000. In a great majority of the cases there were no tangible assets for security for the money so advanced, simply because the farmers did not have security.

Mr. Johnston: Many had.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but a great majority of them had no security. Those who were first and most in need of the benefits of the Act had no security at all to offer. They were in debt to the eyes when the Act came into operation. We recognised that this was a necessary measure of assistance if these people were to survive and we have now enabled them to get over bad seasons, and get back to something like normal times. Does not it follow that the need for the Act as then framed no longer exists to the same extent? That is my argument why the Act should not be continued as a permanent measure. We should wind up the affairs of the board so soon as we can. The clients of the board should be carried only so long as is necessary, and immediately they are in a position to go off the board, they should be told to get off so that the affairs of the board can be wound up.

Mr. Johnston: There are 500 soldier settlers.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If this were done we should not have these contracts for superphosphate carried on as this particular contract has been. The manager of the Agricultural Bank would not have carried on a business transaction on such lines and we are entitled to an explanation why it was done. I am only sorry that an explanation has not been forthcoming at an earlier stage.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [8.43]: It was not my intention to speak on this measure, but for the repeated assertion that the Country party have been connected with the handling of the supply of superphosphate to the clients of the Industries Assistance Board. Not in any one instance to my knowledge has one member of the party been approached by the Westralian Farmers, Ltd., to secure for them any advantage whatever in their contracts with the Government. In no instance whatever has any member been approached. That is my own case, and I feel it is the case of a majority of the members of the party. Let us now review the arguments of the leader of the Opposition. He asserts that there has been jobbery.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not correct.

Mr. PIESSE: I withdraw, but the leader of the Opposition asserts that favour has been shown.

Mr. SPEAKER: The leader of the Opposition called it business methods.

Hon. P. Collier: I questioned the business methods.

Mr. PLESSE: I am not implicated in any way whatever. Let us take the answer which was given to the question asked by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Wilcock) the other evening. The reply to that question showed that the clients of the Industries Assistance Board could get their super. wherever they thought fit. There is nothing whatever binding. That does away at once with the insinuation that we secured the Westralian Farmers any concession whatever. Now just a few words regarding the measure. I feel sure members will realise the absolute necessity for the continued existence of the board, at least for another year as proposed by the Bill. I do not think there is one single member who will deny that the board have rendered immense assistance to the farmers generally in their operations. It is just as necessary to continue the board to-day as it was to establish it some half-dozen years ago—an action which our friends now on the Opposition benches were good enough to undertake. I hope hon. members will see fit to vote for this continuance Bill, and I feel sure that on calmer reflection they will realise that there is no justification whatever for the assertion that the Country party are in any way whatever connected with the Westralian Farmers, or that the party have ever used political influence on behalf of the Westralian Farmers.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [S.47]: With regard to the suggestion that has been made for the amalgamation of the Industries Assistance Board with the Agricultural Bank, let me point out that the two institutions are now located in one building, placed under one management, and run practically with one staff.

Hon. P. Collier: Except as regards office staff.

The PREMIER: Books and everything else of that nature are now connected up. There is one accountant, and one general manager, and one set of expenses. As regards the Agricultural Bank, the position is altogether different from that of the Industries Assistance Board, the bank's advances being on fixed mortgage for a period of 30 years, whilst the board's advances are made on a single crop and to be repaid when the crop has been harvested. So there must be two different forms of assistance even if the Industries Assistance Board were amalgamated with the Agricultural Bank. The principal Act has never been extended to the South-West because that part of the country has never known the drought trouble, which was felt with particular severity by the settlers in the wheat belt who were struck by it in 1914. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) recently brought a case under the notice of the House. That is the case of a man who was furnished with a sufficient

number of cows to make a living. The position in the South-West is utterly different from that on the wheat belt. I have no objection whatever to assisting farmers who are in need, and I have no hesitation at all about doing so, because I realise that the farmer is a national asset and must be kept going. If we keep him going satisfactorily on the land, it is a good thing for everybody. However, there is no use in giving the farmer half assistance; we must render him sufficient assistance to enable him to get a decent crop. I think the Act ought to remain in force, because men will need assistance from time to time. This Bill has been discussed as though Western Australia was the only place in the world where such assistance is given. But help of a similar kind has been rendered to the farmers of Greece by the great Greek statesman Venizelos. We know, too, that Mr. Joseph Chamberlain established a system of this kind in one of the Crown colonies. However, we discuss this system in much the same way year after year. No matter how well the work is done, hon. members will insist on discussing it. As a fact, the farmers who have been assisted have paid in four millions of money to the Industries Assistance Board, and through them to the Treasury. That amount represents wealth produced which would not have been produced but for this Act. The production of that wealth has meant a great deal of work from one end of the State to the other, besides yielding permanent additions to the wealth of the people. We need not discuss the matter at any length. Repayments this year will be far more than the claims on the board; that is, in the aggregate. I do not say that the farmer will pay more than he owes. I find that I am unable to introduce into this Bill the amendment that I thought of making at the instance of the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson). You, Mr. Speaker, have pointed out that it is impossible to amend the title of this Bill. However, I will see what can be done irrespective of the Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier can move to amend the title of the Bill, but he cannot amend the 1915 Act by the Bill before us now, which is a Bill to continue the operation of the Industries Assistance Act.

The PREMIER: I cannot agree with the view that one should take a man's security from him and not enable him to carry on in such a way that he may be able to pay the interest that is due from him. I quite realise that the present position is not fair to outside creditors. It is not quite fair that they should be prevented from collecting money that is owing to them. But I repeat what I said when introducing this Bill, that the outside creditors of farmers on the Industries Assistance Board have been paid £210,000. I believe there is now £350,000 owing to them. The farmers have been responsible for about three millions of cash trade during the last four years, which must have greatly benefited all concerned.

Hon. P. Collier: But a great deal of that trade went through the co-operative societies, and not through the storekeepers, who have assisted the farmers in the past.

The PREMIER: That is so, and it is not right. The farmer should now stand by the man who stood by him in the past. I do not know that this House will agree to the State buying up bad debts. If debts can be paid in full, they should be paid in full. Coming now to the fertiliser question, I admit I was surprised when the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willecock) brought the matter up. Just as soon as I found out what the true position was, I told the hon. member of it and apologised to him. It is true that tenders were called and that the Westralian Farmers Ltd. tendered at a discount of 6s. while other merchants tendered at a discount of 6s. It is true that the board decided to fix a discount of 7s. in all cases. It is also perfectly true that I knew nothing of the matter. I doubt whether members sitting on the cross benches knew anything of the matter. I was the more surprised because of my knowledge that the general manager is usually very keen to get everything he can. However, he thought it wise to make this arrangement. At that time it rested with the people supplying fertiliser whether they gave us a discount or not, because we could only purchase the locally manufactured fertiliser, sold at a fixed price of £6 10s. per ton. The money saved does not belong to the board or to the Government, but to the individual farmer on whose account the purchase was made.

Hon. P. Collier: Katanning is wrong, then.

The PREMIER: If one buys fertiliser for a client and pays £6 3s. and charges the fertiliser up to him at £6 10s., it is not right. There is no doubt about that. Four years ago I asked that this discount might be given to the farmer, and I was then told by the fertiliser firms that it could not be done. They said that if the Government proposed to give the discount to the farmer who bought and used the fertiliser, the Government could not have the discount. Thereupon, rather than lose the discount, I put it into the funds of the board. But if one buys a horse for a board farmer at £48, one has no right to charge that horse to him at £50.

Mr. Thomson: But the fertiliser companies will not allow you to give the discount to the farmer.

The PREMIER: That is so.

Mr. Thomson: Then Katanning is right.

The PREMIER: The fertiliser companies said that if the Government proposed to give the discount to the farmer, the Government could not have it.

Hon. P. Collier: But they said that you could have the discount for your own funds.

The PREMIER: Yes, certainly.

Hon. P. Collier: And the board said they did not want it.

The PREMIER: I do not know they said that.

Hon. P. Collier: In effect they did.

The PREMIER: If the discount had been 9s. per ton, that would have been better than a discount of 7s. per ton. It would have been £1,800 benefit to the board. But the board went into the thing, and made what they thought a fair arrangement.

Hon. P. Collier: They thought they did not want the £1,800 extra.

The PREMIER: I agree that the farmer ought to buy where he pleases, because it is his money that goes into the purchase.

