

drafted, but after a heavy sitting such as we have had the Minister might now agree to report progress.

The MINISTER for Education: You will have another opportunity.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER for EDUCATION: The amendment of which I have given notice makes no alteration except to render clear a matter that otherwise might be rather confused. In the expression "so engaged at home," in paragraph (f), the word "so" is intended to mean "engaged in any one of the occupations previously referred to." After the occupations referred to, there are paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e); and it might be contended that the word "so" referred to one of those paragraphs. I therefore move an amendment—

That the word "so" in line 3 of paragraph (f) be struck out and "in any trade, operation, or process mentioned in paragraphs 1 to 8 inclusive of this definition" be inserted after the word "home."

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (f) the word "two" after the word "exceed" be struck out, and "four" be inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The hon. member has given no indication why the word "two" should be struck out, which seems a singular procedure on his part.

Hon. H. STEWART: Possibly the hon. member was not here earlier in the evening, when a discussion relative to this matter took place. If the word "two" is struck out, I shall move that the word "four" be inserted in lieu; which would mean that more than four people working in private circumstances would be required for the purpose of constituting a factory under this Bill.

The MINISTER for EDUCATION: At the present time six persons would constitute a factory. Where the privilege is extended to a family, six do not constitute a factory. I do not see anything inconsistent in now increasing the number in the case of a family. Personally I do not intend to oppose this amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The hour is very late, and I have further amendments to move in connection with this clause. Will the Minister move to report progress?

The MINISTER for EDUCATION: We have made very little progress.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: But we have been sitting a long time, and we are all very tired.

The MINISTER for EDUCATION: So long as hon. members understand that we must sit late for the remainder of the session, I do not object to adjourning now.

Progress reported.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Hardsman's Lake Drainage.
- 2, Mining Act Amendment.
- 3, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—BUILDING SOCIETIES.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendments.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ENDOWMENT LANDS.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that it had disagreed to the Council's amendment, and giving reasons.

House adjourned at 10-58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 2nd December, 1920.

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

QUESTION—WHEAT, INFERIOR GRAIN AND COST OF BOARD.

Mr. JOHNSTON (for Mr. Griffiths) asked the Premier: 1, What was the total dockage for inferior wheat for the 1919-20 wheat season for wheat handled by the Westralian Farmers? 2, What is the approximate cost of the wheat board organisation, excluding labour at depots and ports?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The total amount docked by the Wheat Scheme for inferiority is £10,197. 2, £7,876, or 1/5th of 1d. per bushel.

QUESTION—RAVENSTHORPE SMELTER.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When does the lease of the Ravensthorpe smelter expire? 2, Does the Mines Depart-

ment intend to secure a further lease? 3, What was the cost per ton incurred on treatment, freight, realisation, and handling charges per ton for the years 1914 to 1920, inclusive? 4, What was the total amount charged to clients per ton for treatment over the years 1914 to 1920, inclusive? 5, What was the loss sustained by the department for the years 1914 to 1920, inclusive? 6, Does the amount charged to clients include any charges other than the actual cost for treatment, freight, handling, and realisation?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The lease expired on the 30th ultimo. 2, Possession of the works is retained at present and is terminable by three months' notice on either side. It is possible that at the conclusion of the present campaign it will be terminated. 3, 4, 5, and 6, I am unable to answer any of these questions as they all have a bearing on an action now pending in the Supreme Court, in which the Mines Department is the defendant, the hearing of which is expected to take place shortly.

QUESTION—STATE LOTTERY.

Mr. TROY asked the Premier: 1, In view of the financial necessities of Government hospitals and charities generally, have the Government considered the advisability of holding a State lottery to augment the funds of these institutions? 2, If so, what decision has been arrived at?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—MINING BOARDS.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Does he intend to inaugurate a system of mining boards in mining districts, with a view to assisting and encouraging the development of mining? 2, If so, when is the principle to be put into operation?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes, in an advisory capacity pending amending legislation. 2, At the earliest possible moment.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Hardwick, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Angelo (Gascayne) on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Mr. Willcock (for Mr. Lambert), leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Rocke (South Fremantle) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—BAYSWATER DRAINAGE WORKS.

Introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

BILL—JUSTICES ACT AMENDMENT.

First Reading.

Introduced by the Attorney General, and read a first time

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short amendment of the Justices Act. Under the present Act offences cannot be tried before one justice unless that justice is the police magistrate or the resident magistrate, or unless there is no other justice within ten miles. This has been found to work a hardship upon persons committed for minor offences. For instance, a man charged with drunkenness is locked up, perhaps in a cell, and as there is only one justice available to hear the complaint, the man is unduly detained, especially if it occur in a country district. I admit the present Act is defective in this respect. It is impossible to give a list of offences which could be tried before one justice in this way. It is impossible to draw the line, but the difficulty can be got over by providing that one justice may hear the offence where all parties consent. The difficulty is got over by adding a proviso to Section 29 of the Justices Act, providing that with the consent of all parties concerned any such complaint may be heard by and before one justice. It is a simple method of getting over a very real difficulty. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. T. Walker, debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING

- 1, Herdsman's Lake Drainage.
- 2, Mining Act Amendment.
- 3, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—CORONERS.

Council's requested amendments.

Schedule of four amendments requested by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 9, paragraph (a).—Strike out all the words after "accident," and insert the following sub-paragraphs:—(1) in or about a mine to which the Mines Regulation Act, 1906, or the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1902, applies; or (2) in or about a factory to which the Factories Act, 1904, and its amendments apply; or

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—That the amendment be made.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 2, Clause 13, Subclause (1).—After the word "writing," in line two, insert "or cause to be put in writing."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—
That the amendment be made.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment made.

No. 3, Clause 39.—Add the following sub-clause, to stand as (3):—"When the Commissioner of Public Health certifies in writing that it is necessary in the interests of public health that a post-mortem examination should be held on the dead body of any person, a coroner may, without holding an inquest, direct any medical practitioner to make a post-mortem examination, and to report thereon to the Commissioner of Public Health, and it shall be lawful for, and the duty of, such medical practitioner to make a post-mortem examination and to report thereon accordingly."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—
That the amendment be made.

The only objection to this amendment may be on the score of sentiment. It was introduced no doubt with a view to protecting the public health.

Hon. T. Walker: In what way?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It might be discovered from what cause a person had died.

Hon. T. Walker: Might it not lead to body snatching?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not clear as to the object of the amendment. It gives the Commissioner power to order a post-mortem examination on any body. It may be argued that this would be done in the interests of medical science, and with the object of widening the knowledge of medical men in regard to diseases and complaints. The power, however, is a wide one. We do not know that it would be exercised with discretion. The bodies of persons who die in public institutions will be at the disposal of the Commissioner for Public Health.

The Attorney General: It does not go as far as that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Very few coroners would decline to comply with the request made by the Commissioner to hold a post mortem inquiry. I do not suggest that the Commissioner would be actuated by mere curiosity in ordering such an inquiry, but we are giving him power to do as he likes with the body of any person. We are not justified in conceding such a great power to any officer. If this power were frequently exercised it would undoubtedly create a great deal of resentment on the part of the relatives of the deceased.

Hon. T. Walker: It will help a doctor to obtain knowledge.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We ought not to place this power in the hands of the Com-

missioner simply to enable doctors to widen their knowledge of the diseases of the body.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I hope the Attorney General will not force through this amendment. A certain doctor did not feel sure as to his diagnosis in a particular instance and refused to issue a certificate of death until a post mortem examination had been made, in order to ascertain whether he was correct or not.

Mr. Willecock: Without there being any suspicion of foul play?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There was none. He thought it was a case of meningitis. He applied to the coroner on the point and was told he had no power. He then went to the Commissioner, and eventually it turned out that the doctor was right. There was another dispute with regard to a mail boat which arrived here and was supposed to have on board cases of typhus. The doctors who examined the cases here declared the disease to be typhus, but the principal medical officer of the Commonwealth, who was in Melbourne at the time, declared that it was not typhus and that the ship should not have been quarantined. We also had the trouble over the influenza quarantine regulations. Our Health Department gave in to the Commonwealth, with the result that many lives were lost in Western Australia. If a patient died in quarantine here the doctors would be able, with this compulsory power, to hold a post mortem examination and find out if they were right or wrong.

Hon. P. Collier: It would be poor compensation for the person concerned to clear up a dispute between two doctors.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The medical profession has shown on occasions a lack of certainty regarding the nature of diseases from which people have died. This has a tendency to weaken the faith of the people in the work of doctors and to make them realise that there is a possibility of the medical men being wrong.

The Attorney General: Don't you think people have that doubt now?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is mainly by faith that people have confidence in doctors, and if they gain the impression that doctors are liable to make mistakes, the position will be adversely affected. To-day any relative has the right to refuse to have a post mortem examination held, and that provision should be allowed to remain as it is. It is not right, in the face of opposition from relatives of a deceased person, to allow a compulsory post mortem examination merely at the whim of a doctor. I hope the Minister will not press this amendment.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I can quite understand the objection to the amendment on sentimental grounds, but I do not think the power would be exercised unreasonably. It is no discredit to doctors to say that their diagnoses are not always correct. Suppose a man had actually died

from some infectious disease such as cholera or plague, and the death certificate had set out that he had died from appendicitis. The contacts in such a case would be free to go about among the general public and might prove a serious menace. In such a case, should there be any doubt, it would be in the interests of the general public that a post mortem examination should be held. It was only such a position that influenced me in accepting the amendment. There is a danger, of course, in the amendment, but I have confidence in the Commissioner of Public Health and believe that he would not exercise the power detrimentally to the individual. If he did so, his Minister would be responsible to Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Who is going to prove that?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is very little fear of the power being wrongly exercised. It is in order to secure the living from the possible consequences of a disease that the power is sought.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have not that unlimited faith in the saving discretion of the Minister for Public Health and of doctors generally who are thirsting for knowledge, that the Attorney General has. Does the Attorney General realise that this amendment places at the disposal of almost every doctor the body of every deceased citizen?

The Attorney General: They can have mine if they want it.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have no doubt of that, but sentiment is a matter we must respect. No one would like to see the body of his dear one handed over to the medical fraternity merely for experimental purposes. Yet that is the sole purpose of this amendment. If a doctor has any doubt whatever as to the cause of a person's death, all he has to do is to go to the Commissioner of Public Health and put up some tale and the post mortem will be ordered. There are hundreds of cases where doctors are not sure what caused death and there can always be a general certificate of death from natural causes. In all such instances there would be no question of foul play or wrongful treatment as the cause of death. Doctors have ample power now of securing bodies for experimental purposes. Not only are there actual post mortem examinations, but there is also vivisection.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This is really an amendment of the Health Act, not of a Coroners Bill.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is another good point. Everyone of us is liable to be body-snatched for the instruction of the medical fraternity, and this is unnecessary seeing that there are plenty of bodies taken from our gaols and hospitals that are unclaimed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is nothing in this Bill dealing with the Commissioner of Public Health.

Hon. P. Collier: I think the amendment is out of order.

Hon. T. WALKER: That point could well be tested. Post mortem examinations are held to discover the cause of death in cases of foul play, accidents, or other agencies, rather than of natural causes. That is the power with which we clothe our coroners. Now we are going beyond that in a desire to clothe with extraordinary powers the Minister for Public Health.

Hon. P. Collier: The amendment says that it is "in the interests of public health." That is not the object of the Bill.

Hon. T. WALKER: If we desire to take action in that direction, let us amend the Health Act.

Mr. Money: The coroner has to concur and he has the power to order a post mortem examination without the Commissioner of Public Health.

Hon. T. WALKER: The power conferred on the coroner is for exercise in the interests of justice. Under the clause we might be at the mercy of ignorant doctors.

Hon. P. Collier: And there are ignorant doctors.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is undoubtedly true. We must consider the question of sentiment, for one does not like to contemplate desecration around the coffin in such sad moments. There should be no interference with that aspect in the manner which is indicated in the amendment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are trying to sneak it in here.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I ask for a ruling as to whether the amendment is in order. The Bill is cited as a Coroners Bill and it has mainly to do with the administration of justice. This amendment sets out the purpose for which it is to be inserted when it refers to the "interests of public health." We are not justified in inserting something in a Coroners Bill which relates to the interests of public health. If it is desirable that we should legislate "in the interests of public health" the proper place to insert amendments is in the Health Act and not in the Bill dealing with coroners. I submit that this amendment is foreign to the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall rule the amendment out of order on the ground raised by the leader of the Opposition.

