

Hon. D. G. Gawler: No.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: It is permissive, not mandatory.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Every year dozens of persons are arrested and charged with being of unsound mind, and, if the doctors were to be called in every case, the expense would be heavy. Mr. Gawler's amendment, however, I consider quite reasonable. If a man is in a condition to say that he desires to have the doctors called for the purpose of cross-examination, then it is a pretty fair indication that the man is not of unsound mind.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I should certainly have asked the Committee to reject the entire clause but for the circumstance that then the Bill would not accomplish what the Minister desires, namely to prevent a crop of litigation. As amended, the clause will meet that difficulty, and also meet the intention of the Minister, and, further, meet pretty fairly what I desire.

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

Clauses 5 to 10—agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned 5.32 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 15th December, 1914.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Regulations under the Workers' Homes Acts, 1911, 1912, and 1914. 2, Report of Public Works Department for the year ended 30th June, 1914.

PAPER—PROPOSED AGREEMENT WITH THE AUSTRALIA WHALING COMPANY.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara) [4.37]: I beg to present a copy of a proposed agreement between the Government of Western Australia and the Australia Whaling Company, Limited, and I move—

That this paper do lie upon the Table of the House.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [4.38]: Before that motion is carried, I wish to ask the Premier whether he will place upon the Table of the House the whole of the papers connected with this matter before the agreement is completed or a license is granted.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [4.39]: Yes; if hon. members think it advisable, I will lay the whole of the papers on the Table as desired.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—ELECTORAL DEPARTMENT.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna) [4.40]: Last Thursday evening the member for Perth (Hon. J. D. Connolly) raised a question in connection with the laying on the Table of the House of certain papers connected with the Electoral Department. I intend to lay those papers on the Table this afternoon, and in addition I intend to lay on the Table a further paper from the Chief Electoral Officer which reads as follows:—

The Hon. the Attorney General. Perth District election, October 1914—Hon. J. D. Connolly's remarks in the Legislative Assembly *re*:—1, With further reference to the above subject and the remarks submitted to you, dated 10th instant, I beg to furnish herewith the following supplementary statement:—2, So far as Mr. Connolly's complaint of delay in attending to this matter is concerned, I beg to say that the marked roll was not handed to me by Mr. Connolly until some time after the election; I am not sure of the exact date, but would say that I obtained access to the roll some time in the beginning of November; and I then informed Mr. Connolly that it would not be possible to commence inquiries at once, as there are always certain important matters which required the attention of the whole staff immediately following upon election day. Moreover it must be remembered that before commencing the actual inquiry it was necessary for me to ascertain the names of the individual electors—out of the total number of 2,439 marked names—who actually voted at the election. This entailed comparing each of the 2,439 names with each of the 14 electoral rolls used at the Perth election, which naturally occupied a considerable time as it was necessary to make absolutely certain that no mistakes were made in this respect, in order that inquiries might be limited to the persons who were actually concerned. Under the circum-

stances, I claim that the charge of inactivity and delay against me does not lie.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! By what right does the Attorney General claim to read that statement?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I claim the right to put the public in full possession of the facts in relation to the rolls with respect to which a charge has been made.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Attorney General must get the consent of the House to the reading of that statement.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I understand it is with the consent of the House I am reading it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have no such understanding.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then I will ask the consent of the House to my completing the reading of the statement which I have begun.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House?

Members: Aye.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The statement continues—

3, With regard to Mr. Connolly's interjection that he (Mr. Connolly) was not surprised that the Electoral Officer had visited certain residences and found people still there, I can only say that in view of the fact that 156 names out of 389, or nearly 50 per cent, of those who voted, were found upon inquiry being made to reside at the very address for which they appeared on the printed roll; and as these 156 names did not in one instance represent a duplication—such having been already eliminated from the list—I cannot understand that Mr. Connolly was not surprised at such result, as the departmental inquiries in fact proved that his canvass was so inefficient and incorrect that half the number of electors he complained about, and in regard to whom inquiry was made, actually were found to reside at the address given on the electoral roll, whilst 70 others were found to reside at other addresses within the Perth electoral district, which, according to his own statement, had been

thoroughly canvassed by his friends. (See Mr. Connolly's letter to me of the 7th instant.) 4, As already stated, the inquiry is proceeding and a complete statement will be submitted at a later stage; but the remaining stages are more tedious, as they entail correspondence with country districts and inquiries through the police in various parts of the State. (Signed) E. Stenberg, Chief Electoral Officer.