Mr. Thomson: So Katanning happens to be right again.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Katanning is not right in interjecting.

The PREMIER: I do not pretend to hold out any hope that the board will next year make arrangements of that sort. I know, of course, that the members of the board are honest and capable men, and that the management, in the hands of Mr. McLarty, is in the hands of a very capable man indeed, one who always makes a pretty hard deal. He must have thought it wise to make this arrangement, or he would not have made it.

Mr. Willecock: It would not have been made if you had been there.

The PREMIER: There is something in the contention that the ls. which has been referred to does not pay for the work that has to be done. However, the position is as I have stated. I do not wish hon. members to believe that any Minister knew anything about the matter. I do not think members on the cross benches knew of the matter. I have never known members on the cross benches to advocate the interests of the Westralian Farmers, Ltd.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you think any Minister knew anything about the arrangement?

The PREMIER: I do not think any Minister knew anything about it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not think you did.

The PREMIER: I know that I did not. The first I heard of it was from the member for Geraldton, and I doubt whether any Minister knew of it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not think any Minister here knew of it.

The PREMIER: I feel very much inclined to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to allow me to alter this Bill so as to authorise the continuance of the Act until 1930, because that course will save a tremendous amount of time and of debate. However, I suppose the House would not agree to that.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry I cannot allow the Premier to amend the Bill before the House in any way. It is a continuance Bill, and that is what it must remain. If the title had read "An Act to continue and amend," it would have been different.

The PREMIER: It is a little dangerous to so word the title if it can be avoided. However, I am perfectly satisfied. I hope the Bill will be passed and that its operations will be as satisfactory for the coming

year as have been the operations of the Act for the existing year.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Continuation of principal Act:

Mr. WILLCOCK: There is here a clerical error. Section 15 should be Section 30.

The Premier: Section 15 is quite correct.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

## BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Freemantle) [95]: The principal part of the Bill again deals with the pastoral leases. We must not forget that, prior to 1917, all pastoral leases were to expire in 1928. It was then pointed out that owing to the short time of the unexpired lease, no person holding a pastoral lease could make any improvements whatever, and that no persons would take up new leases, as by the time such leases were improved for stock-carrying purposes they would have expired. There was some justification for the statement at that time, but it was thought advisable that prior to granting any new leases there should be a proper classification of the areas, that the leases should be subdivided and an appraisal made of their value. That could have been done within a year or two, leaving plenty of time for the leaseholders to apply for certain areas at the expiry of their leases in 1928. In 1917 a Bill was introduced granting an extension of the leases for a further term of 20 years. But certain conditions had to be compiled with. One of those conditions was that no area was to exceed one million acres; another was that the leases were to be subject to appraisal and that double rent was to be paid until the making of that appraisal. In no case was any holder to hold more than one million acres. That provision led to a good deal of discussion, and many members thought it was wrong to grant so large an area to any individual. The possibility was pointed out of companies being formed for the purpose of taking up pastoral leases, but it was definitely under-

stood that, no matter what combination should be made, only a million acres could be held by any one company.

The Minister for Works: That is correct.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The legal adviser of the Government led hon. members to believe that the Bill then before the House provided that no company or combination of persons could hold more than a million acres. Time was given to allow those with more than a million acres to sell the excess area. If they intended to apply for a continuance of their leases under the 1917 Act they could choose any portion of the lease they held and sell the remainder. The Attorney General at that time after pointing out that two members of the House had assisted him in framing the clauses, said that the leases as drawn up would enable persons to obtain and hold areas which the Act provided. He added—

This clause is an honest attempt on the part of the two hon. members I have mentioned and myself to draw up something in the shape of words which would prevent the conglomeration of leases, the acting together of persons, the joining of companies, and so on. We have endeavoured in a large number of ways to attack that aspect of the question.

His idea was to entirely prohibit any company from holding any larger area of land than the Act provided for, namely, a million acres. He said also—

They cannot hold on combination more than two million and will, therefore, have to get rid of the remainder of their holdings or their leases will not be renewed.

It was subsequently amended to one million acres. Then one of the two members who had been assisting the Attorney General said—

We have provided that the largest area of pastoral land to be held by any one individual shall be one million acres, and the amendment clearly lays down that the largest area any company or combination of companies or individuals can hold shall be two million acres. Moreover, there is the declaration as to beneficial interest in any other pastoral lease or holding. These facts dispose of the arguments of the member for Coolgardie. Personally, I consider one million acres should be large enough for all purposes.

Seeing that the House was advised by the Government's legal adviser that the Bill meant that no combination of persons or companies could hold more than one million acres jointly, I think we are justified in assuming that was the intention of members at the time. We also find that last year the question was discussed in another place. Members there were told by the Minister for Education that it was understood the section in the 1917 Act was considered as being sufficient to protect the State in regard to areas which could be held by com-

panies or combinations of persons. In regard to an amendment moved in another place by Mr. Holmes, the Minister for Education said—

The loophole discovered is that the company becomes the leaseholder, and the individual, although he may hold practically the whole of the shares in three or four companies, is not a leaseholder at all, and therefore the clause is not liable to forfeiture as is the lease of a company.

The legal adviser of the Government at the time was definite in his statement that the provision passed by the Assembly prohibited any company from holding more than a million acres. The member for Narrogin raised the question in regard to the various divisions, and he was supported by the Minister for Works, and a clause was inserted to cover the question which was raised. Now the matter has developed into one which requires the attention of the legal mind. It would be impertinence on my part to suggest anything different from the advice given by the legal representatives of the Crown as to how the legislation actually works. It becomes now a question as to whether an interested person is a shareholder in a company or not. If we ask the ordinary person and he is a shareholder in any company, no matter what that company may hold, be it pastoral areas or industrial works of any description, or a trading concern, whether he has any interest in the undertaking, whether he is financially interested in any way whatever with it, I think he would say that he was so interested. It was laid down very clearly in 1917 that no leases were to exceed one million acres in extent. That being the case, and the Government having the advice of the law department of the Crown, one would have thought that the Government, in introducing a measure, would have seen that that measure was introduced in accordance with the wishes of Parliament, and would not have inserted a clause to exclude anything that had been done between 1917 and 1920. What do we find is the result? That when it became known that an individual could only hold one million acres—and there were individuals who at the time held two, three and four million acres of pastoral land—they immediately went to the Government and said that owing to the war it was an impossibility for them to sell the excess areas over a million acres. The consequence of that was that another Bill was passed through Parliament extending the time from one to two years after the close of the war. The object was to enable those leaseholders to reduce their areas to one million acres, as prescribed in the legislation of 1917. In the meantime some persons who were interested in pastoral leases—and I use the expression I have heard used in other places in regard to the matter—became aware that a part of the Act passed in 1917 was loaded. Some have gone as far as to say that hon. members were deceived in regard to the provisions of the Act at the time. They go so

far as to say that the legal advisers of the Crown knew full well that a company could not be considered an individual holder, that a person who was a shareholder in a company could not be considered as having any beneficial interest in any pastoral areas which were held. The consequence of that was that we find several of these people who had large areas in this State immediately formed companies. Whether they were genuine companies or not, I cannot say, but I have been told on very good authority that in some of the offices in the city clerks have been made shareholders to the extent of holding one share only, for the purpose of evading the decision of the legal advisers of the Crown and the decision of Parliament.

Mr. Pilkington: Almost every company in the world is formed like that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But in this case it was done to evade the decision of Parliament.

The Attorney General: There is nothing in that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I contend this is a wrong action if it is true that the legal advisers of the Crown knew that the Act would be useless so far as it applied to companies. The House should have been told that so far as companies were concerned the legislation would have no effect. That being the case, there would have been a possibility of the measure being differently worded so that the intentions of Parliament might have been carried into effect. It has been stated frequently in this Chamber that persons who had pioneered the State should have had the first choice, and the first opportunity of obtaining the pastoral areas. If the areas had been subdivided, there is not the least doubt but that these persons would have a good chance to make a selection in regard to reduced areas, as was intended before the 1917 Act was passed. It is known that persons have taken up building leases, that they have expended thousands of pounds to erect buildings on those leases, and that when the leases have expired the buildings have reverted to the owners of the land. Those people who took up pastoral leases, knew full well what the position would be on the expiration of the leases of the pastoral areas in 1928. Any improvements which they made were made in a manner which they hoped would pay them during the period of their occupancy of the lease.