No. 4. New clause.—Insert the following clause, to stand as No. 27: *Inquests on deaths from accidents in factories, etc.*—27. With respect to every inquest on the body of any person whose death may have been caused by an accident in or about a factory or a "building" within the meaning of that term in the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904, the following provisions shall apply: (1) If an inspector is not present the coroner shall adjourn the inquest, and send to an inspector a notice in writing of the time and place of holding the adjourned inquest. (2) The coroner, before the adjournment, may take evidence to identify the body, and may order the interment thereof. (3) An inspector, or a representative of the Industrial Union of

Workers of which the deceased was a member, may examine witnesses and elicit evidence relative to the cause of death, and to the issue whether the accident was attributable to negligence or any omission to comply with the provisions of the Factories Act, 1904, or the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904. (4) The coroner may view the scene of the accident, and, when the inquest is held by a coroner with a jury, if a majority of the jury so desire, the coroner shall arrange for the jury to view the scene of the accident, and the occupier of the factory or building, as the case may be, shall afford the coroner and the jury (if any) the facilities that an occupier or owner is required by the Factories Act, 1904, and the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904, to afford to an inspector. Any occupier of a factory or of a building as aforesaid who fails to comply with the provisions of this section shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty not exceeding £50. (5) In this section "inspector" means an inspector of factories or an inspector of machinery appointed under the said Acts respectively; and "occupier" includes any agent, manager, or other person acting or apparently acting in the management or control of a factory or building as aforesaid.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The object of the new clause is to regulate procedure at inquests. The clause is largely a machinery one and fully explains itself. 1 move—

That the amendment be made.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Subclause 3 provides that an inspector or a representative of the workers may examine witnesses. It would be better if the sentence were made to read, "an inspector and a representative." The clause does not appear to be clearly expressed. It implies, too, that if an inspector is not there the representative of the union may be there.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The clause means that either may examine witnesses at the inquest.

Question put and passed; The Council's amendment made.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—BUILDING SOCIETIES.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 3, Definition of "Leasehold."—Add the following words: "held for a term of not less than twenty-one years or if for a lesser term with the right to an extension for not less than twenty-one years or to acquire the fee simple."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No doubt it was considered in another place that the word "leasehold" was rather loose when there was a question of advancing money on the security of property. 1 move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 19, Subclause (3).—After the word "that," in line four, insert the words "for a period of eight years from the commencement of this Act."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Under the clause money cannot be advanced on property already mortgaged; it is not possible to secure building societies money on a second mortgage only, but it is possible to do so by way of collateral security. The subclause with the amendment added will read, "Provided also that for a period of eight years from the commencement of this Act, this section shall not apply to any society which is at the commencement of the Act authorised by its rules to make advances on second mortgage, etc." The object of the amendment is to protect certain societies for a period of eight years, during which time they can continue to carry on and work out existing securities. After that period it will not be possible to make advances on second mortgages. 1 move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. BROWN: The amendment was introduced in another place because of the fact that one society here has been advancing money on second mortgages. The competition with other building societies was such that those societies were instrumental in having the Bill drafted. So far as I know there was no public demand for the Bill. The society in question were able under their rules to give to every shareholder a ballot in every eight years. The other societies take ballots at intervals of 17 to 20 years. The result was that during the period of the war the particular society was able to carry on business to the extent of providing a substantial number of houses. If the amendment is agreed to it will mean that, after the eight years allowed for the existing shareholders to get their ballots, the society will be in a similar position to other building societies. Once having been given the right under the old Act, it is only fair that the society should be permitted to continue. The society have set themselves a task and are carrying it out, and there is no likelihood of any default. 1 oppose the Council's amendment.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We cannot consider the interests of an individual society. The argument of the member for Subiaco illustrates the danger of insecure investments. We are told that the society which came here shortly before the war, and which apparently was unable to compete with the existing societies who were conducting their

financial operations on stricter lines, became a competitor by conducting their operations on lines which were not regarded as providing the best form of security for those people who invest their savings, generally small sums, in building societies. His statement proves the soundness of limiting the operations of the society who desire to carry on in a manner not recognised by other societies. If we are going to place building societies in such a position that people may safely invest in them, why should we allow a society who do not come within that category to continue indefinitely in future? We propose to give them eight years in order not to prejudice them, but the hon. member is not satisfied. He wants a particular society of recent date placed in a privileged position. The hon. member said there was no demand for the Bill. I explained when moving the second reading that, although there were not many building societies in the State, there was good ground for believing that the number would increase, and that if we wished to put the law on a sound footing, now was the time to do it. We shall make a great mistake if we do not accept the amendment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Attorney General is taking a line of action entirely opposed to the previous decision of the House. He is now advocating a limitation of eight years where previously there was no limitation. When the Attorney General introduced the Bill he must have been of opinion that the clause would be safe. In most legislation we endeavour to protect the interests of those who are in business when the legislation is passed, and the Attorney General acted consistently with that principle when he provided that these societies should be permitted to carry on this line of business.

The Attorney General: I was absent for a fortnight, and the clause was amended in my absence.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Now it is proposed that these societies shall have no further protection, but must wind up this particular business in eight years. I hope that the amendment will not be accepted.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	13
Majority for ..			5

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Sir H. B. Lefroy
Mr. Draper	Mr. Maley
Mr. Duff	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. George	Mr. Money
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Vervard
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Hardwicke

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Brown	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Troy
Mr. Collier	Mr. Walker
Mr. Davies	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Holman	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Jones	(Teller.)

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3. Subclause (3).—After the word "may" in line seven, insert the words "during such period":

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This is a consequential amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—INNKEEPERS.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ENDOWMENT LANDS.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Legislative Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

Amendment—Add the following new clause, to stand as No. 41:—"Roads and footpaths to public buildings. If any public building is erected on land acquired by the Crown within the boundaries of the said lands, it shall be the duty of the council to provide, make, maintain, and keep in repair such roads and footpaths as may be necessary to give proper access to such building":

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is the most curious amendment I have ever known to come from a House of review. Under the Municipal Corporations Act it devolves on a local authority to make and maintain all roads and all footpaths within its boundaries, and to keep them in proper repair. Therefore, the Legislative Council's amendment is ridiculous. The amendment says that "it shall be the duty of the council." But it is their duty now. If they fail to do it now, the insertion of these words does not mean that they will do it. I expected the Attorney General to move that the amendment be not agreed to. Probably the state of the road in front of Parliament House has brought about the addition of this new clause to the Bill. I intend to move amendments which

will make the new clause read as follows:—
 "If any public building is erected on land acquired by the Crown within the boundaries of the said lands, the council shall, within six months of receipt of notice from the Minister for Works, make, maintain, and keep in repair, such roads and footpaths as may be necessary to give proper access to such building, failing which the Minister is hereby authorised to carry out the work at the expense of the council." It is a common practice of municipalities to neglect to make proper roads to public buildings, the reason given being that no rates are derived from public buildings. That practice obtains throughout the State. But the Perth City Council should ask themselves whether, if Parliament House and other Government buildings were in Fremantle, Perth would be what it is to-day? No. Fremantle would be the capital then. It is the presence of the public buildings and Government offices that maintains Perth and causes it to expand, by reason of the salaries which are paid to public servants working in those buildings, and which are spent in the city. Perth has reaped immense advantages from the public buildings within its boundaries. And yet it is necessary for a branch of the Legislature to draw the attention of the Perth City Council, in an Act of Parliament, to their failure to maintain roads in front of public buildings. Let us not merely remind the Perth City Council of their duty, but let us compel them to do their duty. I move an amendment on the new clause—

That the words "it shall be the duty of," and also the word "to," in line 3, be struck out, and that after "council" there be inserted "shall within six months of receipt of notice from the Minister for Works," and that the following words be added to the new clause: "failing which the Minister is hereby authorised to carry out the work at the expense of the council."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I must oppose the amendment on the new clause. It is an amendment obviously aimed at the municipality of Perth, and at that municipality only.

Hon. T. Walker: No, it is general.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not general in this particular Bill, which deals only with the endowment lands of the city of Perth. Someone has evidently imagined that huge Government buildings will be erected on those lands, though probably there will not be any Government buildings there beyond a post and telegraph office, a school, and a police station. The amendment is not necessary. Why single out the Perth City Council for special treatment in this manner?

Hon. P. Collier: Because they are the chief offenders.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for North-East Fremantle referred to the advantages which Perth enjoys as compared with other municipalities. A capital city, while having the advantage of a higher value of rateable property, has also its ob-

ligations. There is less assistance given to Perth to meet those obligations than to any other town in the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Perth gets the same as the others—nothing at all.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: But I am going back a few years.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A few years ago Perth got more than any of the others.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: At all events, I object to the hon. member's amendment.

Hon. T. Walker: It is an amendment on an amendment which you have approved of.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Council's amendment certainly can do no harm to the city council. If the council chooses to insert an amendment which is really a repetition of a provision already in the Act, I see no harm in agreeing to it. I intend to oppose the amendment moved by the hon. member.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Attorney-General asks us to agree to an amendment from another place dictating duties to the city council. How absurd, then, for the Attorney-General to object to a further amendment which makes those instructions to the city council obligatory. He has no objection to the unnecessary re-enactment of a law which everybody knows to be the law. He says it will do no harm. But is it not rather stupid? The only way in which to make it of value is by the hon. member's amendment. We can then bring the whip to bear on the city council.

The Attorney-General: You have no right to do so. Why make one law for one municipality and a second for another?

Hon. T. WALKER: The municipality are no more than the delegated authority of the Government.

The Minister for Works: I wish they would recognise that.

Hon. T. WALKER: The object of the hon. member's amendment is to remind them that they are but a delegated authority. It is absurd to have a delegated body refusing to do the work for which they were appointed. The city council say to their creators, "We will not maintain your roads, because your property is not subject to us."

The Minister for Works: Is this the right place for such an amendment?

Hon. T. WALKER: I will admit it is not. But neither is it the right place for the amendment which the Attorney-General has asked us to approve of.

The Attorney-General: And which, you will admit, does no harm.

Hon. T. WALKER: An amendment must always do harm when it is supererogatory; it must always do harm when it is palpably stupid and foolish; it must always do harm when it shows that we have a silly Committee led by a silly Attorney General.

The Attorney General: If the hon. member's opinion were of any value, I should know how to answer him.

Hon. T. WALKER: Now, do not feel hurt or wounded; I am only illustrating the position. The Attorney-General says the Council's amendment will do no harm. Neither would it do harm to add to the clause the Lord's Prayer, or the "Death of Eugene Aram." The only test of admission is, will it do any harm? I hope the Committee will reject both amendments.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment might be all right in some other Bill, but this is not the place for it. The development of the endowment lands is an experiment in the right direction. It is proposed to do at the right time what I have seen done in the Old Country when it was almost too late, and when, consequently, it could only be carried out at enormous expense. We ought to recognise the efforts of a public body engaged on a work of this sort, and we could best show our appreciation of those efforts by avoiding all temptation to introduce controversial subjects. Let us support the object of the Bill and do nothing at all which might create bitterness.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am only trying to introduce some reason into the Council's amendment. It is the duty of the city council to make and maintain roads past public buildings. I am not inserting anything fresh. I am merely following the tactics of the Attorney-General, who is trying to placate the Council by agreeing to everything they send down here. If the Attorney-General had moved that the Council's amendment be disagreed with, I would have supported him. The amendment is useless as it stands.

Hon. T. Walker: Fancy putting in a provision merely to remind!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We all know that it is the duty of the city council to provide roads.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Knowing that it is the duty of the council to provide proper road ways to public buildings I should think they would always endeavour to carry that duty into effect. I hope that if my amendment is not carried, the other amendment will be negatived as well.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I trust the hon. member will not press his amendment. This is not the proper place for such an amendment, which discriminates against one municipality and not others. This clause merely makes a statutory declaration of what is already the duty of the municipality, namely to make streets, roads and footpaths within its boundaries. No one has yet shown that the clause will do any harm.

Mr. PILKINGTON: It would be a disastrous thing that Parliament should put into a Bill words which are supposed to

have no meaning whatever. If the matter came before the court, the court would endeavour to give some meaning to it, and the intention of Parliament would certainly be defeated if we put in words which would have no effect. But it appears to me that the amendment made by the Council has a clear effect. It is the duty of the city council to make and repair all roads throughout the municipality, but these words impose a specific duty upon the municipality to do this. If the amendment means anything, it means that this is to be their first duty. Whatever they do, they must make these roads. If the council neglect to do this, though they may have funds available for the purpose, they will be committing a breach of the Act. The result would be that the council would be under an obligation to spend money when it would perhaps be unwise to do so. If a road or a footpath is necessary to give access to a public building the council may be placed in an awkward position and be involved in heavy expenditure. True, without the amendment of the member for North-East Fremantle there is no means of compelling that duty to be performed. I must vigorously protest against placing a public body like the Perth City Council in the position in which they must either perform a duty which involves expenditure that ought not to be incurred, or refuse to perform a statutory duty relying on the fact that no penalty can be imposed. The Council's amendment is an undesirable one, and was probably agreed to without a full recognition of its meaning. Neither that amendment nor the amendment of the hon. member should be passed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment on the Council's amendment by leave withdrawn.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Attorney General, the member for Perth and the member for North-East Fremantle drew up reasons for not agreeing to the amendment made by the Legislative Council.