I move—

That these papers do lie upon the Table of the House.

Question passed; the papers ordered to lie upon the Table.

URGENCY MOTION—PEARLING INDUSTRY AT BROOME.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) has notified me that he intends to move the adjournment of the House in order to draw attention to the crisis which has occurred in Broome. So that the matter may be placed in order, it is necessary that when the hon. member rises to speak seven other hon. members rise in their places to signify their support of the motion.

Seven members having risen in their places,

Mr. MALE (Kimberley) [4.44]: In moving the adjournment of the House, I wish to state that I do so after mature consideration and fully realising the responsibility which I am assuming at this particular period, when Christmas is so near and the time of this House is of specially great value. I would not move the adjournment of the House were not the question to which I desire to refer one of pressing urgency. But for that fact I should not venture to delay the House or ask hon. members to listen to my plaint this afternoon. For 3½ months I have been trying unsuccessfully to get the ear of the Premier. My patience has become exhausted, as has also the patience of those whom I represent. I wish to place their case before members, and I will ask members to judge between myself and the Premier, and see whether I have had a fair deal.

The Premier: That is not a matter of urgency.

Mr. MALE: It will be before I have finished. I would ask whether I, representing one of the big industries of the State, have received that courtesy which a member expects from the Premier. I noticed in last evening's paper that the Premier, in reply to an interviewer, said that the appeal made by the mayor of Broome to the people and the Government in regard to the position of the pearling industry would be considered by Cabinet that afternoon. I found also that the Honorary Minister (Mr. Underwood) in reply to an interviewer, made remarks very much to the same effect. Those remarks would make it appear as if this was the first time the matter had been brought under the notice of the Premier or of Cabinet. I wish to say to the House and through the House, by medium of the Press, to the public generally, that such is not the case. It is within the recollection of members that war broke out early in August last. On the 6th August, when speaking on the second reading of the Control of Trade in War Time Bill, I suggested that the industry which I represented would probably be one of those hardest hit in Australia. I also referred to the fact that the shell trade throughout the world was practically paralysed. Although I did not know at that time, I thought it was quite possible that before long it would be my unpleasant duty to ask the Treasurer of the State to come to the assistance of the pearlers in Broome. On the 4th September I received the following telegram from the secretary of the Pearlers' Association:—

Committee desirous of having your advice as to what practical assistance might be obtained from either State or Commonwealth Government for the industry. Suggest cheaper marine insurance on shell might be obtainable under Government guarantee, also financial assistance in direction of advances on shell stored in Broome during crisis thereby avoiding exceptionally heavy freight, insurance, etc. Commonwealth Bank should doubtless

be in good position make such advances. Probably your influence would enable Harbour and Light to provide storage accommodation special rates and issue storage certificates acceptable to bank mentioned. Pigott, Secretary Pearlers' Association.

Mr. Bolton: They do not want much.

Mr. MALE: No. On the following day I called at the Premier's office with a view to seeing the Premier and placing this telegram before him. I was unable to see him, but I left the telegram with his secretary, and asked that gentleman to arrange an interview for me. On Monday I called again. I was handed back the telegram, a copy of which had been made by the Premier's secretary for the Premier, but on that occasion I was unable to see the Premier, and no arrangement had been made for an interview. I also—I believe it was on the Tuesday—walked across this Chamber and asked the Premier if he had received a copy of the telegram, and if he would grant me an interview. He promised to do that. On the 15th September, after trying for ten days to arrange an interview, and being anxious to send a reply to the telegram which I had received from the Pearlers' Association, I wrote to the Premier as follows—

Dear Sir,—Enclosed herewith I beg to hand you copy of telegram received from Broome, also copy of letter forwarded from the mayor of Broome to Sir John Forrest. Owing to the change of Ministry in the Commonwealth, Sir John Forrest has handed this letter to me to deal with. By the letter and telegram you will see that matters in Broome are very serious, and I would urge on you the necessity of assisting the pearlers during the present crisis. This could well be done by agreeing to make advances against mother-of-pearl shell stored in Broome, or by arranging with the banks to make these advances under Government guarantee, as I understand is being done in South Africa in respect of wool, hides, etc. I would be pleased to discuss this matter with you if you could see your way clear to make an appointment with

me. As the pearlers are anxiously awaiting an early reply, I would ask you to give this matter your early and favourable consideration.