Mr. Pilkington: Improvements do not become the property of the Crown.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In some instances they do on the payment of compensation. But in many instances no compensation is paid in connection with building leases. If two private persons take up a building lease, and improve it, when it reverts to the owner, the question of the improvements is not raised. The Bill which is before us goes a little too far. The very least we should do is to make the Bill declare that the area set out shall continue to be leased as from the passing of the 1917 Act. Those



persons who have evaded the intention of Parliament should not have a special privilege over others in the future.

The Minister for Works: If Parliament makes a mistake, you will not penalise them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am glad that interjection has come from the Minister for Works. Is it not almost common knowledge that so far as the 1917 Act is concerned, there is a doubt as to whether a company comes under its provisions?

The Minister for Works: There was no doubt about the explanation given in the House at the time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Have not the Government had under consideration the advisableness of stating a case for the Full Court to determine what the position was so far as companies are concerned and the areas of the leases? Instead of going on with that test case, the Government now introduce a Bill to legalise the action which has taken place during the last four years. When there was a doubt about the matter, no time should have been lost in stating a case for the consideration of the court.

The Minister for Works: That is a matter of opinion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am expressing my opinion. The Government should have ascertained from the court the actual position so far as the law was concerned. This matter involves thousands of pounds. I have heard of persons acquiring four million acres of land through the supposed blunder on the part of Parliament. Those people have been able to form themselves into companies and override the decision of Parliament. Is it not therefore the duty of the Government to test the position in a court of law?

The Minister for Works: Then you would not pass this Bill until the test case had been heard?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: "After the commencement of this Act no person shall acquire more than a million acres of pastoral land." Every person who took up land prior to the 1917 Act was compelled, by that Act, to reduce his area to one million acres. That has not been done. The holders of the land form themselves into companies to evade the decision of Parliament. The Bill before us now is trying to evade what was the intention of Parliament in 1917.

Mr. Pilkington: The 1917 Act does not suggest the reduction of area already held.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Oh, yes.

Mr. Pilkington: I assure you it does not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The maximum area to be held in one million acres.

Mr. Pilkington: Of the new leases?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Oh, no. I have no desire to argue matters of law with the hon. member.

Mr. Pilkington: There is no suggestion of reducing the acreage already held.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Act says—

The Governor may, in specified districts or localities, fix the maximum area to be

held as aforesaid at less than one million acres. The maximum area to be held in the same division by two or more persons jointly or by any association of persons incorporated or unincorporated, shall not exceed one million acres.

Mr. Pilkington: It all comes after the new leases.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If I mistake not, under the new leases they have to apply for an extension until 1948, and they can only apply for one million acres.

The Minister for Works: They can pick that out where they like.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If they did not wish to avail themselves of the Act they could continue their old leases until 1928.

Mr. Pilkington: That is so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The pastoralists of the State, at all events the larger holders, have rushed in with both hands open to accept this offer. The contention of the hon. member that this does not apply to the old leases does not hold good, because the large holders have applied to come under the new conditions and have formed themselves into companies.

Mr. Pilkington: Many of them have not applied.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Very few of the large holders have not done so.

Mr. Pilkington: I think you are wrong.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No doubt the answer to the question asked by the leader of the Opposition has been postponed until the Bill has been dealt with. The Bill legalises everything that has been done since the passing of the 1917 Act. That is wrong. The Government should not have done anything to legalise that which was contrary to the wishes of Parliament in 1917. I do not say I approve of what was done then, but the intention was clearly stressed at the time. If the Government desired to introduce a Bill of this nature, they should have introduced one that would have made the position clear instead of one legalising actions which were detrimental to the interests of the State. The Premier has explained clearly that this Bill will prevent in the future the extension of the million-acre principle.

The Premier: That is so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He did not refer to the exemptions under the Bill. The Bill will not apply to an executor, administrator, or trustee. I do not think any hon. member desires to take away from a man's family anything that was granted to him in his life in accordance with the law. The Bill says—

This section shall not apply to an executor, administrator, or trustee in respect of any pastoral land held in that capacity, except to such extent (if any) as such executor, administrator, or trustee is beneficially interested.

Is the Premier aware that there are persons in the State, holding large areas of land, to evade the position are placing their land in the hands of a trustee to act for them?

The Premier: No, they cannot do it either.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There may be a doubt about it.

Hon. P. Collier: Would the Premier refuse this in the case of a trustee?

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When a trustee is asked if he is beneficially interested in any area, outside his position as a trustee, he can easily make a declaration that he is not interested so far as that lease is concerned.

Mr. Pilkington: There may be ways of evading the Act, but it cannot be done in that way.

Hon. P. Collier: There are several ways, then?

Mr. Pilkington: Probably 20 or 30 ways. A beneficiary as a trustee would be beneficially interested.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Only as a trustee administering the estate of someone else.

Mr. Pilkington: The person for whom the trustees held the property would be beneficially interested in it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The exemption clauses are so drafted that it is possible to evade even the intentions of the Bill.

The Premier: I do not agree with that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was definitely stated in 1917 that it was impossible for any company or combination of persons to hold more than a million acres.

Mr. Davies: I do not think so. It said in one division they could not hold more than one million acres.

The Minister for Works: That was only a trick.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are five or six divisions. In many parts of the State the areas should be considerably reduced. It should not have been allowed to be nearly a million acres. An injustice has been done to the people. There has been a great outcry of late from members representing the northern districts. It has been pointed out that there is a danger in the northern part of the State of an invasion, and that it is necessary to have increased population to guard against this. When Admiral Jellicoe was here two or three years ago to advise the Commonwealth Government as to the safety of Australia from the naval point of view, he stated that the greatest danger we had to contend with was the empty spaces in the north. The Premier said that if four men were put there in place of each one already there, it would not make much difference. If there was an invasion we would have four guns instead of one. The more people we can get into the north the better it will be for the State and Australasia as a whole. The large areas already held by individuals in the name of some dummy company are detrimental to the State. If we could only have four men in place of one on some of these leases there would be more opportunity of increased

stocking, of larger areas being developed, and of a greater number of people being employed on the leases. Not only would the four leaseholders represent three more than there are at present, but probably each of the four would employ 20 or 30 men, which in itself would represent largely increased population.

The Premier: I do not think you are right there.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I hope that in Committee the Premier will agree to go back to what existed 12 months ago. He stated then that any person who sold an area of this pastoral land should not sell it in areas exceeding 500,000 acres. If a man held a million acres he would have to subdivide it and sell it in at least two lots of 500,000 acres. That was a step in the right direction. I do not know why the Premier withdrew that Bill. He has now gone back to the million acres. The worst part of the Bill is that it legalises something that is contrary to the intentions of Parliament.

Mr. PILKINGTON (Perth) [9.42]: I am going to oppose the second reading of the measure on the simple ground that the restriction on the area which can be held by a pastoral lessee is not a wise provision. It must be obvious that the future prosperity of Western Australia necessarily depends on as much as possible of the land being used and developed. Any provision which is a restriction upon the development and use of the pastoral or other lands of the State is, therefore, a disadvantage. If the area which may be held by one man, company, or association of persons interested in pastoral pursuits, is limited, it means a restriction upon the industry, and such a restriction imposed upon any industry must check its development.

The Minister for Works: That has not been the case in New South Wales in connection with pastoral leases there.

Mr. PILKINGTON: Not only is a check put upon the industry generally but it must in many instances mean a check upon the industry in very undesirable directions. Take the case of the pastoralist, the individual, the company, or body of persons interested in pastoral pursuits, who have a million acres which have been worked and developed successfully. That individual or company may wish to develop another station in the same way. By this Bill they will be prevented from doing so. In this way we prevent the development of the pastoral industry by an individual or company that has proved himself or itself to be specially fitted for such development by the fact of having successfully done it already. We keep out from the development of the pastoral lands of the country those who have shown themselves to be particularly capable of doing that particular class of work, namely, developing pastoral land. We cut out those who are not only capable of dev-

cloping the lands, but those who have the funds necessary for so doing. It appears to me that this is a restriction of a very serious nature. It is obviously in the interests of the State that every acre of pastoral land, every acre of land that is capable of being developed for pastoral purposes, should be so developed. It is a matter of very little importance whether it is developed by a man who has already developed other land or by some person who has not done so. The point is to get the land developed and used. That is the first important point. That we should cut out those who may develop the pastoral lands of the State—persons or bodies of persons who have already shown their fitness for doing so and have the monetary means to carry out the work—would be to seriously retard the development of the pastoral industry of Western Australia. A proposition was advanced during last session by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) to the effect that it was desirable to limit the area which may be worked as one station, in order that we may increase the population in the North. That is a view which was received in certain quarters—and I must confess I noticed it with surprise—with approval. It means that while two persons A and B, who each hold a million acres side by side can successfully work the two million acres and develop the country with the one staff, the one set of plant, and one set of books. This legislation compels those men to have two managers, two sets of plant, two sets of books. There would be no such saving of expenditure or of the expense of production as would be effected by the co-operation of the two persons. All that is to be lost and greater costs are to be imposed on the industry by legislation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you followed that up you would give the whole of the northern portions of the State to one man.