Reasons adopted and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—NAVIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Broun—Beverley) [7.50] in moving the second reading said: This is a small but necessary Bill. The object of the measure is to amend Section 3 of the Navigation Act, so as to make it comply with the Federal Navigation Act enabling courts of

inquiry to be held to deal with mercantile ships controlled by the Government. At the present time Section 3 of the Navigation Act exempts any ship owned by a Government. Recently the "Penguin" was wrecked and the "Bambra" was stranded on a sandbank off Fremantle. Owing to the provision in the Navigation Act a court of marine inquiry could not be held to consider the circumstances relating to those two accidents. All that could be done was to hold preliminary inquiries. In such cases it is possible that the findings of the Chief Harbour Master may not be satisfactory to the captain or officers of the ships. Under the existing legislation, however, they would have no right of appeal. In these circumstances it is necessary for the Act to be amended so that a court of marine inquiry may be held and the accident thoroughly investigated. The wording of the amendment is exactly the same as appears in the Federal Navigation Act, and exemption will only apply to ships belonging to the King's Navy or to the navy of the Commonwealth or any other British possession, or the navy of any foreign Government. With this amendment, all mercantile ships owned by a Government will come within the scope of the Navigation Act.

Hon. P. Collier: It brings the ships under all the provisions of the Act, as well as under that regarding marine inquiry.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, that is the position. The ships of the navies are exempt from all provisions. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin debate adjourned.

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from 16th November; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: A new clause has been moved to read as follows:—

No employee of the Claremont Asylum shall be prejudiced in respect of privileges, promotion, or continuity of service by reason only of the cessation of work during the isolation period of the influenza epidemic of 1919.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I intend to oppose this clause, because it is at variance with the objects of the Bill. The clause is practically on all fours with two similar proposals which were rejected by the Committee. The proposed new clause deals with the reinstatement of the men who were not allowed into the institution on the occasion of the influenza epidemic in 1919. This question has caused a considerable amount

of debate, and the point was made that the recommendations of the select committee regarding the reinstatement of these men as opportunity offered, should be adhered to. Several members have spoken to me regarding the position of these men, and I am willing to meet the wishes of the Committee. A board will be appointed as soon as the Bill passes, and that body will have the necessary power to deal with cases of this kind. I am prepared to ask the board, as soon as it is appointed, to take into consideration the recommendation of the select committee and make inquiries into each individual case and deal with them on their merits. If they consider that these men have been wrongly dealt with, the men will be reinstated as opportunity offers. I hope the Committee will agree to that course being adopted, and I suggest that the Committee leave this matter to the board to be dealt with.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister has offered to concede that which members voted against last time we considered this measure. The Minister has gone so far as to say that he will ask the board which will be appointed if the Bill becomes law—there is a possibility that it will not be passed, as another place may not have time to deal with it—to hold another inquiry into the cases of these men whom the select committee recommended should be reinstated as vacancies occurred. There was no desire on the part of the select committee to have any man discharged in order that the men under consideration should be re-engaged. During the last fortnight some of the staff at the institution have been approached regarding this matter. They were told definitely that the select committee had been biased and that no notice would be taken of them. One officer said he did not "care a damn" what the committee reported, that he would not take any notice of the report, and that not one of these men would be reinstated. The select committee dealt with the whole matter in an unbiassed fashion. There was no bias on the part of any one member regarding any of the officers of the institution. Apart from the member for Fremantle, who launched the motion in this Chamber, I do not think any one of the members of the select committee knew anything about what took place in the institution before the investigation was proceeded with. It was agreed by the select committee that the doctor had acted properly in isolating the hospital, but it was also agreed that the isolation should have been strictly observed; it should not have been for some only. It should have been for all. The looseness of the isolation was such that it caused a revolt. The Minister has been wrongly informed in regard to the men having an opportunity to go back. These particular men did not leave the institution until they had finished their shift. So far as I can gather, some hon. members are of the opinion that these men went out

of the institution and left the patients unattended. Nothing of the kind happened; the patients were being properly looked after. The men who went out had finished their shift, and when they reported for duty next morning they were refused work. About 15 or 16 returned soldiers lost their positions at this institution. One man had 13 years service to his credit, and he was away for two years at the front and returned badly wounded. That man to-day is still suffering from shock and Dr. Anderson actually accused him of being insane. That man's offence consisted of taking the chair at the very meeting which was addressed by Dr. Anderson. An inquiry was asked for by him, but it has been denied him. Is that the way we treat those who went to fight for us and have returned with their health ruined? Another man had his arm injured. For two years he was employed at Whithy, and gave every satisfaction. He underwent an operation and became a stronger man. He was certified by a medical officer of the Defence Department as being fit for duty, but the asylum medical officer declared that he was not fit for duty, and that man is still out. That kind of treatment is unfair. The Minister should take some notice of the recommendations of the select committee. The board provided for in the Bill may never be appointed.

The Colonial Secretary: There is nothing more certain.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Nothing is certain. We did not think that the Factories and Shops Bill was going to receive the treatment it is undergoing at the hands of the Legislative Council. Many other Bills may be thrown out because we are sending them along so late in the session. Hon. members here agree that the recommendation made by the select committee in regard to the reinstatement of the men as vacancies occur should be carried into effect. These men have been sufficiently punished by having been out for 12 months. This has to be borne in mind also, that when a man spends years in that institution he becomes unfit to take up any other kind of outside work. I cannot see why the Inspector General should display any ill feeling over this matter now. It seems that that ill feeling is not directed against the men so much as it is directed against the select committee. I cannot make out why that should be so because the select committee did not display any animus towards the medical officers of the institution. The returned soldiers of Claremont and Cottesloe are much upset at the treatment to which their comrades have been subjected. They contend that these men have been sufficiently punished and should now be reinstated. The Inspector General should get it out of his head that there was any bias on the part of the select committee.

The Colonial Secretary: Did the Inspector General say that the select committee were biased?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I never heard him say so, but an article published in the "Sunday Times" recently was responsible for the statement. I have also been told in all good faith within the precincts of this building, by soldiers who approached the officer, that he declared the select committee were biased. I trust the Minister will investigate the matter himself and see that these men get a fair show.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not wish to traverse the ground already covered except to say that I still hold that these men have been harshly dealt with. I cannot understand the obstinacy, because it is nothing else, which actuates the Inspector General in his attitude towards these men. Even if the returned soldiers amongst them had committed a serious offence against the military regulations they would have expiated the offence before this. Might I suggest a way out. There is no guarantee that this Bill will pass another place this session. In that event the promise of the Minister would be of no avail, because there would be in existence no board to whom the matter could be referred. At present there is sitting a board comprised of the police magistrate, Mr. Canning, as chairman, a representative of the employees and a representative of the Government to deal with wages and conditions of employment of the attendants, and it would be reasonable to refer this question to that tribunal for decision. If the Minister has no objection to remitting the matter to the board proposed under this measure, there can be no objection to the existing tribunal dealing with the matter. If the Government have sufficient confidence to remit to that tribunal questions of wages, hours, and other general conditions of employment, they should have sufficient confidence to let them decide the matter of the reinstatement of these men. If this were done there would be no need to put the clause in the Bill.

The Colonial Secretary: I have no doubt that this Bill will pass another place this session, and I would prefer that the matter of the reinstatement of these men be dealt with by the board to be appointed under the measure, because they would be charged with the responsibility for the institution. Seeing, however, that the measure may not pass another place this session, I have no objection to the matter being referred to the tribunal now sitting. If it can be shown that the men have been unfairly treated, I have no objection to any inquiry being held.

Hon. P. COLLIER: After the assurance of the Minister that the matter will be dealt with by the tribunal now sitting, I ask leave to withdraw the proposed new clause.

New clause by leave withdrawn.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—Short title:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Later on I propose to move an amendment, and I am not sure whether it will conflict with the title.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member may move to amend the title after the clauses have been dealt with.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—Extension of Acts to wheat harvested in 1920-21:

Mr. HARRISON: I have been assured by the Premier and by the Minister for Agriculture that an election is to take place to appoint a representative of the growers on the Australian Wheat Board. The growers have expressed the view that they should have a vote for this appointment. I would like an assurance that an election by the growers will be held to make this appointment.

The PREMIER: I have told the hon. member that the election is to be held and that the matter is already in hand. The Minister controlling the wheat scheme and the Attorney General have the matter in hand.

Mr. HARRISON: That being the case, I do not now intend to move the proposed new clause which appears on the Notice Paper, and which provides for the election of a member by the wheatgrowers of this State.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am glad to have the information from the Premier for the first time that an election is in progress for the appointment of a representative of the wheat growers on the Australian Wheat Board. This is in keeping with my complaint of last evening that many of the negotiations connected with the agreement and with the fixing of the price of wheat for local consumption have been done with an amount of secrecy—

The Premier: That is not so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The leader of the Country party has just been informed that the Government have decided to hold an election for the appointment of a representative of the wheat growers on the board. This must have been decided some time ago.

Mr. Harrison: It was recommendation by the Royal Commission.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not for a representative on the Australian Wheat Board.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am surprised that no publicity has been given to the intentions of the Government. The Premier has said that the matter is in hand. How far has it progressed?

The Premier: You do not object to that method of appointment?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I may do so later on. At the moment I am objecting to the fact that publicity has not been given to the intentions of the Government in this direction. I could understand it if on one or two points the Government failed to inform the Press

and the people as to what was being done. But I find that everything which is done, is done unknown to the public. Hitherto the Government have made the appointment of the wheat growers' representative on the board. Is this proposed change due to the dispute which occurred earlier in the year?

The Premier: The change has been adopted all over Australia.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Who is taking the ballot?

The Premier: The Chief Electoral Officer.

Hon. P. COLLIER: A considerable amount of work is involved. I suppose the balloting will have to be done by post?

The Premier: Yes. There are about 6,000 votes to be cast.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Is the cost of the ballot—

The Premier: The cost of the ballot is to be charged to the Wheat Scheme.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am entitled to know whether the salary and expenses of the Chief Electoral Officer in connection with this work will be charged against the Wheat Scheme.

The Premier: Yes, including a proportion of the rent of his office.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I welcome the new method, since it will prevent the possibility of a recurrence of such an unseemly quarrel as was witnessed a few months ago, when Mr. Baxter and Mr. McGibbon slangwanged each other in the presence of an interested audience of farmers down from the country.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I believe this is not the first time a representative has been elected. Mr. Giles, I understand, was previously elected. But at that time only a wheat grower could be elected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Anybody can be elected under this clause.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why the alteration?

The Premier: I do not see why we should bother about it if the wheat growers want a man.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Why not let the whole of the public vote for the representative? A resolution was carried asking for the appointment of a certain representative at a time when a certain dispute arose. The Government refused to appoint the man in question. Now, to get over a difficulty they find themselves in, the Government are abolishing the qualification. In order to afford an opportunity of putting on the wheat board a certain person, the qualification that the representative must be a wheat grower is being abolished. Why have the Government altered their attitude?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Owing to pressure.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Mr. Baxter gave as an excuse for Mr McGibbon's removal that that gentleman has ceased to be a wheat grower.

The Premier: The wheat growers can do as they like.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is the trouble, that the wheat growers have been too long allowed to do as they liked.

The PREMIER: If the Government had appointed a representative, they certainly would have appointed a wheat grower; but since it has been agreed, and as I think rightly agreed, that the growers who have wheat in the pool shall have the right to elect their representative, they can make their own choice so far as the Government are concerned. I do not know that the work of the pool is being done any better now than it was before the growers' representatives were appointed. I do not see why the Government should bother whether the wheat growers' representative is himself a wheat grower or not. The responsibility is that of the farmers, and they will be permitted to elect whatever man they consider best suited to represent them. He will not have any authority to commit the Government in any way.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But he will have power to make important recommendations.