The letter referred to as coming from the mayor of Broome is dated the 30th August, and is as follows—

To the Right Honourable Sir John Forrest,—As mayor of the town, I ask you in the midst of your press of business to read over this letter, written to you not only in your official capacity, but also as the leader of Western Australia. When war was threatening the pearl buyers ceased buying, and the majority of them, foreigners, left the town. Broome has no back country, and lives entirely on its pearling. The pearl buyers having left, the only source of income remaining to Broome was the money to be obtained for mother-of-pearl shell (generally referred to as M.O.P. shell). The shell is the bread and butter of the business, and the pearl is the possibility beyond bread and butter, which is the lure and fascination of pearling. There are in Broome about 110 pearling boats, whose owners belong to what is known as "the combine" between Broome, Aru Islands, and Thursday Island pearlers to regulate or steady the price of shell. A further number of pearling boats—about 140—belong to owners who have pledged themselves to deliver the shell won by their boats to Oehse of London for the 1914 and 1915 catch of shell at £220 per ton of 2,224 lbs. over the scales at Broome—cash. The pearlers in the combine are promised by Burns, Philp and Co., the selling agents of the combine shell, an advance up to £150 per ton on the shell shipped to them. I enclose copy of the agreement concerning the "combine."

The Premier: Which you did not.

Mr. MALE: I did not enclose copies of the agreements, inasmuch as they were not handed to me, but I presume had been sent back direct to Mr. Clarke Hall.

The Premier: You asked me to deal with them.

Mr. MALE: I asked you to deal with the letter as I received it. The communication continues—

The copies of the agreements which I enclose are only copies made for my office use, but I certify them to be correct. There are about 35 boats—pearling vessels—the owners of which are not members either of the “combine” or under contract to Ochse. The position, therefore, is that, barring the war, Broome is on a good wicket to sell its shell at from £220. From the agreements you will see that Ochse takes half the “combine” shell at £225, and that the combine is not to sell the other half under £267 10s. at the London shell sales. But owing to the war, first Burns, Philp ceased advancing on shell, then Ochse only paid half the price on his own private half, and on his half of the combine shell, and now (yesterday) all bank credits on shell are absolutely stopped, and the man in Broome in possession of, say, one ton of shell cannot raise 6d. on it. The position is such that the coloured men, the crews of the boats, have agreed to leave their wages in abeyance until the trouble is over, provided their masters—the pearlers—will keep them on their boats and feed them. In all the above statements I am speaking of my own knowledge, and the statements are absolutely reliable. If the owners can obtain something like £100 per ton on their shell, they can keep their boats afloat and prevent laying them up, and rotting them on the beach. And at this point I ask your advice and assistance: 1, We are producing a commodity which in the world’s markets is never worth less than £100 per ton, except a few small parcels sold in 1903, on a glut, for £80 odd. 2, We are too far away from any other inhabited district for our women and children to get away from Broome. 3, We are starving in the midst of plenty—having even now—it being the best part of the pearling year—about £30,000 worth of shell in the town. In these circumstances, I beg respectfully to suggest that, as Broome represents about the

fourth largest industry in the State—an industry which while producing a large revenue is drawn from the sea, and is not liable to permanent diminution; which, furthermore, trains men to the sea, and which, furthermore, by its 300 pearling boats ranging in the pursuit of shell from Exmouth Gulf to the entrance to Cambridge Gulf—where the water becomes too muddy for pearling—ensures that nothing abnormal shall occur on our unoccupied N.W. coasts without the Government bearing of it. That it is worth while preserving by some advances based on bed-rock value—except for war. That if such advances could be obtained, say, £80 to £100 per ton, the capital, *i.e.*, the pearling boats, can be kept from perishing, which they would quickly do if laid up on the beach, and the industry can be kept in a condition fit to spring into life again when conditions become normal. It should be recollected that Broome is by far the largest town in the N.W., and that its white population is increasing faster than is the white population of any other town in Northern Australia—outside perhaps of Queensland, of which I have no information—and that it has previously, in 1903, pulled through on a temporary fall of shell to the price of about £110. Could not the existing banks, or the Commonwealth Bank, be authorised to advance up to £100, or whatever they think is the bed-rock price of shell after the war is over, or cannot some other assistance be given to this outpost to keep it alive during the crisis. Be it plainly understood that we do not ask for gifts, we only ask for loans on the bed-rock value of our product. I need scarcely say that Broome is a much more important distant and forgotten centre than is generally thought of. By reference to the post office money order returns and to the Customs returns this can be easily ascertained. It has an abnormally large exchange business, and one bank has four clerks besides the manager, and the other has