Mr. PILKINGTON: I would give any area of land to any person who is willing to take it up and use it. That is my point. When we find a man pressing for the whole of Western Australia we can deal with that position. It has not arisen, nor will it arise. We want the land taken up and used. Hon. members will realise that that is the important point at issue. If a man or a body of persons state they are willing to take up land, even to the extent of ten million acres, and use it, then more power to them. Let that man or that body of persons take up the land and develop and use it. By so doing, it will assist in the real progress of the State. I was dealing with the proposition put forward by the member for Gascoyne, which was approved by persons both inside and outside the House. The conception was one for limiting the areas and so compelling the owner to employ more hands. If the proposition is sound regarding station property, the proposition is equally sound regarding other industries as well. I wonder what would be said by mem-

bers sitting on the cross benches if it was suggested that a farmer who held 2,000 acres must employ so many men per thousand acres. It is the same principle. If legislation of this sort is to be introduced for the purpose of limiting the area which may be held by any one person in the pastoral country, I can see no good reason why the same principle should not be applied to other classes of land, and, in fact, to businesses.

The Minister for Works: There is a difference between freehold and leasehold land.

Mr. PILKINGTON: There is a difference, as the Minister says, although I venture to suggest that he does not know what the difference is.

The Minister for Works: I think I do.

Mr. PILKINGTON: I suggest that the Minister does not know the meaning of the term "freehold land." I know he was a member of the Government which put it into an Act without knowing what it meant. The important point seems to me to be this: if we are going to limit the area which may be worked as one property, we are imposing upon the industry extra burden of expenses which will thereby lessen the total profits of that industry and so lessen the profit which may be earned by the whole population of the State. That is a wrong policy economically, and one which I do not think can result in anything but disaster. As I mentioned just now in answering an interjection by the member for North-East Fremantle, we do not want to see the whole pastoral area of Western Australia held by one or two persons. We can meet that danger when it arises. I do not know the number of pastoralists in possession of lands at the present time, but they are fairly numerous. I believe I am literally correct when I state there are millions of acres still to be used for pastoral purposes. What is required is knowledge and money to develop those areas. The sources from which we are most likely to get that knowledge and that money, is from among those who have already made a success of this work in Western Australia. It is unwise in the extreme to exclude those, either individuals or companies, who have already made successes of their pastoral holdings. The policy which I venture to suggest is that of encouraging anyone, whether he is already a pastoralist or is ready to take up land and use it, to do so. Up to the present time, there has been no effective attempt to do so. There has been no serious attempt to legislate regarding pastoral leases on the lines of compelling the holders to use the whole of the lands held by them to their full extent. That is a line upon which legislation should go. It would require—I speak subject to correction, because I cannot speak with personal knowledge—entirely new legislation, because conditions which obtain in different parts of the State are so varied that we cannot impose uniform conditions under pastoral leases for the different parts of the State.

Conditions applying in the Kimberleys would not apply in the Murchison, and conditions applying in the Murchison would not apply in the Gascoyne. New legislation would probably be required, and it would need a good deal of consideration before the precise terms of the leases for the various parts of the State could be fixed. However, that is the line upon which the legislation should proceed. Under such conditions, everyone would be encouraged to take up pastoral land who had had experience and made a success of the business, and who had the necessary money to carry on the operations provided they made full use of the land. There should be conditions regarding improvements, stocking, and so on, and people should be prevented from holding pastoral lands which they could not reasonably handle.

The Minister for Works: It was understood that we did that under the 1917 Act.

Mr. PILKINGTON: I have already said that there has been no effective legislation attempted on this point. The conditions imposed under the Act mentioned proved onerous in some parts of the State, but were not sufficiently onerous regarding other parts. I have not gone into that aspect, but I am assured that that was the position, and that it will be necessary to differentiate between the various parts of the State. I do not know whether anyone will listen to me, but I urge that we should give up the present tendency of our legislation.

The Premier: We must provide that the men shall stop there.

Mr. PILKINGTON: In legislation such as I propose, the man would be compelled to develop the whole of the land he could take up. At present we have no discrimination between the pastoral lands in different parts of the State. I do not profess to speak with any knowledge of the subject, but I am informed that unless we do differentiate between the different parts of the State, legislation will be ineffective. There is only one other remark I wish to make, and that arises out of a reference by the member for North-East Fremantle. I only make it because it seems to me to have an important bearing when passing legislation of this kind. The hon. member said that a certain intention existed in the mind of Parliament in 1917. I have no doubt that what the hon. member has stated is substantially correct. I was not present in Parliament at the time, and I am glad that I am not responsible in any way for the extraordinary document passed by the House in 1917. It is one of the most extraordinary Acts to understand that I have ever had the misfortune to read. The hon. gentleman said that it was the intention of Parliament and that the then intention of Parliament should now be given effect to. That is a very dangerous principle. It is retrospective legislation, and it is not in any way made less offensive by reason of the fact that Parliament may have had in its own

mind the intention, which it was thought was introduced into the Act. The intention of Parliament—I am speaking as a lawyer, although, I think I may claim, with a certain amount of common sense—is the intention which is expressed in the wording of the Act which Parliament passes.

Mr. Willecock: It should be.

Mr. PILKINGTON: That is the expressed intention of Parliament, and if Parliament by an Act says that is the intention of Parliament, it would be very unseemly three years later to say, "This is not what we meant; Parliament meant something else and we are now going to pass legislation which will be retrospective to give effect to our intention of three years ago, although we told the public that our intention was something else."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They say there is a doubt with regard to it.

Mr. PILKINGTON: I am glad the hon. member has mentioned that. If there is doubt it ought to be resolved by the courts of the country. It ought to be resolved by the judiciary. It would be most unfortunate if the legislature took upon itself to perform the functions of the judiciary, just as it would be most unfortunate if the judiciary took upon itself to perform the functions of Parliament, or if the Executive took upon itself to perform the functions of either of the other two. This measure does not legalise what has been done in the past. It leaves it exactly as it was. This measure deals only with the future as from the day it is passed. After the passing of this measure certain things shall be law. This measure does not legalise anything done in the past.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It does so far as holding a million acres is concerned.

Mr. PILKINGTON: This measure refuses to touch the past. It leaves the past untouched and I submit that is right. Retrospective legislation except in very extraordinary circumstances is most dangerous and most wrong, and this measure very properly deals with the future. However, the point on which I wish to make my protest is that we should not limit the area which any person may develop in pastoral leases. We should be glad to welcome development by any person or any company of any portion of our pastoral lands so long as they are taken up under the conditions which bind the lessees to make full use of those lands.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [10.2]: With a good deal that the hon. gentleman has said I quite agree, but I rise merely to make a statement in connection with the 1917 Act. Whether we were correctly advised or not is a matter that the House itself can judge. But we certainly were told in this House—I myself was told by the legal authority of the Ministry—that one million

acres and one million acres only could be held by one person in this State.

Mr. Pilkington: That is correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no question of a million acres in this division and a million acres in that division. The question was put pointedly because the member for Williams-Narrogin came to me and asked me whether it was so. I put the question to the then Attorney General and I received an answer as distinct as I am stating it now, that only one million acres of Western Australia could be held by one person.

Mr. Pilkington: That is correct, the person being either a man or a company.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the Act provided for a million acres in each division.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Perth is a trained professional man and can attach meanings to words which do not appear to the ordinary person. I am trying to speak in the language of the man in the street. The general run of member cannot claim to have had special education to find these points. Therefore he must rely on the statements of those who have had special education and who pose, willingly or unwillingly, as authorities. I state without fear of contradiction that the House distinctly understood that no person or combination of persons could hold more than one million acres in the whole of Western Australia. One statement made by the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington), who pleaded very much for what the man in the street refers to as the holder of the money bags, was that because some person having a big area of land has acquired a large amount of money through his experience, knowledge, and work, he therefore is the only person who should develop a certain area.