The PREMIER: Still, he will not have any opportunity of committing the Government at all. The wheat belongs to the men who are electing the representative. It does not belong to the Government at all, except in so far as the Government have advanced against it. There is no risk in the advances being made. Those advances are being managed by a local board. The Government, of course, see that the interests of the people of the country are conserved, and that any advances made are safeguarded. The pool in this State is well managed. According to the leader of the Opposition, there has been secrecy in the matter. As a fact, there has been no secrecy whatever. A meeting of wheat growers was held in Perth, and the meeting decided that the farmer wanted 9s. per bushel, plus interest and plus some other charges. Several gentlemen who were at that meeting saw me later, and asked me what the Government intended to do. I replied that we intended to do what the Eastern States Governments did, and no more. I repeat, there was no secrecy about the matter; the fact that the farmers intended to ask for that price was published. Nominations for the position of wheat growers' representatives on the board are now being called.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I agree that the farmers have a major interest in the matter, but I do not agree that it concerns the farmers alone. If the wheat belongs exclusively to the farmers and if they ought to have a free hand to do what they like with it, why do the Governments, State and Federal, step in and take out of the hands of those who own the wheat the fixing of the price of that wheat? By that very act the Government have declared that they have a dominating influence in the wheat. It is clear that all the people of the State have an indirect interest in the wheat, and I believe it could be equitably established that the whole of the people of the State should have a vote in the election of a representative on the board.

Mr. Johnston: To elect the growers' representative?

Hon. P. COLLIER: They have no representative of their own.

Mr. Thomson: The Minister represents them.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He does not.

Mr. Thomson: Then he should.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is exactly right, he should; but he does not. What kind of representation can the people have when this Minister, who is supposed to represent them, is himself a wheat-grower with wheat in the pool? Immediately he takes his place on that board there arises a conflict of interests, and he is faced with the question whether he is to protect the public by seeing that not more than a reasonable price is charged, or whether he shall yield to natural instincts and have regard to his own personal interests. I do not say that for the sake of a few extra pounds which would come his way as the result of an increase of a shilling per bushel the Minister would vote for that increase; but he has a double interest, he has also his political interests to consider.

Mr. Nairn: He might consider his interests as a consumer also.

Hon. P. COLLIER: One halfpenny per loaf to him as a consumer would but ill balance an extra shilling per bushel to him as a grower. But, imagine the position of the Minister, representing a district comprised almost entirely of wheat-growers, if he were to come back from a wheat conference and explain that there had been a proposal to charge 9s., but that in the interests of the consumers he had considered 8s. would be a fair price! What sort of a reception would he get at this next election?

Mr. Johnston: Well, he ought to look after the interests of the agriculturists.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member, by his interjection, admits that the Minister is there primarily to look after the interests of the agriculturists. A moment ago we were told he was there to represent the interests of the consuming public. The hon. member agrees that the consuming public have no representative on the board, that the Minister represents the wheat growers only.

Mr. Johnston: And the policy of the Government of the day.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Which is a policy put upon them by the representatives in this House of the wheat-growers. So we get back to the same point, which is that the consuming public have no representation on the board, notwithstanding that the consuming public, in relation to the wheat-growers, are in the position of a bank that has backed the bills of the farmers.

Mr. Nairn: That is pretty severe on Mr. Storey and Mr. Theodore.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not here to defend either. The hon. member knows that Mr. Storey has guaranteed 7s. 6d. per bushel to the growers of New South Wales, and that therefore it is to Mr. Storey's interests to have a high price fixed in order

that he shall not be called upon to make good any of his guarantee. Because I venture once in a way to disagree with Mr. Storey and Mr. Theodore my friends opposite, who have never agreed with either, at once range themselves behind Mr. Theodore and Mr. Storey on this point.

Mr. Maley: You are rather late with that suggestion.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member is not in touch with current events. I have frequently put forward that suggestion. Who were the gentlemen who comprised the deputation from the Wheat Growers' Conference which waited on the Premier? They passed a resolution asking that the Premier should fall into line in paying 9s. a bushel, that the wheat should be held at the risk of the Government, and that the Government should pay interest on any money due to the farmers for their wheat. Was that resolution placed before the Premier, and did he agree to pay interest?

The Premier: I did not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When a request of this nature is made by a deputation representing the wheat growers of the State, the need for publicity of such a request is brought home to us.

The Premier: Did that appear in the Press?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, the day after the conference was held. I do not know what request was actually preferred, but this is the substance of their resolution. From the attitude adopted by hon. members, who seem to dominate the actions of the Government in all matters relating to wheat and its control, and who seem to range themselves so strongly on the side of their own interests, regardless of the interests of the consuming public, I judge there is no chance of obtaining any redress on their behalf.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 7—agreed to.

New Clause:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I move—

That a new clause be added as follows:—

“Where any wheat acquired under the Wheat Marketing Acts is made available for local consumption, the price to be charged for such wheat on the sale thereof shall be the price, if any, as fixed under the Prices Regulation Act, 1919, but if no such price is fixed or the sale takes place elsewhere than in a proclaimed area under such Act the price at which the wheat is sold shall not exceed 7s. 8d. per bushel. Penalty: One hundred pounds.

The effect of this new clause will be that the price of wheat shall be fixed under the Prices Regulation Act, and failing that, it shall not exceed 7s. 8d. a bushel.

Mr. Davies: How do you arrive at the 7s. 8d.?

Hon. P. COLLIER: All the evidence I have been able to collect indicates that 7s. 8d. is a fair and reasonable price. It was the price fixed by the wheat marketing board in

January of this year, and was more than had been expected by many of the growers. Prior to that it was 6s. or 6s. 6d. up to the end of December. Mr. Hughes had strongly opposed any increase beyond 6s. That was a fortnight before the election. A fortnight after the election, however, the Prime Minister agreed to an increase to 7s. 8d. per bushel. The Premier: The world's parity had improved.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No one knows definitely what the world's parity is, but it is always being brought forward.

The Premier: And we always act on the world's parity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then why has the Premier agreed to the price of 9s. for a period of 12 months? Can he say what the world's parity will be for the next 12 months?

The Premier: We know what it is to-day.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Prime Minister said that he believed 9s. was just about the world's parity.

Mr. Davies: He said that it was about the price that had been fixed for forward deliveries to the end of December 1921.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He said that 9s. was a fair computation for the probable world's parity for the 12 months. That only shows the insincerity of the whole business. No expert grain buyer in the world would attempt to estimate what the world's parity would be for 12 months. Buyers in London on the 22nd November last were paying 110s. a quarter, which works out at 9s. a bushel f.o.b. Western Australia. Members on the cross benches said the world's parity might be one thing in the morning and another thing in the afternoon.

Mr. Harrison: That it might be higher or lower.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Members on the cross benches said no notice should be taken of the price. We know that it fluctuates from day to-day. Those who are sincere in desiring that the people of the Commonwealth should have wheat for local consumption at the world's parity, should have fixed the price for a month, as the board recommended only two months ago. The board said that the price of wheat after December would be fixed at the world's parity, and that this would be ascertained from month to month, so that the price for local consumption would vary accordingly. The board realised that the world's parity was a fluctuating quantity.

Mr. Maley: They recognised the mistake that was made the previous year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They believed that the world's parity could only be secured by an adjustment of the price every month. If the price had been fixed as from month to month or quarter to quarter, it would have been evidence of a desire to give a fair deal to the consumer. We have four months' supply of flour in the State if the harvest were not put into the pool at all. The member for Subiaco says we shall have a hundred million bushels of wheat this year as an exportable

surplus to go into the general pool, from all quarters of the world. Broomhall estimates that the year's production will show a surplus of 100 million bushels. Since that estimate was made the harvests in the wheat producing countries have turned out better than was anticipated. The harvest in Australia was estimated some time ago at 90 million bushels. The Prime Minister, however, estimated recently that we should have 130 million bushels. It can easily be understood that there will be quite 100 million bushels over the world's requirements on hand. If there is one commodity to which the law of supply and demand, which law it has been suggested cannot be varied, applies, it is to the sale of the world's wheat requirements. If the supplies of wheat coming into the markets of the world exceed the demand, then the price falls. It would be idle to contend that already the indications are not in favour of a downward tendency from now onwards. It may be said that the wheat recently sold by the wheat board was in excess of 9s. But that was a small parcel. There is no doubt whatever that the price of wheat will come down, and long before the 12 months expires, for which period the price of 9s. has been fixed, the parity in Western Australia f.o.b. may be below 7s. 8d., which the farmers are receiving at present.

The Premier: You do not know that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I say that the indications are that that will be the tendency. How will the members of the Country party justify themselves in demanding 9s. if the world's parity drops to 8s. within the next two or six months?

Mr. Harrison: Reverse the position and if the price goes up, what then?

Mr. Maley: It was up last year.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I asked members to preserve order. They cannot listen to more than one member at a time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have expressed my views and I have not heard any member put up a reasonable case on the other side. In view of the assistance given by the people of this country to the growers, and the fact that it is only by having the credit of the people of Australia behind them that they have been able to sell their wheat at all, that they are able to talk of the world's parity for a single moment; in view of all these things, the farmers are not entitled to the world's parity for wheat for local consumption. They are entitled to a fair price which will cover all costs of production and, in addition, return to them a generous measure of profit. I would not limit them to the customary six or eight per cent. on ordinary investments, but would concede them a generous measure of profit in addition. If they demand the world's parity, the Government are entitled to say that they will not stand behind them any longer but allow them to proceed on their own. If the farmers desire to sell wheat in London, it would be impossible for them to get the

price quoted there at the present time. They would have to guarantee the shipping, insurance, freight, and all other charges as well. It would be impossible for them to make the sale and comply with the conditions laid down by the London buyers. It is foolish to speak about the world's parity at the present time. Without the Government's assistance, the farmers cannot sell their produce, and in return for that backing, which enables them to get from 3½ to three times as much as they could formerly obtain for their wheat, is it asking too much for the public to be supplied at a price which will give the farmers a fair and generous profit. Where is there any argument in reply to that? I invite the farmers' representatives to advance some cogent reason why the people are not entitled to that consideration. This advance, we are told, will mean 1d. on the 2lb. loaf.

The Premier: No, it does not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It does. I am fully aware that it has been stated that it represents a ½d. That is only the sugar on the pill in order to delude the public. It cannot be done at less than 1d. unless the bakers and others are satisfied with a smaller profit than they have been getting to-day. Their present profit has not been regarded as unreasonable.

The Premier: They are selling bread in the metropolitan area for less than 4d. a loaf. They are selling it to institutions on contract for less than that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have no doubt about that. I presume the Old Men's Home at Claremont would be included. Does the Premier know what it costs per head per day to maintain the inmates at that institution? It runs out at 1s. 1d. per day, or 7s. 7d. per week.

The Premier: No, it is far more than that.

The Colonial Secretary: It is more like 13s.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is stated so in their report. We know that the contractors who supply these institutions always give cut prices.

The Premier: They do not steal the flour; they have to pay for it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It may be the class of flour for which Western Australia has received so discreditable an advertisement in South Africa. A parcel of 300,000 tons of flour sold to the Government of South Africa was condemned as unfit for human consumption and they are now making a claim for compensation against the Australian Government. That flour, no doubt, was gristed from the reconditioned wheat which was not sold for poultry or pigs here. If it was turned into flour and sent to South Africa, then the result has been unsatisfactory so far as Australia is concerned.

The Premier: No, it is good flour that the institution gets; the same flour as we get.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I accept that statement. I did not say that the flour used in

the bread for these institutions was such as I have described, but we know wheat was gristed in Australia which was utterly unfit for consumption. The incident in connection with the South African deal gives evidence of that fact. My amendment is a reasonable one and should not be opposed by members of the Country party. Simply because there may be over-production in one year it would not be reasonable to ask the farmers to accept the price, based under those conditions, which might be as low as 3s. per bushel. That would be unreasonable and unfair, for the farmer could not produce profitably at that price.

Mr. Pickering: How could you assure him a price which would be profitable?

Hon. P. COLLIER: It could be done. If the wheat falls next year to 3s. that is no reason why the farmer should be asked to produce at that price, for he could not do so.

Mr. Maley: He has been asked to do so before.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, but we live in a different world now, and we have conditions to which we were not formerly accustomed.

Mr. Davies: The difficulty is that a farmer produces much more than can be consumed locally, at times.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That has nothing to do with it.

Mr. Davies: It has got everything to do with the farmer.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No State Government could give a guarantee to the farmer under those conditions.

Mr. Harrison: Who is going to back the bill you are proposing?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Government.

Mr. Harrison: You would give a guarantee for so many years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If it is an equitable thing to say that a farmer shall get so much for his wheat this year, it is an equitable thing to say he shall get it next year and the year after. If the farmers now grab excessive prices, it will mean excessive costs to the consumers for their bread. If the farmers take advantage of the circumstances which will enable them to do that, they will not be able to complain in the future when the world's parity goes down, and when the consuming public will turn a deaf ear to their demands.