two clerks besides the manager. If the Commonwealth bank came here under the present circumstances and prepared to advance on the bedrock (except for war) price of shell, it would at once secure a lucrative business. I was instrumental in assisting to obtain a branch of the Western Australian Bank here, and that bank more than paid its expenses during the first six months of its starting business here. It may be of service to the town if you, when reading over this letter, know that I am not now, nor have I ever been interested in pearling, either as owner or as mortgagee. I am simply a solicitor who has had the sense to keep out of a business he does not understand, *i.e.*, pearling, and that I have been in Broome for 12 years and have been mayor for five (1905-8, 1913, 1914), whenever in fact they want the town clearing of typhoid and they cannot secure anybody else who will prosecute all offenders against health. It is difficult, even to myself, to realise the approaching crisis and how intense it must become. The loose cash of the inhabitants is not yet expended; but when it is expended I do not know what is going to happen because there is no reserve. The pearlers spend their money as fast as they have made it. Broome, nowadays, is not a pearling camp, but a town with a due proportion of women and children. My wife and baby are away in Port Darwin with my parents-in-law, I having accompanied them on a holiday abroad which was suddenly curtailed on the news of war which brought me back to Broome instead of proceeding to Java. I mention this to show how fortunate, comparatively, my own position is. As an illustration of how seriously I regard the situation, I have reduced my house expenses to 24s. a week plus, of course, rates and repairs, the freehold being mine and my family being away. My office salaries I have not reduced and they amount to £35 per month both because it has taken

many years to collect my small staff and also because I do not believe in throwing people out of employment at a crisis when we should all row in the same boat and pull together. You will see, therefore, that I am not pleading for myself but for the town, and I most earnestly ask of you assistance and, out of your great experience, for advice. Your obedient servant (Signed) W. Clarke Hall, mayor of Broome.

Mr. Bolton: Did he get it from Sir John?

Mr. MALE: He did not get it from Sir John for the simple reason that Sir John did not have the power to give it, the Federal elections having altered the state of affairs in the Federal House.

The Premier: That does not affect him giving advice.

Mr. MALE: It affects him giving assistance.

The Premier: Has he attempted to move the Federal House to get that assistance? Do you remember the day you handed me the letter?

Mr. MALE: Yes, the 15th September.

The Premier: The date of the letter is 30th August, and you handed it to me when the elections were over.

Mr. MALE: I handed it to you immediately I got it. I think that common courtesy at least demanded some acknowledgment of my letter, but none was forthcoming.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Mr. MALE: I called again, but was unable to see the Premier. On the 19th September I followed my first letter up with another. I wrote on the 19th September to the Premier as follows:—

On the 5th September I left at your office for your perusal a telegram received from Broome re necessity of doing something to assist pearlers, owing to crisis which has arisen, occasioned by the war. On the 15th September I wrote you enclosing a copy of previous telegram, also copy of letter from the mayor of Broome, addressed to the Federal Colonial Treasurer. I am again in receipt of

a telegram from Broome, asking what is being done to assist them. As the matter is one of urgency, I would again appeal to you to give this telegram and letter your early consideration, so that I may be able to let them know that your Government is prepared to assist them.

That was on the 19th September. On the 24th September I happened to call at the Colonial Secretary's office on some matter appertaining to his department, and whilst there presumably we must have touched on the question of pearling for I told the Colonial Secretary what I thought of his Premier. I did not mince matters, but I told him I had appealed for an interview from the 5th September. I had written him letters but I had failed to get an answer. He told me, knowing the Premier as he did, that he thought there was some mistake?

The Premier: Who said that?

Mr. MALE: The Colonial Secretary said he thought there was some mistake. I said "there is no mistake." The fact remained I had endeavoured to see the Premier and had failed. I saw the hon. member when he was sitting in his seat in the House, and I walked across the Chamber, and he agreed to an interview, but he failed to keep that interview. I have written twice, and I have received no acknowledgment of either letter.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Mr. MALE: It is correct.

The Premier: I have a copy here of the reply.