Mr. Pilkington: I never stated that he was the only person. I said he was a person not to be disqualified.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member claims that a person who has made a success of his land and farming business and has money should not be denied the opportunity of dealing with and improving any further property he may wish. In one sense there is good reason behind the argument. I would point out, however, that the trend with regard to land tenure throughout the world to-day is that opportunity must be given to the small man. The development which the hon. member desires to get and which we desire to get will not necessarily follow if the big person is confined to his million acres and if the million acres adjacent is taken up by an inexperienced person. No man can run a large station of a million acres without having a number of employees who, through the experience they gain on the station, gradually arrive at the stage when, if they had the opportunity, they could run stations for themselves. It is the object to give an opportunity to get holdings of their own to those who by hard work and strict attention to duty have fitted them-

selves to apply for their own benefit the ability, skill and experience which they have previously used for the benefit of their employers.

Mr. Pilkington: The more land that is developed the better chance they have.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In New Zealand, it has been the law for years that if certain land is required to find means of livelihood for people who are unable to get land, the State can step in, allow the owner to retain 500 acres and acquire the rest on fair terms and divide it. The principle that applies to cultivable land to which the hon. member also referred, applies to the leasehold lands. It was the desire of the House in 1917, and I believe it is the desire of a majority of members to-day, that the smaller man should be given a chance to deal with these areas.

Mr. Pilkington: If you are not careful you will wake the Premier.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the Premier were awake he might differ from me.

Hon. P. Collier: Then now is your chance. While he is asleep you can say what you like.

The Premier: I am awake.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have in my hand a list of some 30 or 40 smaller men who hold areas varying from 60,000 acres to half a million acres. It is to be supposed that these men would not have taken up this land but for reasonable expectation that they could handle it. The experience of New South Wales when the large pastoral areas were cut up was that there were considerably more sheep, cattle and horses on a given area than ever there were in the reign of the squatter kings.

Mr. Pilkington: What happened in South Australia?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know what happened in Timbuctoo, but if the hon. member intends to travel that way he might write and let us know. Let me tell the hon. member what has been the result in this State during recent years. It is only a few years since the bulk of the sheep in Western Australia were held in the country north of Geraldton. To-day, owing to the extension of the farming industry and the starting of small flocks, there are considerably more sheep south of Geraldton than north of it. We know, because it has been stated by members whose sincerity cannot be doubted, that there has been and will continue to be a large demand in this State for comparatively small areas of land for pastoral pursuits. I grant the hon. member this point, on which I think he is right, that if a man has a large banking account and is willing to use it to employ people and to improve his place the State benefits, but I go further and say that while this cannot be denied, it stands to reason that if an area were held by 20 persons who had pro rata the same amount of money, skill and experience, the State would be bet-

ter served by having that number than by having one person holding a million acres. The hon. member went on to speak of the utilitarian aspect and said that adding to the one million acres already held a further one million acres would mean one set of books, one storekeeper, one butcher, one baker, instead of two sets or more, but he should remember that the principal need of Western Australia is population.

Hon. P. Collier: Carry that out to its logical conclusion and one man could own Western Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall come to that presently. Western Australia wants population and we are not or ought not to be concerned with the idea of getting a man merely because he has large lumps of money behind him. He is useful; but population is what we need when the time comes to stand up for Western Australia. Population does not mean a man with the money bags only when there comes an emergency such as we have experienced during the last seven or eight years.

Mr. Lambert: Man power counts.

Mr. Pilkington: You assume your method will bring population.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We shall attempt to get it anyhow, but we are not likely to get it by embracing theories in favour of the money bags. The hon. member may if he so desires sneer at my grey hairs. It is not very nice to do so; it shows that he has not been very well brought up, but although my hairs are white and my years are many, I have not forgotten to progress with the times, and I do not permit myself to be strangled by the shibboleths of the year one. The hon. member is about to leave us, and it is just as well that he should take with him to the new land some lessons by which it is to be hoped he will profit, namely that it is of no use people coming to Western Australia or to any part of Australia with the idea of shutting themselves in ringed fences. If ever there came a time when it would be possible for a man to stand inside his fence with tens of thousands of people out in the road wanting bread, that would be the time when might would become right and the money bags and banking account would be of no value whatever. I do not believe that time ever can come because people are getting more enlightened in regard to their duties to their fellows. As I have said in this House before, our first duty is to look after our people not only with regard to their food, but with regard to other things, and we shall not do that by allowing money bags to conquer and rule the place. Just once more I want to emphasise this strongly. I feel that when the 1917 Act was passed, I was personally misinformed; and I do not like it. I do not intend to let the matter pass without placing on record my feelings on the subject. I have not only the right to expect from the occupant of the Attorney General's

chair an opinion regarding any measure before the House, but I have also the right to expect the same thing from any other legal practitioner who may be a member of this House. All such members are expected to give the House the benefit of their education, their knowledge, and their experience. There were other legal practitioners besides the then Attorney General in this House at that time, and it was their duty to give us their views on the measure and to see that we were fully seized of the position. If an occasion arose when my knowledge and experience might be considered as of some value by the member for Perth, and I held it back, he would say that I was not giving to the country that which I had a right to give, namely, of my best. With regard to the present Bill, I say to the member for Perth that if he knows it does not carry out what is the intention and desire of the State, he is failing in his duty if he does not make the position quite clear to this House and to the country.

Mr. Pilkington: Perhaps you will tell us what is the legal advice you have got now about the present Bill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Let me remind the hon. member of the position with regard to the 1917 Bill. It was treated in this Chamber with all the care and ability possessed by members who were seeking for true and honest guidance. The Bill was not passed without debate, or without questions being asked. There was a special committee of members appointed, consisting of one member from the Opposition side and two from this side. The committee went out to frame a resolution, which was brought into this Chamber and debated here. Questions were asked as to its effect. If the member for Perth had then occupied the chair which he now occupies, and I had asked him a question, I know that undoubtedly he would have given me a straightforward and honourable reply. If I had asked him a question that he did not care to answer, he would not have deceived me. I believe he has too honourable a mind to do that. But I do not want him to go away from this State believing that this House did not try to know what that 1917 Bill contained. The hon. member is right with regard to retrospective legislation. Indeed, I am inclined to think he is absolutely right on that point. I know that retrospective legislation is very dangerous indeed. In the interval between 1917 and this date there may have been interchanges in connection with these leaseholds, perfectly honest and straightforward interchanges, and if we were to revert to the original intention of the Bill of 1917 we might injure those who had quiet honestly and innocently engaged in certain transactions. On that point I am at one with the hon. gentleman. But I am not at one with him when he puts forward as his main postulate that if a man has made a success of his work and thereby accumulated money bags, we must give him the fullness of the

earth to go on with, and that all other people must become his servants, or remain shut out.

Mr. Pilkington: I never said that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot subscribe to that principle.

Mr. Pilkington: I never said that or anything like it. I never suggested that the small man should be excluded. I say that my system will give him a better chance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What I have stated is the corollary to the hon. member's proposition.