Mr. Pickering: As they have done in the past.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member will live in the past always. He is like those troglodytes who lived in caves. Let the hon. member cast his eyes to the rising sun, let him hitch his wagon to a star and not grope about in the past. If the farmers will not meet the public now, they cannot expect the taxpaying public to make good on the railways a loss occasioned by the carriage of their requirements. I submit the amendment I have read.

The CHAIRMAN: It appears to me that the amendment is inadmissible. The Aus-

tralian Wheat Board which controls the shipment from, and the price of wheat in, Australia, was formed by mutual agreement between the Governments of the Commonwealth and the States of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. This agreement was confirmed by the Wheat Marketing Act, 1916, and unless the other contracting parties introduce legislation and transfer the important function of fixing the price of wheat to price-fixing commissions, the passing of this amendment by the House will have no effect on the board, and will place the Western Australian representatives in an impossible position. The amendment also appears to me to be beyond the scope of the Bill, which merely extends the wheat pool to the coming harvest, and makes a few minor alterations in matters of detail. I must therefore decline to accept the amendment.

Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.

Hon. P. Collier: I must dissent from your ruling.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Chairman reported the dissent.

Hon. P. Collier: My reasons for disagreeing with the ruling the Chairman are as follows—

I disagree with the ruling, as whatever agreement has been made by the representatives of the State we as a Parliament have a right to discuss and amend the measure submitted for the control of this season's wheat grown in Western Australia to be consumed in this State. That cannot be beyond the scope of this Bill, which relates to the control of wheat in this State. We can extend the wheat pool on the same or on new conditions as Parliament may deem fit.

In submitting my reasons for disagreeing with the Chairman's ruling, I am pained at a disadvantage compared with that hon. gentleman. I have had perforce to draw up my reasons on the spur of the moment, while I note that the Chairman of Committees has had his reasons for disagreeing with my amendment carefully prepared and typewritten, notwithstanding the fact that nobody knew what my amendment was, because it has not appeared on the Notice Paper.

Mr. Johnston: You told us last night the effect of it.

Hon. P. Collier: Will the hon. member have himself? He is too quick to jump into the breach to avoid taking the responsibility of a vote. I repeat that it is an extraordinary situation that, when no member of this House had seen my amendment or knew what it was at all, the Chairman of Committees could be sitting in his Chair with a typewritten decision as to why he should rule it out of order. Is that the way the business of this House is to be conducted? Is that

the manner in which members are to be debarred from discussing various phases of this question? I say it is degrading to the conduct of this House to find the Chairman of Committees giving a typewritten decision upon an amendment which he had never heard or seen and of which he knew nothing.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It demands an explanation.

Hon. P. Collier: What kind of fair play can one expect in such circumstances? Is it a desire to gag the Committee?

Mr. Speaker: I do not think the hon. member should say that.

Hon. P. Collier: The fact remains that here is a typewritten decision which was already in the possession of the Chairman of Committees before he even saw my amendment. When was it concocted? Who concocted it?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Echo answers who?

Hon. P. Collier: It is quite apparent why the ruling has been given, and why events have taken this turn. Members of this House, not caring, or not having the desire or courage to stand up to a direct vote on my amendment, are seeking to avoid the issue and to clear themselves by getting the amendment ruled out of order. I must say that I am astonished.

The Premier: You should not accuse members of that.

Hon. P. Collier: I realise that I am making a serious charge against the Chairman of Committees. I withheld the amendment from the Notice Paper for this very reason. I have been in this House for some years, and I know how matters have been dealt with on former occasions.

Mr. Nairn: You must have told some of your friends what you were going to do.

Hon. P. Collier: And is the Chairman of Committees entitled to write out a ruling on some tittle-tattle which he may have heard in the corridors? I am not saying that this is what happened, but that is what the hon. member suggests.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member will resume his seat for a moment I may perhaps be able to clear the air. It is only fair to the Chairman of Committees and to hon. members of this House to say that the member for Boulder indicated on two or three occasions last evening that he was going to move this amendment. It struck me that the amendment seemed irrelevant to the Bill, and this afternoon I told the Chairman of Committees that the leader of the Opposition intended to move an amendment. So far as I can recollect, I said to the Chairman of Committees, "You had better look up the Bill and see whether the amendment can be admitted." That was between three and four o'clock this afternoon, and I have heard no more of the matter since. Very likely the Chairman of Committees did look up the Bill. If the hon. member looks at the Chairman's ruling he will see that a good deal of it was written in after the first portion had been typed.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The first portion is typewritten.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, and the rest is written. I say that in fairness to the Chairman of Committees.

Hon. P. Collier: I am afraid that the explanation does not help the Chairman of Committees in the slightest degree.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It further complicates the position.

Hon. P. Collier: Am I asked to believe that the Chairman of Committees, after general reference to an amendment which proposed to submit and before the terms of the amendment were known at all, is justified in drawing up a ruling in anticipation of the proposed amendment?

Mr. O'Loughlen: He was not justified.

Hon. P. Collier: I am surprised to hear the explanation that the Chairman of Committees arms himself beforehand with a ruling in anticipation of an amendment which I might move. The explanation does not help the Chairman of Committees at all. I am surprised to learn that there was a discussion as to whether the proposal would be in order before it was known what the proposal would be. To say that the Chairman of Committees is justified in drawing up in special terms a ruling upon an amendment, in phraseology and terms of which he knew nothing at all, is extraordinary. I do not know that we are prepared to go on debating this Bill. I fear it had already been decided in some subterranean fashion by some parties concerned that this amendment would be ruled out. I wish to place it on record that in my view it stands to the eternal discredit of this House, or at least to the discredit, that he should come armed with typewritten reasons for ruling an amendment out of order when he had never heard or seen the amendment. It stands to the eternal discredit, not to say disgrace, of the Chairman who would adopt such an attitude.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must discuss the reasons.

Hon. P. Collier: I propose to disagree with the ruling. I ask you, Sir, to draw upon your long years of experience in this House and ask what chance I have of getting a fair deal, not from yourself, but in the discussion of this matter, when such a thing as I have described can take place. I am ruled out of order before I have even spoken, before I have even disclosed one word of my amendment, in specific terms and in a typewritten decision by the Chairman of Committees. I shall not allow the matter to rest there. For the moment I shall have to, but I shall take such action with regard to the Chairman of Committees which I hope will preclude the possibility of such a thing recurring. It would be of no avail to discuss that aspect of it any further at the present time. I have known men who occupied the high and honourable position of Speaker or Chairman of Committees in this House and, without a reflection at all upon the present occupant, I would say that some of those gentlemen

have adopted tactics of this kind before, but I am happy to say that I have not known of any such instance in recent years. The ruling given by the Chairman of Committees, I venture to say, is a positively absurd one. It could not be otherwise. He did not know the terms of my amendment. It displays a want of knowledge with the conditions under which the wheat is controlled by the pool. It could hardly be expected that it would be otherwise when the whole thing was drawn up in anticipation. The Chairman of Committees says—

It appears to me that this amendment is inadmissible. The Australian Wheat Board, which controls the shipment from and price of wheat in Australia—

There is a mis-statement of fact to begin with. The Australian Wheat Board does not control the price of wheat in Australia. The board has no voice at all beyond making a recommendation as to the price of wheat in Australia. The price of wheat was fixed by the Prime Minister. The fact that the power to fix the price of wheat in each State is retained by the respective Governments is shown by the fact that at this very board meeting which the Chairman of Committees says has the right to fix the price of wheat in Australia—the board on which the Minister for Agriculture represents the Government of Western Australia—the Minister refused to agree to the price of 9s. a bushel until he had returned to this State and secured the endorsement of his Cabinet.

The Premier: Those were his instructions.

Hon. P. Collier: And it proves that the final authority and power which fixes the price of wheat is the Government, subject to the endorsement of this House on this Bill.

Mr. Troy: That is the attitude they took up with regard to the selling of last season's wheat.

Hon. P. Collier: This is disclosed by the fact that the Government did not agree to the 9s. a bushel until some days after the return of Mr. Baxter from the Eastern States. Yet, in the ruling of this Chairman who anticipates things, he says—

“the Australian Wheat Board which controls the shipment from and price of wheat in Australia.”

What is the value of a ruling based on such an utter want of knowledge of the facts, and based on such ignorance of the facts, a ruling, the very first line of which condemns itself? The ruling goes on—

—was formed by mutual agreement between the Government of the Commonwealth and the States of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia. This agreement was confirmed by the Wheat Marketing Act, 1916, and unless the other contracting parties introduce legislation, and transfer the important function of fixing the price of wheat to price-fixing commissions, the passing of this amendment by the House will have no effect on the board, and will place the West Australia

representatives in an impossible position.

“The passing of this amendment,” the ruling says, “will have no effect on the board.” The amendment is not intended to have any effect on the board. The board have nothing at all to do with the matter, have no say whatever in the fixing of the price of wheat. To declare that this House may not pass an amendment to a Bill which is before it, because the passing of such an amendment would place our representative on the board in an impossible position, is entirely to nullify the power and influence of this House. What does the Chairman of Committees mean by “placing the representatives in an impossible position”? See the danger one rushes into when one sets out to place on record a decision upon a matter which, at the particular stage, has not arisen. See the pitfalls which await any man who adopts such methods. It could only have been expected that the Chairman of Committees would commit this blunder when he said that the passing of the amendment by this House would have no effect upon the board. Of course it cannot have any effect on the board. It was never intended that the passing of the amendment should have any effect on the board, because the board, as I have stated, have no power at all in the matter. The power of fixing the price of wheat rests with the Government, and rests with this Parliament, in this measure. The Chairman of Committees says that the price has been fixed by the Wheat Marketing Act of 1916. But this Bill supercedes the Wheat Marketing Act of 1916, supersedes every one of those Wheat Marketing Acts. The wheat pool and its Act and the whole matter will disappear, so far as Western Australia is concerned, if we fail to pass this Bill. This Bill is an extension of the existing Wheat Marketing Act, and to say that this Parliament has no power, no voice, as to determining the price of the wheat grown in this State, put into this pool, controlled by this measure and sold under its provisions, is to say something absurd. To say that it would be out of order for this House to introduce an amendment fixing the price of wheat in such a Bill as this is to reach, in my opinion, the very height and the very limit of absurdity. There is no reason in such a ruling. The decision places the power of a board, who have no independent authority at all, above and beyond the power of this Parliament. Is that a position members of this Chamber are prepared to accept? Why, it is the very negation of common sense. To admit such a contention would be to strip this House of all the functions which are essential to the conduct of public business. This State retains full control over the price of wheat. So much is evidenced by the very fact that the Government did not approve of the price fixed in Melbourne until they had considered it. If they instructed their

Minister to withhold his approval until he had consulted them and they had endorsed the price, surely that meant, if it meant anything at all, that the Government had the right finally to refuse to endorse the 9s. price. The Government could have said, "No, we will make wheat available in this State for 8s. or for 7s. 8d." the latter being the present price. They could have done that had they thought fit. Surely if the Government, by a merely executive act, by a decision of their own, have power to fix any price they like, it follows that this Parliament has the same power in the passing of this Bill. The Bill is not yet passed. It is an extensive measure. We are now discussing the measure. Therefore all matters relating to the control and price of the wheat are within the jurisdiction of this House, and competent for this House to discuss and to decide. I hope that this action has not been taken because of a desire in some quarters to evade the responsibility of giving a direct vote on the amendment. I hope this action has not been taken because we are on the eve of a general election and because members therefore fear to disclose their attitude on this very important question by voting either one way or the other. I hope that is not the position. I do not want to accuse any member of this House of a desire to evade the responsibility of his vote, but, if that is the position, it is incumbent on the House to turn down and reject, by a unanimous vote, this ruling of the Chairman of Committees. I do not wish to say more on the subject, except that I shall take such action as is open to me to express my feelings and my attitude towards such a decision as has come from the Chair of this Chamber to-night.

Mr. Troy: The Chairman of Committees in his decision insists upon what the Government of this State denied a few weeks ago. When it was asserted that the representatives of Western Australia on the Australian Wheat Board had agreed to sell last year's harvest to the Eastern States at 7s. 8d. per bushel, the Government of this State insisted that the Australian Wheat Board had no power to do such a thing. What the Government then denied the Chairman of Committees now insists is a fact.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government said they would go to law over it.

The Premier: I said nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier did not say so, but the Honorary Minister said it.

Mr. Troy: I am speaking of the Government collectively. Now the Chairman has announced that the attitude taken up by the Government with regard to the last harvest, and on a Bill similar to this, was a wrong one. My experience leaves me in no doubt as to how these matters are arranged. Unquestionably the Government in the first instance intervened to get this decision. They drew the attention of the Chairman

of Committees or the Speaker to what was about to come forward.