Mr. MALE: At that particular time I had not received any acknowledgment. The Colonial Secretary sympathised with me, and said, "There must be some mistake. I shall be seeing the Premier to-day and I will refer the matter to him," and he made a note about it. Evidently he did see the Premier. I reached my private house that afternoon at 5 o'clock and found the acknowledgment from the Premier awaiting me. The acknowledgment is dated 21st September. It was posted that afternoon, the 24th, and received by me that afternoon, the 24th, and it is as follows:—

With reference to your letter of the 19th instant and previous correspondence therein mentioned on the subject of necessity for assisting pearlers at this crisis, I have to inform you that the representations made have been under consideration with a view to endeavouring to see how the difficulty can be met. I will communicate with you again on the matter as soon as possible. I might point out that the copy of letter sent to Sir John Forrest from the mayor of Broome was incomplete, as the particulars supplied by way of enclosure thereto were not attached. It is returned herewith, as you may require it for future use.

The Premier is quite correct there. The enclosures referred to were not attached inasmuch as I did not receive them.

The Premier: You could easily have got a copy of them.

Mr. MALE: I could, but the Premier never asked for them.

The Premier: I am not going to beg to you for these things.

Mr. MALE: On the 28th September I received a letter from the Premier dated the 24th September, reading as follows—

With further reference to the correspondence which has passed relating to the present position of the pearling industry, I have to inform you that consideration has been given to the matter but it is thought that representations should first be made to the Federal Government with a view to seeing whether they are prepared to adopt the suggestion contained in the second paragraph of your letter of the 15th instant, and either make advances against the M.O.P. shell stored in Broome or guarantee some bank who may be willing to undertake such business. The Federal Government have given an assurance that they will assist the financial institutions and the banks so that the industries of the Commonwealth may not suffer more than is possible through the crisis occasioned by the war, and I think this is a case in point. It certainly appears to me to be a matter which the Commonwealth should be in a better position to

engineer than the State, and I would strongly recommend that action be taken in the direction indicated.

After waiting from the 5th September to the 28th, I am coolly informed by the Premier that as far as the State Government are concerned it is a matter for Federal consideration, and to make the sting just a trifle more bitter—what I may call rubbing it in—the Premier takes occasion to add a footnote of his own:—

Hon. H. Gregory is the member for the district.

Mr. Bolton: That is not a sting.

Mr. MALE: It is a sting, and a sting that the Premier himself felt when the result of the election was known.

Mr. Bolton: You felt the sting.

Mr. MALE: It did sting, and I resent the insult. To this letter I replied as follows:—

I have to acknowledge receipt of your favour redated September 21st posted and delivered to me on the 24th and redated and delivered to me on the 28th, and note that as a result of your consideration extending from September 5th you advise me that the matter is one for Commonwealth consideration. I would like to point out that your Government according to the Hon. the Minister for Mines have arranged for advances to be made against the base metals for the assistance of miners. Also, I understand, assistance is to be rendered by your Government to farmers. These people have not been advised by you to appeal to the Commonwealth for assistance. I fail, therefore, to understand your scant consideration of the appeal of the pearlers. My request for an interview has been absolutely ignored and the pearlers' suggestion of obtaining from your Government storage accommodation at special rates and the issue of storage certificates is also ignored. I might point out that should the said Government see their way to assist us on the lines indicated this latter question of storage and storage certificates would still be a necessary portion of the scheme, and I have no assurance from you that you would ever agree to this.

A reply respecting this might be of some assistance to the pearler. I have been patiently waiting for nearly four weeks to give the pearlers some answer and now have nothing to give them. I leave in a few days for Broome, and regret to find that I have no offers or suggestion of assistance to convey to them from you.

There was nothing left then for me to do but to pass on a copy of the whole of the correspondence to Mr. Gregory, our Federal member, which I did.

Mr. Bolton: And what did you get?

Mr. MALE: I got courtesy; I got civility; I got consideration.

The Premier: Then what are you worrying me for if you got all this?