Mr. Pilkington: No, it is not. There are millions of acres available.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To give the man who has made a success of a million acres another million acres simply for that reason, means squeezing out the small man who has not the big money bags and the big bag of experience. Among the friends I value there are at least half-a-dozen young fellows who have worked on the large stations for years, and who have acquired knowledge and experience and saved a little money, and who perhaps have been assisted by men able to help them, and who are now on their own and doing well. Although they are not on large areas similar to those on which they gained their experience, they are doing good work for the State by showing that it is possible for them to deal with such propositions otherwise than within the arms of the great octopus. I agree also with the member for Perth when he lays it down as a condition that whoever has land should use it. I go further, and I say that no Government ever had or ever can have any right to part with land except on the express condition that it shall be used for the purposes for which it is required, namely to provide food for the people. The extension of that principle will come in time to all of us who own any land, whether it be a garden allotment or an area of thousands of acres. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." If the State has parted with land to individuals, it must see that the individuals use the land to provide food and raiment and shelter for the people of the country. The first duty that rests upon the Government and upon Parliament is to see that the people within the borders of the State are fed and are enabled to live decent lives. If the money bags stand in the way, the people will have to put them out of it.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [10.22]: I have read this Bill very carefully, and I support its second reading. There appears to be considerable misconception regarding the Land Act Amendment Act of 1917, and I am exceedingly surprised to hear the remarks of the Minister for Works. That hon. gentleman has stated that he was under the impression that he had been informed that under the Act of 1917 no one would be allowed to hold more than one million acres of pastoral leasehold in Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: That is so.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: The Act is perfectly explicit on the point, and anyone reading it must see at once that not only does it not provide for only one million acres to be held by any one person in the whole of Western Australia, but states distinctly that not more than one million acres shall be held under pastoral lease in any one division. There are six divisions of Western Australia and the Act provides that a million acres of pastoral lands can be held in each division. The Act is perfectly plain. I myself would not need any advice on that point, because the language of the Act is so explicit that there is no need to ask any question in regard to the matter at all. The Act merely states that the maximum area held by one person in one division shall be one million acres. I am speaking of the Act as it is. I am afraid there is very much misconception indeed with regard to the measure. Further, in connection with the passing of that Act, it was distinctly understood that no person, or combination of persons, would be able to hold any more than one million acres in one division of this State. However, the courts have not decided that question either one way or the other. In fact, I am under the impression that all those persons who are desirous of bringing their pastoral leases under the Land Act Amendment Act of 1917 to be extended until the year 1948, have been careful, although they may have put their leasehold properties into companies, not to hold more than one million acres by one of those companies. However, the House was distinctly under the impression that no person, or body of persons, would be able to hold more than one million acres.

Members: That is what we say.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: It is not for this House to interpret the Act now. When a Bill has passed through Parliament, Parliament has done with it for the time being. If there is any doubt in regard to an Act of Parliament, it is the judiciary that has to decide the question. No one seems to have been rash enough, or courageous enough, to bring this matter before the judiciary of Western Australia; and consequently, as to this particular matter, we are now in the same position as in 1917. Considerable reflection has been passed on the Attorney General of that period. I wish to express my confident belief that that gentleman, when giving his opinion on the interpretation of the particular clause in that Bill, gave it in absolute good faith.

The Minister for Works: No one is doubting that.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: The opinion may have been wrong, but I am perfectly certain that in giving it he did not desire to mislead anyone.

Mr. Lambert: Do you remember anything of that self-appointed committee that we did not know anything about?

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Certainly. I was here; in fact, I was in charge of the Bill, and so I know something about it.

Mr. Lambert: Do you remember the self-appointed committee?

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: I do not know that it was a self-appointed committee. The House agreed to certain members going aside and discussing the question, and afterwards the question was discussed in this Chamber. Finally it was decided that these same persons should go to the Crown Law Department the next morning and there consult with the Attorney General, and then come back here with a clause framed in accordance with the views arrived at by that small body of men.

Mr. Lambert: Who were they? A couple of busybodies and nonentities. I knew nothing about the matter.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: They came back to the House, and the House agreed to the clause, and it became law. If it was wrong, I do not wish to exonerate even myself from responsibility for the passing of the clause. But I do wish to state that I was quite of the belief that no person or body of persons could hold more than one million acres. That was the intention of the Act. We do not know whether that is correct or incorrect, because the courts have never given a decision. However, I believe the intention of this Bill is to place the matter in order; and I trust the House will carry the Bill. Certain remarks have been made by the member for Perth (Mr. Pilkington) with regard to the improvement conditions. One gets very little credit for anything one does in this direction, unless one keeps hammering it in—hammering it in. The stocking conditions and improvement conditions on leaseholders were made very much more stringent by the 1917 Act, far more stringent than they were under the Land Act of 1898.

Mr. Johnston: And the rental was increased too.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: Yes. I wish to point out that if the conditions under which the leases are held under the 1917 Act are carried out, a man cannot hold a pastoral lease without making certain improvements within a certain time, and, in addition, stocking his land to a very considerable extent.

Mr. Lambert: What have they done up to date?

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: The Lands Department is very strict in seeing that the conditions are properly carried out. The desire of the department is to see the Act carried out in its entirety. The Act was passed in good faith, to encourage pastoral pursuits.

Mr. Lambert: It was bludgeoned through at the end of the session in a most scandalous manner.

Hon. Sir H. B. LEFROY: The hon. member might leave that alone. It is past history and the House is responsible for it. The Act has done considerable good. The settlement of our pastoral lands has been very much increased under it; also the Act gave greater facilities for land settlement gener-

ally than any previous Act. I hope the Bill will be passed.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.38]: It has never been the desire of any member to depreciate the good work of the pioneers, but when the contention was put up that there should be an extension of pastoral leases every member felt that many of the anomalies then obtaining would be remedied, particularly those which permitted of big aggregations of territory suitable for closer settlement. The member for Moore (Sir Henry Lefroy) said we were all cognisant of the contents of the Bill of 1917. I am certain we all thought that under it nobody could hold more than a million acres.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: Then the hon. member could not have read the Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Bill was considered late in the session, and I remember well the words of an hon. member no longer with us that he would have the Bill forced through if he kept the Assembly sitting for a week. It has been a grave injustice to the State.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: It was a very excellent Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: The hon. member knows that under the Bill the squatters, at the very termination of their leases were given an extension of 21 years, thus creating an asset worth millions of money to them. It was undoubtedly a good Bill from the hon. member's point of view. I was particularly struck with the spirited criticism of the Minister for Works. We should have a greater regard for man power than for any stocking conditions in any Bill. Some encouragement should be given to the younger generation desirous of getting reasonable holdings. That can only be done by affording reasonable safeguards.

Hon. Sir H. B. Lefroy: You must have men for stocking.

Mr. LAMBERT: Still the hon. member must know that the aggregation of pastoral areas in the Kimberleys has almost amounted to a scandal. I do not say those men have not been allowed to do it. They have taken advantage of the Act. The sooner it ceases the better. There should be very clear restriction put upon the area which anybody can operate. There are perhaps big disadvantages in carrying out the pastoral industry in the North-West, but those big areas should be available to everybody. There is no desire on the part either of Parliament or of the people to take from the pioneers anything which they have justly earned, but if we are to people the country the policy of the past must change. There may be nothing wrong with the actual provisions of the Bill before us, but on the last occasion the House was grossly misled. It was regrettable that legislation of the sort should have been rushed through.

Mr. Teesdale: But as far as possible, it is rectified in the Bill.

Mr. LAMBERT: No, the same aggregation of pastoral areas will go on under the Bill.



Mr. Teesdale: Do you object to a million acres?

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes.

Mr. Teesdale: One cannot do much up North on less.

Mr. Hudson: You voted for a million acres last time.

Mr. LAMBERT: I voted under a misapprehension. Some self-appointed busybodies entered into some arrangement with the then Attorney General to retire and draft something which would be suitable.

Mr. Nairn: The House must have known of it.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am speaking only of the effect of that careless legislation. If we are to people the State we must see to it that this big aggregation of territory shall not go on. Not even the old pioneers could have reasonable objection if given proper compensation as in other parts of the world. The problem has been tackled elsewhere, and the sooner it is tackled in Western Australia the better. We should so shape our land laws as to afford the greatest possible facilities for peopling the country. That can only be done by preventing the scandalous aggregation of territory which is likely to go on until Parliament definitely stops it.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [10.41]: The chief objection I have to the Bill is precisely that which I had to the Bill introduced last year, namely, that the limitation of areas is the same the State over. There should be differentiation between districts. If 250,000 acres is sufficient on the Gascoyne, 500,000 acres may be required further north, and at least a million acres in the Kimberleys. I have heard it said that it is impossible to have any kind of a station with less than a million acres. My experience is that the large stations are not as profitably run as are the smaller stations. This is proved in every district. The two or three large stations in the Gascoyne district do not make the same percentage or return the same result as do the smaller stations. Further, if any heavy losses occur through drought, the large stations lose in greater proportion than do the smaller ones. Again, the smaller stations come under the personal supervision of the manager. It is impossible for any manager to look after a larger area than 250,000 or 300,000 acres.

Mr. Lambert: We want to shut out objectionable squatting companies which may come into being.