The Premier: Who did?

Mr. Troy: The Government.

The Premier: We did not.

Mr. Troy: Or else some member interested.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The leader of the Opposition distinctly stated last night that he intended to move his amendment.

The Premier: The Chairman of Committees did not know what the amendment would be.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The leader of the Opposition distinctly described his amendment.

The Premier: I hope hon. members opposite are not accusing the Government of having done anything wrong in this matter.

Mr. Troy: I do not blame them if they did that which I have described. It would be the natural course for them to take. If I wanted to know how a probable amendment would affect a Bill, I would adopt the same course—I would go either to the Speaker, or the Chairman of Committees, or the Clerk of the Assembly and ask what would be the effect. I have no doubt that this typewritten decision is merely a decision given in the ordinary course by the Clerk who was consulted. As a matter of fact, the language is not like the language of the Chairman of Committees, but it is like that of the Clerk. I have no objection to that either. The Clerk has merely done a duty which he will naturally do when called upon. But if the Chairman of Committees is right in stating that a mutual agreement arrived at overrides any amendment passed by this House, I want to know whether such mutual agreement has the force of law? And if it has not the force of law, how could an amendment to this Bill dealing with the marketing of wheat be influenced by a mutual agreement between this party and that party and some other party? In my opinion the thing is absolutely absurd. Again, how was the price of wheat for local consumption arrived at? By any statute or Act of Parliament? No.

The Premier: It was fixed in 1916.

Mr. Troy: At 9s. per bushel?

The Premier: No. The method of arriving at the price was fixed in 1916.

Mr. Troy: That may be so. But this Bill is a continuance of the 1916 measure, and surely it can amend the method laid down by the 1916 Act. This Parliament has power to do that. So we arrive at this position, that the 1916 Act provides a method of fixing the price of wheat, and that this Bill is a continuance of the 1916 Act, and that yet we are told that in this Bill the leader of the Opposition has no power to amend the method by which the price of wheat is fixed. The fixing of the price of wheat is a matter which the Government determine for themselves. The Honorary Minister administering the Wheat Scheme was in the Eastern States when the price of 9s. was determined

on. Mr. Baxter was not a consenting party to the fixing of that price. He did not concur. He came back to this State to consult the Government. It is for the Government of this State, and not for the Australian Wheat Board, to determine at what price wheat shall be sold for local consumption in Western Australia.

The Premier: That is provided in the 1916 Act.

Mr. Troy: If that is so, the objection of the Chairman of Committees is not a valid one. He says the amendment is inadmissible because the Australian Wheat Board was formed by mutual agreement, and that unless the States are contracting parties with the Australian Wheat Board—to which the Act of 1916 makes no reference—the passing of the amendment by this House will have no effect. Then how can the Australian Wheat Board be affected by the amendment? It is quite possible there might be other reasons for disallowing the amendment, but the reason given by the Chairman of Committees is an absurd one. In effect his decision concludes by saying that the passing of an amendment by this House will have no effect on the board, and will place our representative in an impossible position. It is the most ridiculous, laughable decision I have ever heard. Because legislation will have no effect on the Australian Wheat Board, we should not consider it. What has the placing of our representative in an impossible position to do with this measure? Every act of legislation places somebody in an awkward position. The reason given is not a valid one, nor is it conclusive. It is both contradictory and foolish.

Mr. Pickering: What about the last reason given, namely, that the amendment is not in conformity with the Bill?

Mr. Troy: That is but an afterthought. Apparently the typewritten ruling was made out in the afternoon. On further consideration it looked ridiculous, and as an afterthought it was added that the amendment appeared to be beyond the scope of the Bill, which merely extended the wheat pool to the coming harvest and made a few alterations in matters of detail. There might be something in that. It is a serious objection if an amendment is not within the scope of a Bill. But the decision in its first part is most ridiculous. I do not think the amendment is beyond the scope of the Bill.

The Attorney General: Do you think it is within the scope?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, and within the Title.

Hon. P. Collier: It is absurd to say it is not within the scope of the Bill. If we can amend the Schedule we can amend the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member has already addressed himself to the question.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, and I will do so again.

The Speaker: The hon. member must do it in order.

Hon. P. Collier: I will do it in order, and sometimes out of order.

The Speaker: The hon. member must not be offensive.

Hon. P. Collier: I have no desire to be offensive.

Mr. Troy: Although the measure makes provision for fixing the price of wheat, we are told the amendment which fixes the price for local consumption is not admissible. I am glad for the good sense of the House that the first part of the ruling was abandoned.

Hon. P. Collier: It has not been abandoned.

Mr. Troy: But it is too contemptible to be considered: If the agreement were a legal one, and the amendment interfered with it, there might be a real objection.

Hon. T. Walker: In any case this Parliament can annul a contract.

Mr. Troy: Yes, but since this is only a mutual agreement—

Hon. P. Collier: And this Parliament cannot interfere with a mutual agreement.

Mr. Troy: Because the Honorary Minister goes to the Eastern States and makes a mutual agreement, this Parliament cannot interfere. Moreover, the amendment might put somebody in an awkward position. We have the right to legislate, but an agreement between two irresponsible parties must not be interfered with.

Hon. P. Collier: Where is the contract or Act of Parliament which prevents us?

Mr. Troy: But our representative might be placed in an embarrassing position. What on earth has that to do with Parliament? Because the Honorary Minister might be placed in an embarrassing position, Parliament must not amend the Bill! It is so utterly foolish that one cannot conceive of its ever being put forward as a serious ruling. It would bring the House into contempt. If hon. members do not want the amendment to be carried, let them at least allow the legitimate functions of Parliament to prevail. This decision would bring us into ridicule.

The Premier: The last speaker suggested that this was being used to shelve the proposal. There is not an atom of truth in that. I heard from the leader of the Opposition that he intended to move an amendment, but I did not know the nature of it.

Hon. P. Collier: I sent it to you just before I moved it. It was the only copy I had.

The Premier: I was as much surprised at the amendment being ruled out of order as was the hon. member himself. The Government have no wish to stop discussion, or to prevent this amendment being fully considered. But if the amendment is passed, we shall have in the one measure two methods of fixing the price.

Mr. Willcock: One being an alternative.

Hon. P. Collier: But the Premier must have admitted that possibility when he

withheld his consent from his Minister's agreeing to the proposal in Melbourne.

The Premier: I have not the reasons given by the Chairman of Committees for refusing to admit the amendment.

Hon. P. Collier: But when the Premier withheld consent to that decision in Melbourne, he showed that in his opinion he had the right to agree or disagree.

The Premier: I admit that.

Hon. P. Collier: Well surely Parliament also has the same right.

The Premier: There can be no question about that. But in the Act of 1916 it is provided that the price shall be determined in a certain way.

Hon. T. Walker: And if you again submit the Bill to us we can suggest another way.

Hon. P. Collier: And this is the Bill again.

The Premier: We can hardly provide in the one measure two ways of arriving at the price. If the amendment is carried we shall have two methods, for all the provisions of the 1916 Act stand. Members on this side have no wish that the question should not be determined by the House, so I hope hon. members opposite will refrain from suggesting that the Government had anything to do with the attitude taken by the Chairman of Committees.

Hon. P. Collier: I did not suggest that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I support the objection of the leader of the Opposition to the ruling of the Chairman of Committees. The Bill is a wheat marketing measure, and it is almost impossible to market wheat unless one can sell it. Our legislation provides for arriving at the price of wheat for the year 1916. From 1916 down to the present day the Act of 1916 has been amended every year.

The Premier: And continued.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has been amended every year. The amendments each year have applied only to the harvest which the continuance Bill applied to. This year we have a Bill under similar conditions, not merely a Bill to continue, but a Bill to amend, the original Act. Clause 4 is an amendment of Section 10 of the principal Act, Clause 5 an amendment of Section 13, and Clause 6 an amendment of Section 14, which refers to the sale of wheat. Each year stands by itself. Each season the wheat is acquired under a special Act. Clause 2 of this Bill says it shall extend and apply to the wheat harvest during the season 1920-21 subject to amendments not contained in last year's Act. This amendment will apply to the 1920-21 wheat.

Hon. P. Collier: Past agreements have nothing to do with that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is so. The leader of the Opposition desires to insert a new clause to the effect that the fixing of the price of wheat for local consumption shall be done under the Prices Regulation Act. The Premier has referred to the 1916 Act. If these are the conditions under which the price

of wheat has been arrived at, the Government have been acting illegally, because they have fixed one price for the miller, and a largely increased price for the poultry farmer. The whole arrangement for fixing the price of wheat has been in the hands of the Government under the title of the Wheat Marketing Act.

Hon. P. Collier: We have given no power to deal with the coming harvest until this Bill has been passed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Unless the Bill is passed there will be no legal or compulsory pool in Western Australia for next year.

Mr. Hudson: There is nothing to prevent outside sales.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Therefore, there is no Act of Parliament in existence controlling the marketing of the 1920-21 harvest. I maintain that any hon. member has an opportunity of proposing an amendment to the Bill we have before us, which deals with the marketing of wheat.

Hon. P. Collier: We can say we agree to continue the Act subject to the price being so and so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government of Western Australia fixed a price for this State. Last year the Wheat Marketing Board fixed the price of wheat sent to New South Wales. Seeing that the power is in the hands of the Government, and that no power can be granted without the consent of Parliament, I contend that we are at liberty to move any amendment to this Bill stating how the price shall be fixed for the coming harvest. The preamble of the 1916 Act is dead so far as the next harvest is concerned. We have every right to tell the Government how the wheat shall be marketed. The 1916 Act does not affect the coming harvest. The Chairman's ruling is not in compliance with the Bill we have before us, and the motion is in accordance with it.

The Attorney-General: The substance of the Chairman's ruling is that the amendment in its present form is not within the scope of the Bill. The position of the Australian Wheat Pool is that it is a partnership existing between the producing States, and the Commonwealth is also a party to it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not for home consumption, but only for export.

The Attorney-General: That partnership is a legal partnership as it stands, but requires certain machinery to carry out the objects of the partnership, which is generally known as the wheat scheme. That machinery is required to be passed by the Parliaments of each State in order to ensure that the wheat grown in the State is delivered to the scheme. Without such an Act of Parliament, we cannot carry out the scheme or partnership. The Act has been in operation since 1916. Year after year Bills have been brought forward to continue the operation of the Act. The main object of the measure is to extend the operation of the original Act. It is quite competent for the House—it would be absurd to deny it—to say, "We will ex-

tend this Act upon certain conditions which may be laid down in the Bill." That is really the contention of members opposite, and undoubtedly it is competent for the House to do that. In supporting the ruling of the Chairman of Committees, I do so as a matter of form, because, as I have already pointed out, it is quite possible to get over the difficulty. The clause extending the operation of the Act has already been passed. That clause set out that the parent Act of 1916, as amended by the Acts of 1918 and 1919, shall extend and apply to the wheat harvested during the season 1920-21. I suggest to the leader of the Opposition it was in that clause that any provision regarding the conditions of extension should be inserted. I do not see how the amendment the member for Boulder seeks to have inserted, can be added at this stage.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have inserted amendments in this manner before.

Hon. P. Collier: If the amendment is admissible at all, it is admissible as a new clause.

The Attorney General: I do not think that it should go in as the member desires; it could have been more correctly drafted by the Solicitor General.

Hon. P. Collier: This amendment was drafted by him.

The Attorney General: Then he could not have considered the full operation it would have. It would be possible to draft a clause which would make the extension conditional, and it would be competent for the hon. member to introduce such a clause. I do not think that the leader of the Opposition will accuse the Government of any fore-knowledge of this particular move. I did not know of it until the point was actually raised in the Chamber. The new clause which he has introduced was not advanced as a condition of the passing of the Bill, but it is in a form which would make it more acceptable as an amendment to be inserted in the Prices Regulation Act. It is the form in which the clause is framed rather than the substance that induced me to support the ruling of the Chairman of Committees on this point. Both the substance of the clause and the reasons he has given in support of it come more within the purview of the Prices Regulation Act rather than under this Bill. Apart from that aspect, of course, the clause is satisfactory, but in its present form it does not come within the purview of the principal Act.

Hon. T. Walker: The concluding portion of the speech by the Attorney General gives the whole case away. He clearly admits that the leader of the Opposition is in order in fixing a price or in arranging for a new method of fixing the price for the consumption of wheat locally. The Attorney General declared that it was the form or phraseology that he objected to. If the substance of the new clause is in order, it cannot be ruled out of order simply because it is not elegantly

worded to meet the particular taste of the Attorney General. The substance of the clause is correct, and we have a right to move in the direction the leader of the Opposition has adopted.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the only point involved. It is on that point that the Chairman has given his ruling.