Mr. MALE: I got all that, which is something. I am pleased to say that although the Federal Government did not see their way to assist the pearling industry as a separate industry, owing to the fact that they were providing funds for the various States to look after the different industries and public works, I did at least receive from the Federal Government, through Mr. Gregory, consideration and courtesy and a prompt reply. After being turned down—and I suppose I might call it practically being turned down—by the Premier, the next I heard of the pearling business was on the Claremont showgrounds. I was down there on show day and amongst others I met the hon. the Colonial Secretary. He came up and passed the time of day with me, and chaffingly remarked, "You are a fine member to represent the pearlers; you do not seem to take the slightest interest in them." I may say I received rather a shock, and I asked the Colonial Secretary what he meant. I said, "I have done all I could in the matter. I have failed to get an interview with your Premier," and I went on to say that I had received a letter from him turning it down, and referring me to the Federal Government. I also told him that I was in communication with that Government through our member. He then said, "The Premier has asked me to go into the matter." Then I said, "Surely it was either the duty of the Premier or yourself to

advise me that you were asked to go into the matter," and surely, I had a right to be informed of that. I should not have had to pick up that information casually on the show grounds. That was only a day or two prior to my leaving for Broome. I thanked the Colonial Secretary for his information, and I called on him before I left for Broome. He told me he was going into the matter; that he would be away for a week, and that if anything cropped up he would send me a telegram. On my way up the coast I naturally had to stop at Geraldton. Whilst ashore there I casually met the Premier in the street. We passed the time of day, and he said to me—and this is the first information I got from him on the question—"In reference to the pearling matter, I have asked the Colonial Secretary to go into that for me." I believe at the same time the Premier also advised me that he was conferring with the Commonwealth Bank in connection with the matter. When in Broome I explained the matter very fully to the pearl-ers. I told them exactly what had been done, and that I had been passed out by the State Premier in the first place and then referred to the Federal Government. I also told them that the matter had been passed on to the Colonial Secretary for consideration. At a public meeting held in Broome just prior to my going south, the following resolution was carried—

That Mr. Arthur Male, M.L.A., member for the district, be asked to endeavour to arrange with the Government to guarantee advances by the banks to the amount of £120 per ton against this season's m.o.p. shell stored in the Government goods sheds at Broome.

A copy of the resolution was wired to the Colonial Secretary, and he was also advised that I was proceeding south, and would call upon him at his office. On my arrival I took the first opportunity of seeing the Colonial Secretary and of discussing the matter with him, and he promised to place the matter before Cabinet. I believe it was first placed before Cabinet on the 30th November. I rang up the Colonial Secretary the following day

to know what the result had been. He told me that it had received some consideration, but had been deferred until the following Monday. I understand that on the 7th December, the following Monday, the matter was again brought up in Cabinet. It was not received with much approval, but at the same time the proposition was not altogether turned down. Following that an appeal was made to me by the pearl-ers who happened to be in Perth at that particular time—

Mr. Bolton: They are always in Perth.

Mr. MALE: To try and arrange to introduce them as a deputation to the Colonial Treasurer. I called at the Premier's office to try and arrange this deputation but I met with my usual fate. I was unable to see the Premier himself, but I received the following letter—

With further regard to your request that the hon. the Premier should receive a deputation representing the pearling industry, I have to advise you that I mentioned this matter to Mr. Seaddan, but as it is one which chiefly concerns the hon. the Colonial Secretary, and all correspondence which has been received has been passed on to him for his consideration, Mr. Seaddan would be glad if you would kindly arrange to make your representations to him.

I rang up the Colonial Secretary for the purpose of arranging a deputation to him. He advised me that as the matter had not been absolutely turned down by Cabinet, and would be again brought before them, and that as he did not think I would be able to give him any additional information other than which was already in his possession, he did not think it was necessary to receive a deputation on the subject. On the 8th of the month, failing to make any progress I wired to the mayor of Broome as follows—

I consider very little chance obtaining Government guarantee bank advances against shell. Under these circumstances is there any danger of large number of men being stranded and requiring Government relief for neces-

saries of life? If so, what number do you consider will be affected?

I myself was most anxious to prevent any crisis. I was anxious too to find out what the actual state of affairs would be in Broome if we were turned down. In fact, I wished to obtain some information for the Colonial Secretary in order to let him know the position he would have to face if the Government were not prepared to do something in the nature of guaranteeing advances. On the eve of the 10th a public meeting was held in Broome, and the following resolution was passed:—

That the people of Broome who are entirely dependent on the pearling industry view with dismay the hesitation of the Government in guaranteeing bank advances on mother-of-pearl shell stored in the Government warehouses in the town, as without such assistance the majority of the pearlers will be unable to pay the wages or the passages to Singapore of upwards of 1,000 men, the bulk of whom in a few days and the balance shortly will be destitute in Broome, necessitating Government assistance.