Mr. ANGELO: For my part I would rather see 10 men making £2,000 a year than one man making £20,000. It is the duty of the State to do the greatest good for the greatest number. It is nonsense to think we have unlimited areas of pastoral country suitable for sheep. Of course, we have immense areas in the Kimberleys still available, but when we come to sheep pro-

positions, there is very little land available at the present time that can be taken up until railways are run out so that wool and stock may be carried more economically than is the case at the present time. I am afraid we have not many areas to be acquired by newcomers. I am right out against repudiating any contract. If the previous Government have granted a man a million acres or more, that man should be allowed to keep it until the term of his lease runs out, but when that lease does run out, or if he should wish to sell it, there should be legislation to compel him to cut up the area to the limited size provided for. In the district that I represent a pastoral area should not exceed 250,000 acres. In poorer districts, of course, it should be more, and I think the appraisement now being carried out should be a good basis on which to work, and on which to say what should be the area in a particular district.

Mr. Pickering: What do you think should be the minimum?

Mr. ANGELO: I have said that 250,000 acres should be the maximum in certain districts. I have spoken to many pastoralists in the Gascoyne district, and they consider that that area would be sufficiently large. As the leases fall due, or as the owners wish to sell, the sales should be effected in accordance with the areas fixed. One of the most profitable stations in the Gascoyne belongs to the Messrs. Butcher. That is less than 400,000 acres in extent, but it is thoroughly improved, and carries every head of stock that it is capable of carrying. The best improved stations on the Gascoyne are the small stations. When we come to the larger stations, such as Bush's and Munroe's—

The Honorary Minister: Munroe's station was held by four men years ago and they all went bung.

Mr. ANGELO: That may be so, but the stations were not improved then. Coming to the Murchison, several of the stations were joined together and worked as one. The original owners made nothing like the profits that are being made by the present holders. Take Billabalong station of 300,000 acres which was part of the station I refer to. That is a payable proposition and, like other small areas, the holder is able to devote the whole of his time to it and to see that the improvements are thoroughly carried out. There is Meeragoolia station on the Gascoyne, which consists of only 53,000 acres, which has more paddocks and more wolls than any other area double the size that I know of, and the holder is quite content. It is an exceptionally fine property. The stations of 250,000 acres are making bigger money for their acreage than the larger areas. It is far better for the State as a whole that the stations should not be too large. The member for Perth objected to my remarks on a pre-

vious Bill. He said he could not see the advantage of having a homestead and a staff for each of the different stations, and added that a huge area could be more economically worked by one staff. I contend that smaller areas should be taken up because it is absolutely necessary that the district should be more closely populated. Unless we can get population in those parts we can never carry out what the Government desire, and that is to see the north developed in the manner that it should be developed. It would be better if there were more settlers, because there would be a greater chance of getting railways.

Hon. P. Collier: "And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

Mr. ANGELO: If the hon. member turns up the speeches I have made on the pastoral question he will find that I have not changed my views one iota. In connection with the appraisements that are taking place, those appraisements are not being satisfactorily received. Some of the lessees are finding that they are far greater than ever they expected, and not only that, but they do not seem to be fair compared with the appraisements made on other stations. Some of the lessees who have already surrendered their leases under the old Act state that they lose under the new Act, and that they would be only too pleased to go back to the old Act and see their eight years through. Now that the appraisements have come out they find that those appraisements will not pay them. The appraisers have had experience in one district and not in others. The conditions in those districts vary considerably. Let me quote an instance. Two squatters in the Roebourne district who had spent all their lives sheep breeding up there came down many years ago to the Gascoyne to inspect some country. They went back to Roebourne after having told me that they would not pay rent on the property they inspected. That same country at the present time has made a fortune for the person who has taken it up, and the men who came down from Roebourne said it was no good. The difficulty to which I have referred could be got over by a provision being inserted in the Bill for an appeal against appraisements. There would not be many appeals. The board could be constituted by the appointment of a judge and two well known pastoralists who know the North, and two Government officials. But that is for the Government to say. I trust the Government will give consideration to the matter before the Bill is finally disposed of. Provision should be made for a re-appraisal of leases at any time when a new port is opened up or a new railway constructed, because the value of the leases to a great extent is subject to the proximity of the lease to a port or railway.

Mr. Troy: Repudiation.

Mr. ANGELO: Oh no! At the present time appraisements are made owing to the proximity of the property to a port or railway, or the means of getting to a port or railway. If the Government are going to spend money in developing new ports or building new railways, the lessees who occupy land adjacent to the ports or railways should bear a certain portion of the cost of establishing the facilities. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, but I hope some alterations will be made in Committee.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [10.55]: I do not intend to annoy the House to-night by stressing many points dealt with by previous speakers. I sympathise with many of the speakers who have drawn attention to certain misconceptions that have occurred with reference to the 1917 Act. Had I known at the time that any of the sections of that Act admitted of the construction since placed upon them I should certainly have opposed them.

Mr. Pickering: You were not here.

Mr. TEESDALE: Excuse me, I was. Although representing a northern constituency I claim to be fair, and I consider that the million acres fixed at that time was understood to be the maximum which one firm or corporation could hold. I am opposed to any larger extent of country being held by one man or one corporation. At the same time I would call particular attention to the fact that when debates take place in this House with regard to pastoral country, members never seem to differentiate between different districts. We have had a few remarks from the member for Gascoyne. The conditions of his district are totally dissimilar to those in my district. The acreage that would suffice for his electors would be perfectly useless for my electors. Unfortunately, in the district I represent we have had very serious droughts, which necessitate the holding of a larger area of country to enable us to move stock about during the period of those droughts. It is quite possible that the river frontages may be depleted of feed, and that it is necessary to move flocks away to the back country. Had we not a large extent of country it would be impossible to do that, and we would lose stock through inability to keep them moving. In our part of the district this large acreage is positively necessary. I am opposed to anything more than a million acres. At the same time I must emphasise the necessity for that acreage. With regard to the stocking clause, I think every precaution has been taken to see that the land is properly stocked and that the conditions are carried out. I agree with the member for Gascoyne that it is possible that a smaller extent of country might suffice in some districts, but in the district that I represent I must certainly object to any reduction. Members, although regretting the defects in the 1917 Bill, must recognise that the Gov-

ernment have done all they can to make this particular Bill as complete as possible, and to take reasonable precautions against any violations for the future.

Mr. MONEY (Banbury) [11.0]: I was not a member of the House when the 1917 Bill was put through.

Mr. Pickering: Neither was the member for Roebourne.

Mr. MONEY: Certain statements have been made which are a reflection upon members of the House. I have looked up in "Hansard" the debate which took place at the time. The original area which could be taken up in each division was two million acres, and the member for North-East Fremantle moved an amendment to reduce this area to one million. A debate ensued and the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) took part in it. The hon. member said—

Even with the proposed reduction to one million acres a man and his wife would still be able to hold six million acres of pastoral lands in this country. The words "in the same division" at the commencement of the clause should be struck out.

It is clear that the question of the area in each division was debated at the time. Later on the Minister for Works interrupted as follows:—

I find that I am incorrect in what I said, and that one million acres can be held in each division.

It was thoroughly understood that it was to be one million acres in each division.

Mr. CHESSON (Que) [11.2]: I support the Bill. It puts into plain language the intentions of Parliament in connection with the 1917 measure, which provided for the holding of a million acres within the State. That is what we were given to understand at the time the Bill was before us. The point was raised by the member for Williams-Narrogin, who contended it meant a million acres in each division. The then Attorney General gave us to understand that it meant a million acres within the State.

The Minister for Works: That is quite correct.

The Attorney General: I cannot understand that.

Mr. CHESSON: The Attorney General gave us to understand that it meant a million acres of pastoral land, and that it was impossible for any person or combination of persons to hold more.

The Attorney General: Does "Hansard" say that?