Hon. T. Walker: It is on that point that the leader of the Opposition has been ruled out of order. If it is right to have the price fixed under a different method from that in operation during previous years, then the new clause is not out of order. I will not deal with that aspect of the Chairman's ruling, however, because his decision was obviously out of order in foisting such a decision on the Committee. Undoubtedly he was wrong, and to foist such a ruling upon the Committee was derogatory to the position which he holds. To say that the Committee cannot agree to any proposal which would place certain responsibilities on the wheat pool, is an impossible position.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the limit.

Hon. T. Walker: It is absolutely unheard of. The point on which the new clause was ruled out was that it did not come within the scope of the Bill. The measure prescribes the method of fixing prices. The 1916 Act deals with this question for the marketing of the harvest so that the growers shall receive a price on the basis of the price ruling in the London wheat market, with certain deductions. The preamble to the 1916 Act deals with that aspect, and it prescribes certain methods of arriving at the price. If the question of price is dealt with in the Bill, then it is strictly in order for hon. members to propose some other method of fixing the price. If the House does not desire the price to be fixed by one method it is open to members to suggest another method, which may be accepted or rejected. Once the question of price-fixing has been dealt with in the legislation, then the whole matter is in order, thus enabling us to fix the price according to methods we deem advisable. The 1916 Act has been extended from time to time, and in the present Bill, Clause 6 provides that Section 14 of the Wheat Marketing Act, 1916, shall extend to wheat acquired by the Minister and in possession of any person with the view to the purchase thereof, and to the products of such wheat, until such purchase is completed by payment to the Minister of the price of the wheat sold. There is provision made there for the price to be arrived at by the Minister in connection with the purchase of that wheat, and that very fact brings the new clause proposed by the leader of the Opposition within the scope of the Bill. The Minister is able to buy the wheat apart from the pool, and the mere purchase means that a price has to be fixed independently of the Bill. This year it is proposed, apart from this measure altogether, to retain a certain proportion of the wheat within the State, and a fixed price

of 9s. has been arrived at respecting this wheat for local consumption. If it be possible to fix such a price, it is clearly open to the House to give instructions to the Minister dealing with wheat, independently of the Bill, to fix the price of wheat for local consumption according to the decision of the Prices Regulation Commission. The amendment by the leader of the Opposition only deals with wheat which does not go into the pool, and the House would be quite in order in saying that the wheat so acquired should be paid for at 7s. 8d. or at a price to be fixed by the Prices Regulation Commission.

Mr. Speaker: I have listened with great interest to the arguments advanced by hon. members, and I was not led away by what was said in regard to the powers of this Chamber to legislate, because these powers cannot be denied. I do not think that the ruling of the Chairman of Committees affects that point in any one particular. The ruling of the Chairman is that the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition does not come within the scope of the Bill. The Bill under discussion is to extend to 1920-21 the operations of the Wheat Marketing Acts of 1916-18-19. There are minor amendments dealing with certain sections in the 1916 Act, the authority for agency agreements, and other matters.

Hon. T. Walker: There is Clause 6, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Clause 6 reads—

A paragraph is hereby added to Section 14 of the Wheat Marketing Act, 1916, as follows:—"This section shall extend to wheat acquired by the Minister and in possession of any person with the view to the purchase thereof, and to the products of such wheat, until such purchase is completed by the payment to the Minister of the price of the wheat sold." The hon. member's amendment is to fix the price as fixed in the Prices Regulation Act of 1919. I admit that is an Act to which this amendment to regulate the price of wheat could be applied, but it cannot be applied to the Bill. Therefore I must uphold the Chairman's ruling that the amendment does not come within the scope of the Bill.

Dissent from Speaker's Ruling.

Hon. T. Walker: I must ask the House to disagree with your ruling on the score that this is the proper place to deal with the regulation of the markets for wheat. The Bill deals solely with wheat, its price, its transport, its collection. It is wheat from beginning to end, and therefore this is the proper place and the only place for the amendment. If we attempted to amend the Prices Regulation Act by this amendment, we should be ruled out of order on the score that we have a specific Act, special legislation dealing with wheat. And all things relating to its selling and distribution are cognate, relative to the substance of the

measure. That is to say, we do fix the price by certain methods. We had in the 1916 Act a fixed method of ascertaining the price. That is cognate to it. One might as well say the Act of 1916 ought never to have had that provision, that it should have been made in a price fixing Bill; but it does distinctly say that price fixing is one of the features of the Bill. It provides for utilising on a fair basis the means of transport available and for the marketing of the harvest on behalf of the growers at a price based on the London market. There is prescription there for fixing the price of the wheat in the pool. Price fixing is an essential feature of the whole measure, and every measure which we have since had to extend the Act of 1916 has contained the same provisions. The measure we have before us gives the Minister power to fix the price, to buy at a price and fix it according to his own methods.

Hon. P. Collier: Yet we are told that price fixing is outside the Bill.

Mr. Hudson: Suppose there were no Prices Regulation Act. What should we then do? We would have to do something under this Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, it is too absurd for words.

Hon. T. Walker: The Prices Regulation Act deals with general commodities. We have given them the power to fix the price of wheat ever since 1916, and now we are giving the power to the Minister. In view of this, how can it be said that it is beyond the scope of the Bill to deal with prices? Clause 6 specially exempts the Minister from the operation of Section 14 of the original Act and gives the Minister power to buy. How can he buy without price, and how can he get price without an arrangement?

The Attorney General: Price and price fixing are two different matters.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes, but whether it is done temporarily or by statute it is price fixing. When the Minister makes a contract with a seller, he and the seller have fixed the price. What is done now is to prevent that shifting sort of sliding scale and fix the price by a given method, as was done in 1916 with the overseas wheat. Now it is proposed to do it by submitting all the facts to the Prices Regulation Commission and allowing them to decide and, where it does not come under their jurisdiction, to fix a price by statute for this year at 7s. 8d. per bushel. How can that be beyond the scope of the measure? Will the Speaker rule out Clause 6 on the ground on which he has ruled out the leader of the Opposition? I take it that he will not, and if he does not, neither can he logically or rightfully rule the new clause of the leader of the Opposition out of order. I move—

That the ruling of the Speaker be dissented from.

Mr. O'Loughlin: I must express my regret that it should be found necessary in this

Chamber to disagree with your ruling, Sir, but I claim to have had average experience in this House and while not posing as an authority on Standing Orders or on the interpretations sometimes given by presiding officers, I venture to assert that if you were on the floor of the House, you would question such a ruling as you have given to-night. You would question it on the ground that it is almost inexplicable; and one is led to imagine that there is a lack of candour about the explanation as to how this ruling originated. I do not wish to make any disparaging remarks about the decision you have given, or about the decision of the Chairman of Committees, but I do say that within the last 12 years I have known of no instance where an amendment proposed to be moved by an hon. member was anticipated to the extent that the amendment to-night was anticipated. I have heard that a similar thing has occurred before, but I know of no instance personally. I think there has been displayed a reluctance on the part of some members to give a vote on the question which has been ruled out. Whether there is a desire on their part to avoid giving that vote and whether those members were instrumental in inspiring the decision given, I know not, but there is some member in the House who can tell us how this ruling originated. It has been suggested that the leader of the Opposition last night indicated by his remarks that he would move an amendment on these lines. Can any member tell me of an instance in the history of this Parliament where a Speaker or Chairman of Committees was so interested—without the point being suggested to him—that he would go nosing round to dig up a possible ruling without knowing what the amendment actually was? I know of no instance, and honestly I cannot bring myself to believe that any Chairman would interest himself to this extent without some pressure having been brought to bear or some suggestion or desire having been expressed that action of this sort should be taken. If anyone can throw any light on the question as to where the ruling originated, whether in the Solicitor General's office, or whether in the mind of the Chairman or of the Speaker, or whether it was suggested by a Minister of the Crown, this House has a right to know it.

Mr. Speaker: I have already told the House that I directed the attention of the Chairman of Committees to it this afternoon.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are we to take it then, that you and you alone are responsible?

Mr. Speaker: I have told the House all that occurred.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I have never known such a thing to occur before. I could understand the Chairman or Speaker, knowing that he was likely to be called upon for a ruling on a certain question, or knowing that his ruling might be challenged, looking up the points involved in anticipation. There might even be a temporary suspension of the business to enable this to be done, but during

the 12 years that I have occupied a seat in the House I have never known you, Sir, or any predecessor in the Chair to interest himself in a debate to the extent that he would anticipate matters as the leader of the Opposition has been anticipated to-night. Immediately the leader of the Opposition moved his amendment, a ruling was given, and that ruling was even then typewritten. Never before have I known such a thing to occur, and I am at a loss to find a reason for it. I believe there are members in this House who could tell us why it was done. I regret that the ruling was given. I regret, Sir, that you are upholding the ruling, because it would have been more satisfactory to the public of this State if we could have taken a decision on the merits of the amendment. Undoubtedly this Parliament and Parliament alone has the final decision of the price to be fixed for wheat for local consumption. I very much regret that you find yourself obliged to uphold the ruling of the Chairman of Committees. I take it that you are upholding it largely because you, to an extent, suggested such a ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must not say that.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You told the House that you had made a suggestion to the Chairman of Committees that he should look it up.

Mr. Speaker: A suggestion to look it up.

Mr. O'Loughlen: This shows that there was something running through your mind, and I can only express the opinion that if you were down here on the floor of the House, as on a memorable occasion when another hon. gentleman occupying that Chair got his bristles up, we would have heard some very interesting and blistering comments on decisions and interpretations which sometimes emanate from the Chair.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I support the hon. member in his motion to disagree with your ruling, though I regret very much the necessity for doing so. I am confident that neither the Chairman of Committees nor yourself, in considering your decision, has referred to the Wheat Marketing Act of 1916. In almost every section of that Act the purchase and sale of wheat are dealt with.

Hon. P. Collier: The Act deals with nothing else.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Clause 6 sets out that for the purpose of the satisfactory marketing of the wheat harvest the Minister, whether in conjunction with Ministers of other States or of the Commonwealth or not, may buy or sell or arrange for the purchase or sale of wheat, and do all acts, matters and things necessary or expedient in that behalf, and may appoint or employ such agents, officers, and servants as are necessary, and Clause 10 prohibits sales of wheat except to the Minister. The whole Act of 1916 deals with the selling of wheat, and if the Minister thinks fit, there need be no connection with any person in the Eastern States. Owing to the financial position it was impossible for the Government of Western Australia to finance

the scheme without joining up with the Governments of the Eastern States with regard to overseas trade. This being so, Western Australia fell in with the Eastern States and in conjunction with the Governments of those States formed the Australian wheat pool, but that pool had nothing whatever to do with wheat for our own consumption. It had no more to do with the wheat consumed in this State than we had to do with the wheat from the Victorian crop consumed in Victoria. The Australian pool deals only with wheat sold overseas. The pool sells the wheat overseas and provides the shipping for it, but it has nothing whatever to do with the State consumption. The whole power of fixing the price of wheat is left entirely in the hands of the Minister. It has been proved conclusively that the Minister in this State has fixed different prices. He has fixed one price for wheat for milling, another price for wheat for the poultry farmers, another price for wheat for the pig raisers, and he has fixed the prices according to the different grades.