It was also resolved that the assistance of the Press should be asked to enable the needs of the pearlers and their employees to be made known throughout Australia. You will probably expect me at this particular moment to make some slight reference to the disturbance which occurred in Broome the following day. I do not view that myself with any particular alarm, but I do accuse the Government of being to some extent responsible owing to their delay in coming to any decision with reference to the assistance of pearlers. If it was the intention of the Government to turn us down absolutely, why were they not manly enough to say so weeks ago?

Mr. Bolton: Turn "us" down?

Mr. MALE: Yes, I am a pearler, and am not ashamed of it. Why were they not manly enough to turn us down weeks ago? Why did they not say straight out they would not assist the pearlers? Then they would have known their position

and what they had to face, and what to prepare for.

The Premier: The position is all right.

Mr. MALE: A feeling of uneasiness naturally surrounds the whole of the pearling industry.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Surrounds the whole world.

Mr. MALE: It is natural too that that feeling of uneasiness should also be communicated to the men engaged in the industry.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: How many men are there?

Mr. Munsie: How many white men are there?

Mr. MALE: And in connection with the men employed in the pearling industry, let me say right here that there is no port in the British Empire where you can turn so many seaman loose on shore at one time with cheques to the extent which they have in normal times, and preserve the same amount of good order as is maintained in Broome with the few police stationed there.

The Premier: That is a reflection on the white races there.

Mr. MALE: It is not a reflection.

The Premier: The pearlers hush anything up.

Mr. MALE: I say also that I have lived in Broome for many years when we have been faced with the same difficulties, and we have only had one constable to maintain order amongst this number of men.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: How many men? You do not give us information.

Mr. MALE: I have to admit that I have failed to obtain the ear of the Premier. He has refused all along to grant me an interview. I now appeal, not to him, but to members of this Chamber, to see that justice is done to those whom I represent, and through this Chamber I make also my appeal to the people of this State. The leader of the Country party, when speaking on the Address-in-reply the other afternoon, made reference to the fact that every industry in this State should receive consideration. He referred to the fact that every member representing an industry in this State

who has a knowledge of that industry, should be consulted by the Premier or other responsible Minister, to see what is necessary to be done for the assistance and maintenance of that industry, and that each industry should receive assistance according to its relative value and importance to the State. I appeal to the leader of the Country party and to members of that party to assist me this afternoon in seeing that we obtain our fair and just rights. I appeal to my friend, the leader of the Opposition, and to the members of the Opposition to assist me this afternoon, and I also appeal to members on the opposite side of the Chamber to give us at least a fair and impartial hearing and consideration. What is the position in Broome to-day? Perhaps I could not do better or explain it better than by reading the appeal which the mayor of Broome has sent to the Press of Western Australia.

Mr. Carpenter: Take it as read.

Mr. MALE: I would be quite willing to take it as read if I had the assurance of the whole of the members of this Chamber that they had read it.

Mr. Carpenter: We have read it all right, I think.

Mr. MALE: I have not that assurance.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I hear that the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) has not read it.

Mr. Heitmann: I am very fond of fiction.

Mr. Taylor: How many volumes?

Mr. MALE: In a telegram to the *West Australian* the mayor of Broome, dealing with the position of the town and the pearling industry in the locality, says—

At a public meeting at Broome on Thursday last the following resolution was unanimously passed:—"The people of Broome who are entirely dependent on the pearling industry, view with dismay the hesitation of the Government in guaranteeing bank advances on mother-of-pearl shell stored in the Government warehouses in the town, as without such assistance the majority of the pearlers will be unable to pay wages due to or passages

to Singapore of upwards of 1,000 men, the bulk of whom in a few days and the balance shortly afterwards will be destitute in Broome necessitating Government assistance." It was also resolved that the assistance of the Press be asked to enable the dire need of the people to be made known throughout the Commonwealth.

In a telegram to the *West Australian*, the mayor of Broome (Mr. Clarke Hall), dealing with the position of the town and the pearling industry generally, says:—"It was pointed out at the meeting that this town lives entirely by pearling, with 290 boats, averaging 12 tons burthen and 25 feet in length each, owned by 144 separate owners, the great majority of owners having one boat. These boats which are valued at £600 apiece normally, are now unsaleable, and if left uncared for on the mud at Broome would in a few months be unfit for sale. A skilled lot of white and coloured men, such as could not be collected again for years, will be scattered all over the world if pearling is closed down. On the average it costs at the end of each season—that is to say in December—an average of £250 per boat to pay off the wages for the last season, profit and to re-engage a crew for the next year. This money has always come from the working of the boats during the previous six months, little shell being sold before June in any year. This year no pearls could be sold after July, and no shell after August. There is not in the town the necessary money to pay off and ship away to Singapore the last season's crews. The shell fished and to be fished this season and during the next season (1915) has been sold in advance to big London and New York buyers at the price of £220 per ton cash on delivery at Broome, but the buyers since August have declined to accept delivery of or to pay for any more shell for the present, and legal actions are pending to enforce the contracts. The town is, therefore, by the inability to sell the shell just now,