Mr. CHESSON: I do not know. I have not looked it up, but that was the impression created at the time. I intend in Committee to support the amendment outlined by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy). He indicated he would move to reduce some of the big holdings inside a radius of 70 miles from a port or railway. I have realised for many years that the resumption of the vast

pastoral holdings in the State must come about. When in 1917 the tenure of leases was extended from 1928 to 1948, there was an agitation all over the Murchison shortly afterwards. Many people were under the impression that the leases would become the property of the State, and would be subdivided, and an opportunity thus given to people to take up portion of these big pastoral holdings adjacent to the railways. The agitation led to a petition being drawn up and presented to the House by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Willcock). This petition was particularly on behalf of returned soldiers, but there were many other interested people working in and around the mines on the Murchison, who had been in the district for many years, and who knew that it was impossible for holders of these big leases to comply with the stocking conditions. On the contrary, the small holders on the Murchison not only complied with the stocking conditions but achieved better results than did the big holder. Some of these men have had very big returns from their land. The Murchison is a well watered country, and water can be obtained from Pindar to Peak Hill. It would be better for the State if the pastoral leases adjacent to the railway were cut into smaller holdings, with a small frontage to the railway extending back. This would afford better opportunity to our railways in the way of traffic, induce more people to live in that part of the State, and create better social and educational conditions for all concerned. If we are to extend our railways for any distance into the interior we must provide for a population to use them. A man can make a good living anywhere on the Murchison upon 100,000 acres. I have talked with the squatters, and many of them recognise that they cannot hold these big areas for any length of time. In New South Wales there have been subdivisions, and these have been beneficial to all concerned. In some districts in that State as much as 100 square miles of country were held by one man. These areas have now been cut into smaller holdings and have been made to carry more sheep and cattle than was previously the case. The same thing applies to Queensland. We on this side of the House realise that if any of these large holdings are taken over the holders must be compensated for the improvements they have made. The squatter by his energy, capabilities and application has developed his holding, and he should be allowed to have the pick of the land for himself and his family. We do not wish to penalise those men who have done so much to pioneer the State, but we agree that in the interests of the people these lands should be cut up. Pastoral holdings are a very attractive form of land settlement, both from the point of view of wool production and from the point of view of increase in flocks. Then there is also the other aspect, that of getting rid of the culls to the butcher. There is a big inducement to men to enter the pastoral

industry. It does not require the same amount of knowledge to do this as is the case with many other industries. Men who have followed mining occupations for years have taken up 50,000 acres of pastoral land. Although they had very little knowledge of how to run a pastoral lease they have made a success of their venture. People on pastoral land are not handicapped in the same way that settlers on agricultural land are. If a farmer is growing wheat 12 or 14 miles from a railway, he is beyond the distance when he can do so profitably. In the case of a pastoral holding it is nothing to have to drive sheep 50 miles to a railway. The member for Mt. Magnet has contended that on the Murchison there are 20 million acres of pastoral land available for subdivision, held at present by 82 people. We could put 500 people at least on these holdings, and they could make a good living. I hope the suggestions of the hon. member will be put into effect when the Bill is in Committee. It would be a good thing for the State, and afford an excellent opportunity for men, who have previously followed the occupation of mining, to enter the pastoral industry. It is only a matter of time when many of the mines will close down and the miners will have to look round for some other avenue of employment. These miners already know the back country and what it is capable of doing. If they are given an opportunity of acquiring some of this territory I feel sure they will make good.

Mr. DURA'K (Kimberley) [11.13]: I do not know that I can add much to what has already been said. I was not here when the 1917 Bill was put through. I remember that the question was discussed last session. It was clearly indicated that one million acres was the total area that any person or company could hold in each division. We find now that the maximum area that can be so held is one million acres within the State. That is a big difference between the interpretation of the 1917 Bill and the present conditions. I understand there are six divisions in the State. That would mean under the 1917 Bill that people were entitled to hold six million acres, one million in each division. Although I agree with the member for Perth that the limitation of the area is unsound in principle, I am prepared to admit that it is not in accordance with the trend of the times. I am not altogether an advocate of extensive areas being held. Considerable stress has been laid on the amount of land a person should hold. I am prepared to admit that it is possible to carry on with a million acres more profitably than with a more extensive area. It is not so much a question of that aspect, however. It has to be remembered that Western Australia is a new State. Men have gone out into the pastoral areas within comparatively recent years and developed those distant parts of the State. Western Australia owes a duty to those who have borne the heat and

burden of the day there. These big holdings will, in the course of time, give way to smaller areas. The pastoralists have families who are growing up and naturally the big holdings will be cut up into smaller areas and distributed among the children. In this way the big holdings will, in the course of a few years, disappear. I am sure that the State recognises the duty owed to the pioneers, and that there is no intention on the part of the Government of doing other than justice to the pastoralists. As to the differentiation, from a pastoral standpoint, between the various parts of the State, there is a good deal in what the member for Perth and others have pointed out. It would be better if some such differentiation were provided respecting the several divisions of the State. While I am not prepared to follow the member for Roebourne, who said that the carrying capacity of the land in his part of the State would be far less than the land in the Gascoyne district, by commenting in similar strains regarding the Kimberley areas—I do not say that the carrying capacity of the Kimberley areas would be less than the Gascoyne or Roebourne areas—when the large areas are cut up they will enable more stock to be carried. The time for the reduction of the large areas in the Kimberley division has not arrived yet. I take exception to the remark by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) who stated that the large areas held in the Kimberley division by the pastoralists amounted to a scandal. If the hon. member had reflected for a moment he would have realised that that is scarcely the case. The Kimberley division comprises about 150,000 square miles. Hardly more than half of that area has been selected, which would indicate that it is not a fair statement to make that the position there is a scandal. When there are about 100,000 square miles vacant and waiting for somebody to take up, the position cannot be described as a scandal. The member for Gascoyne has pointed out the position regarding the appraisers, who have been sent out to value the pastoral holdings. No one doubts the integrity of the appraisers for one moment. They have been doing their work to the best of their ability. They do not, however, know the conditions regarding the pastoral industry according to the point of view of the pastoralists. While these men have been actuated by purely honest motives, I think that it would be in the interests of the industry if the Bill were amended to provide for an appeal against their decisions. If such a provision were made, it would be more satisfactory. The member for Gascoyne, when advocating smaller holdings, said that he did not want any suggestion of repudiation to enter into the matter, and urged that the present holders should be allowed to retain possession of their land, but when their properties were sold they should be cut up into smaller areas. To do that would be to work an injustice against the pastoralists, because they should be en-

titled to sell the areas held by them and the question of cutting up those areas might be applied to later transactions. The men who have pioneered the pastoral industry and are getting up in years, should be allowed to enjoy a little of the comforts of life. If they are compelled to cut up their holdings and dispose of them, they will not, in many cases, get the return to which they are entitled or which they might otherwise receive. On the whole, I think this Bill is a very fair one. The reduction from five or six million acres, which it was possible to hold under the 1917 Act, to one million acres under the Bill, is a very large one, but I think it meets the wishes of most members of the House. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*House adjourned at 11.22 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 9th December, 1920.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

### BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 52—No child to be employed without permission:

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

That in line 1 the word "a" before "child" be struck out and "any" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That all the words after "child" be struck out.

The clause will then read—"No occupier of a factory shall employ therein any child."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: My sympathies are with the amendment and, after having considered the matter and discussed it with the chief inspector, I intend to support the amendment. There are about a dozen children, not more, under the age of 14 to whom permits have been given to work in factories. I am strongly of opinion that no child should be allowed to work in a factory. These permits have been issued only in exceptional cases and after careful inquiry. The inspectors are very strict; last week an occupier of a factory and the parents of a child aged 13 were fined for a breach of this provision. These permits have been granted because the necessities of the family make it necessary for the children to earn money. If they cannot work in factories, some other means will have to be found to meet the necessities of the families. Rather than pass a bad law to meet a few necessitous cases, we should find some other way to deal with these cases. Before a permit is issued the Education Department has to be satisfied and the child has to be exempted from attending school. I accept the amendment, realising that some other means will have to be found to meet the necessitous cases concerned.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I am quite in sympathy with the mover of the amendment and the leader of the House, but I am anxious that no hardship should be inflicted in the cases where permits have been granted. I shall want an assurance that the children now employed will not be displaced. These children may be working to help to keep homes going. There must be extenuating circumstances or the permits would not have been granted. If these children can be placed in some other walk of life, or some equivalent can be offered, the amendment should be passed. I think that further consideration should be postponed until we obtain from the inspector particulars of any possible injustice which might be inflicted and an assurance that some other avenue of employment will be provided.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I hope the hon. member will insist on the amendment. It is wrong that any child under 14 should be called upon to earn part of its sustenance.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I earned mine long before I was that age.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The future of these children is being sacrificed for the temporary necessities of the parents. If the parents cannot keep these children, it is incumbent on the State to assist, so that the children may enjoy their proper share of schooling and of child life.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have the fullest sympathy with the amendment, but the fact that such a limited number of permits have been granted is evidence that great care has been exercised by the inspector. I would be in agreement with the leader of the House regarding the need for providing some other means to assist the people who require the