Hon. P. Collier: Under the 1916 Act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes. Even last year the first year of the operations of the Prices Regulation Act in this State, wheat did not come under the Prices Regulation Commission. It has been exempt from the Prices Regulation Commission because it is provided for in the Wheat Marketing Act, which we are now asked to practically re-enact. Wheat is entirely apart from the commodities dealt with by the Prices Regulation Commission. Now, however, the leader of the Opposition wishes to bring it within the scope of the Prices Regulation Commission's activities, and to take away the powers which in 1916 were given to the Minister under the Wheat Marketing Act. This is the only alteration for which the leader of the Opposition is asking, an alteration which will permit the price of wheat to be fixed under another Act. It has never before been ruled out of order by the Chairman of Committees. The ruling is entirely wrong so far as the 1916 Act is concerned. I regret I have to vote against your ruling. If it is upheld it will take away the powers we possess in this Parliament with regard to the sale of wheat. The people have guaranteed the producers in respect of their wheat and have stood as security to the banks. The people, therefore, have a right to say in what manner the wheat is to be sold, and we are representing their interests to-night. In the 1916 Act we said how it should be dealt with, and that Act is now dead, but the power may be revived in the Bill we now have before us. That Bill we may amend as we think fit, and I regret that any attempt should have been made to prevent us from doing so. The trouble is that this Parliament has been too orderly. We have not made enough row. We have not done what has been done in the other States. We have not acted in such a way as to show the people of the country that

Parliament has been throttled. It is time we let the people of this State know that their representatives here are only dummies. We have been too easy on this side of the House because we wanted to assist the Government in times of stress. If we had been expelled from the Chamber one after the other the people would have been shown what was being done. Instead of that we have tried to uphold the honour of Parliament and assist the Government. When we try to protect the people of the State we are blocked by a ruling which is quite contrary to the Acts under which we have been working. It is a ruling which is in direct opposition to the method employed in fixing the price of wheat. There is no legislation for fixing the price of wheat or offal but the Wheat Marketing Act. Through the organisation under this Act the Government have been enabled to fix the price of flour and offal. They have been tied in fixing that price because this was done under the 1916 Act. They have said that the wheat is to be such and such a price, and there was no other Act under which they could say so. They were carrying out the wishes of Parliament correctly. They fixed the price for wheat, and the Prices Regulation Commission was enabled to fix the price of the products of the wheat. When people who had purchased offal from Adelaide, and were in the position to sell it here for less than the local article, they were told they could not do this owing to the fact that the local price-fixing commission had fixed the price at a certain amount, thus affecting the interests of the dairying industry, the poultry industry and the pig raising industry. We have been told that wheat can be marketed without there being any selling price fixed. How can it be marketed without the price first being fixed? It is ridiculous to suggest such a thing. There is only one way of doing things now. Put some of us out and let the people know what action has been taken. Why throttle the interests of the people we are sent here to protect? The ruling is against all justice; it is wrong. It is against the Wheat Marketing Act. I trust that something will be done by members to protect their interests and the interests of the people, without fear or favour, as they took their oath to do when they were elected. I am confident that the opinions of hon. members, if they would vote honestly, would be that the method of fixing the price of wheat in Western Australia is through the Wheat Marketing Act and by no other means. If members will vote honestly, without any fear, they will vote to disagree with your ruling.

Mr. Hudson: I regret I have to support the motion to disagree with your ruling.

Mr. Lutey: Why regret it?

Mr. Hudson: I always regret having to take such a step. It is not a question of consideration for you, Mr. Speaker, nor a question whether wheat should be sold at 7s.,

9s., or £1 a bushel; it is a question of maintaining the rights and privileges in which this House is involved.

Hon. T. Walker: That is the whole point.

Mr. Hudson: I was greatly disappointed when you gave the decision you did. I had anticipated that you would have taken the cue from the Attorney-General, who is the leader of the House in matters of law, when he gave it as his opinion that the reasons given by the Chairman of Committees were entirely wrong, except perhaps the reason which stated that the amendment was not within the scope of the Bill. He disregarded the other reasons that were given. It is just as well that they should be disregarded the other reasons that were given. light of day. With regard to the question whether the amendment was germane to the Bill, he said it was so in substance but not in form. We can easily get over that difficulty. He gave his reasons why it was not in form, but I am not in accord with those reasons. He said that if the leader of the Opposition desired to move this amendment, he should have moved it when Clause 2 was under discussion. I observe on looking at the clause that it provides for the extension of the Act, and also provides for an agreement for the handling of the wheat. There is one point we have overlooked, and that is, that we have the right to legislate in Western Australia only. It is not a question of this being a sovereign State. We are sovereign within ourselves and we have the right to legislate for ourselves alone. I am dealing with the point raised by the Attorney-General. He assumed that Clause 2 dealt with the entrance by this Parliament into a partnership. We merely authorise the Government to enter into an arrangement with other people. We legislate for Western Australia, and within Western Australia the whole Bill deals with the marketing of wheat within the State. The question arises in your decision as to the admissibility of the amendment proposed by the leader of the Opposition, and as to whether or not it is within the scope of the Bill. With other members I maintain that the amendment is distinctly within the scope of the Bill, and that the fixing of the price of the wheat is an essential part of the Bill. All the leader of the Opposition seeks to do by the reference to the Prices Regulation Commission is to provide some machinery by which the price of wheat for local consumption shall be ascertained, thus taking the matter away from the absolute discretion of the Government. He fixes an arbitrary price of 7s. 8d. per bushel, which price is to remain unless altered by some means. He does not introduce the Prices Regulation Act here at all, but seeks to make use of the Commissioners appointed under the Act, seeks to use them for the purpose of arriving at a price for sales of wheat under this Bill, not for sales under the Prices Regulation Act. I do not

think there is any doubt about this matter, and I shall support the motion.

Hon. P. Collier: I, too, regret the necessity for having to disagree from your ruling in this matter, Mr. Speaker. At no time is it a pleasant thing for members to disagree, by a vote recorded in this Chamber, with a ruling either of the Chairman of Committees or of yourself, Sir. I do hope that hon. members will vote on this motion irrespective of all feeling, and without paying regard to the natural disinclination to cast a vote against any ruling given from the Chair. Further, I trust members will in considering this motion dismiss from their minds any consideration of party politics and also entirely discard the question as to what the price of wheat for local consumption should be. Surely it is not too much to ask members to be true to their own innermost conscience when casting their votes upon this motion. If they have regard for the privileges which they enjoy in this Chamber, privileges handed down to us as the fruit of centuries of struggle in the Mother of Parliaments, hon. members must, independently of their views on the merits of the amendment, vote to uphold the right of this House to deal with matters which clearly and unmistakably come within its functions. I am bound to say that I cannot in any respect follow the reasons which have prompted your ruling, Mr. Speaker. Leaving aside the preamble, if I may so describe it, of the type-written document, and coming to the question whether the amendment is outside the scope of the Bill, I declare that I am unable to conceive of any amendment or any motion which would be within the scope of a measure if this amendment is not within the scope of the Bill now under discussion. If the Wheat Marketing Act does not contain provision for the fixing of prices, where does that power lie?

The Attorney General: The Wheat Marketing Act does not express prices.

Hon. P. Collier: If the power to fix prices is not within the scope of that Act, where does the power lie? The Attorney General on his own reasoning must, in order to be consistent, vote to disagree to the rulings which have been given. The Attorney General has declared that the amendment, in substance, is within the scope of the Bill. But he disagrees with the form of the amendment. From his training the Attorney General knows perfectly well that the mere form of the amendment does not determine the question of its relevancy.

The Attorney General: To make myself clear—I think you could have moved the amendment as a proviso to Clause 2.

Hon. P. Collier: There we are! On that very interjection the Attorney General must vote against your ruling, Mr. Speaker. You have ruled the amendment out, Sir, on the ground that it is not within the scope of the Bill. But if I were to move the amendment as a proviso, in accordance with the Attorney General's suggestion, it would still be a price-fixing

proposal. It would still be an attempt to fix the price of wheat by this Bill. Consequently, on his own admission, the hon. gentleman disagrees to the ruling which you have just given, Mr. Speaker. He has admitted that it is competent for this House in this Bill to deal with wheat prices. Therein he disagrees with your ruling, Mr. Speaker. To say that by this Bill we cannot fix the price of wheat, or deal with the price of wheat, is to say that this Parliament has no power whatsoever over the fixing of the price of wheat, that this Parliament has no power to fix even the price of wheat for consumption within this State. There is no other Act that does control the matter; and, consequently, if it cannot be controlled by this Bill, there is no power whatever to control it. Why, the very fact that under the Wheat Marketing Act prices have been fixed makes this amendment admissible. Prices have been fixed under the Wheat Marketing Bill.

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. P. Collier: Under what power have they been fixed, then?

The Attorney General: Simply under the powers of the Wheat Scheme.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the Wheat Scheme?

The Attorney General: The Wheat Scheme merely has powers under the Act for the purpose of collecting wheat.

Hon. P. Collier: Let the Minister read the Act, and he will find there is more power than merely that of collecting wheat.

The Attorney General: That is what the Bill is wanted for.

Hon. P. Collier: The price of wheat for flour millers has been fixed from time to time. The price of wheat for poultry farmers has been fixed from time to time.

The Attorney General: Not under this Act.

Hon. P. Collier: Then under what Act? Where is the Act that does give the Government power to fix prices for wheat? There must be some power somewhere to fix those prices. This very Bill is entitled a Wheat Marketing Bill. If one sells 100 bushels of wheat, does not one market it? What else does "marketing wheat" mean but selling wheat? Every member of this Chamber must know in his heart that there is ample power to move an amendment for the fixing of prices under this Bill. It is an utter absurdity to be discussing the matter. I regret the circumstances in which the discussion has been initiated. When I once more recall the fact that the discussion originated from the ruling given by the Chairman of Committees, I am led to the conclusion that there has been some collaboration somewhere, in some quarter, with regard to that ruling. I cannot conceive of the Chairman of Committees arming himself beforehand with a ruling on an amendment which he had never seen and knew nothing at all about, unless there was collaboration in some quarter or

other with regard to the matter. The result is that we find ourselves in the present position. In common with the member for North-East Fremantle, it seems to me that there are members in this House—I do not accuse all or even a majority of members—who desire that this amendment shall not be dealt with on its merits. I would be content if the amendment were debated and dealt with on its merits. Whether it is agreeable to the majority of members or not, is beside the question. Members are entitled to their own opinion and to vote accordingly. For that reason, I would be satisfied if they were content to frankly and honestly deal with the amendment. I most emphatically object to it being side-tracked in any manner whatever which would enable them to refrain from disclosing their attitude. That is what has happened. The action which has been taken is merely begging the question. Members opposite have taken advantage of the generous attitude displayed by the Opposition during this session. If we had been more hostile and fought the Government at every point, we should have been more respected in some quarters. It is most regrettable that advantage should be taken of such a position and so enable members to evade their responsibilities, and escape from casting a straight out vote upon the amendment. For my part, I hope I shall not err in the future through being generous to the Government. Let hon. members cast their vote on the question now before the Chair in accordance with their consciences and I shall be satisfied. I do not see how any solitary member can uphold your ruling, Mr. Speaker. They cannot do it. No man with any sense of logic or reason or understanding of the Bill before us and of the principal Act, could accept the ruling. If members face this question honestly, they cannot support your ruling.

Question stated and a division taken.

Hon. P. Collier: Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees is voting for his own ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Hon. P. Collier: Mr. Chairman, have a little bit of decency. You should not vote in support of your own ruling.

Mr. Stubbs: You mind your own business.

Hon. P. Collier: In this case I will make your business, my business. Fancy a Chairman of Committees voting for his own ruling! It is in keeping with the ruling he gave.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	16
				—
A tie	..	..	..	0
				—

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Brown	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Smith
Mr. Collier	Mr. Troy
Mr. Davies	Mr. Walker
Mr. Duff	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. O'Loughlin
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Draper	Mr. Money
Mr. George	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Willmott
Sir H. B. Lefroy	Mr. Maley
	(Teller.)

Mr. Speaker: I give my casting vote with the Noes.

Question thus negatived.

Committee resumed.

The Chairman: The question is: That the Schedule be agreed to.

Hon. P. Collier: I move—

That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

The Chairman: The question is that I leave the Chair and report progress.

Hon. T. Walker: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. P. Collier: I simply moved that you should leave the Chair

Question stated and a division called for.

Hon. P. Collier: I have got you now, Mr. Chairman. You will not be able to vote for your own ruling this time.

The Chairman: I will not take any instructions from you.

Hon. P. Collier: You are not fit to be Chairman of Committees.

The Chairman: I know how to behave myself and you do not.

Hon. P. Collier: Behave yourself! You ought to be dragged out of there.

The Chairman: Order!

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	17
Majority against				3

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Smith
Mr. Brown	Mr. Troy
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Collier	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Davies	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Lambert	(Teller.)
Mr. Lutey	

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Maley
Mr. Draper	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Duff	Mr. Money
Mr. George	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Hardwick
Sir H. B. Lefroy	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

Progress reported.

Mr. HUDSON: I should like to know where we stand. What stage have we reached?

The SPEAKER: The Chairman reported to the House that the Committee had considered the Bill, made progress and asked leave to sit again. I do not know how much progress has been made.

House adjourned at 11.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 3rd December, 1920.

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

URGENCY MOTION—FIREWOOD CUTTERS' STRIKE.

Mr. SPEAKER [4.33]: I have received the following notice from the leader of the Opposition:—

I desire to give notice that it is my intention, on the assembling of the House this afternoon, to move a motion for the adjournment of the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely the closing of the mines in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, consequent upon the strike of woodcutters in the district.

In order to comply with the Standing Orders, it will be necessary for seven members to rise in their places.

Seven members having risen in their places,