some £100,000 short of its usual cash, namely, 450 tons at £220 per ton. Its boats are unsaleable and its other assets are for the moment unsaleable. Over £100,000 of shell at ante-war prices will be lying on the town. On this the people consider that it is reasonable to ask for a Government guarantee or assistance to the banks, which are then willing to advance £120 per ton on the war-bound shell. They do not ask for any gifts, but only for a guarantee in respect to which the banks will assure any responsible inquirer that there is little actual risk of being called upon to pay. An amount of £50,000 guaranteed on this basis would enable the town to meet its obligations and ship away its imported labour, and admit of a considerable proportion continuing pearling. The 1909 cyclones cost the industry over that amount, but the town out of its own resources made good its losses. The 1910 cyclone cost the town over £80,000, but the town again made good its losses without assistance. This time we have suffered no loss of that description, but for the present the market for shell and pearls is closed, although it must, of course, shortly re-open. If we can negotiate advances on our shell we can pull through without insolvency or recourse to charity. If we cannot, then whether it likes it or not, and intensely against our wishes, the Government will have to come forward with ships and stores to feed and carry away a considerable portion of our own population, in addition to the imported seamen, in respect of each of whom the Government holds a £100 bond. Broome has no back-country or railways, nor any town within 1,000 miles on which we can fall back. To take us to civilisation will cost £7 per head steerage. All food but meat comes from Fremantle (1,200 miles) or from Singapore (2,000 miles). At present cash is required for everything, and the stocks are not being replenished as usual. The 1914 season is finishing in a few days. All the boats

will be in with 2,000 coloured seamen, in addition to the white men. Out of the 2,000 coloured men, not less than 1,000 should, in the ordinary way, be shipped to Singapore during the next few weeks, but it is estimated that not less than 1,000 of them will be stranded here owing to the inability of their masters to pay their wages and their passages to Singapore, which cost £6 per man. The boats are liable under the marine law for the wages, but the boats are unsaleable. The masters have plenty of shell in the town, but that also is unsaleable. All the other property of the pearlers is unsaleable at present. Very shortly the masters will be unable even to feed these 1,000 men, and in many cases will be unable to buy food for themselves and their families in a very short time. The state of affairs means serious trouble. Were there 1,000 of ourselves, instead of 1,000 coloured men, unpaid and unfed, anyone can imagine the trouble that would immediately arise. We are on the point of serious trouble if the Government does not guarantee us, or take the situation in hand, in the way of sending up food and ships for transport. Is it not better to guarantee, in a maximum of £50,000, a town which, in recent years, has twice made good larger amounts, than to throw the money away in gifts or charity, which would leave the town ruined and deserted? It has to be remembered that every year Broome brings into the Commonwealth in hard cash in payment for the shell and pearls which it every year wins from the surrounding seas between £350,000 and half a million.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How many participate in that amount?

Mr. MALE: The whole Commonwealth. The report continues—

It is a self-supporting community, the largest and one of the extremely few such communities in our tropical Australia outside of Queensland. If any Australian industries are being, or are likely to be, subsidised or financed, should not this little white outpost be

assisted and financed, which in the reputedly most unhealthy part of Australia contributes up to half a million annually to Australia's income. It is, as our papers say, desirable, above all things, to people our empty North with the white race. Should not this, the white settlement in the empty North, be preserved from collapse? The white population of Broome has increased from 150 in 1912 to close on 1,100 in 1914, while the coloured local population has diminished, and the number of the imported seamen has remained about stationary. At what enormous cost could another white colony successfully establish in the empty North to take the place of Broome? What is the total cost to the Commonwealth of Port Darwin, a smaller white community than Broome? Pearling is the fourth largest industry in Western Australia and Broome is Western Australia's third largest Customs port, ranking generally in volume next to Perth and Fremantle. Our 290 boats cover and patrol the otherwise deserted north-west and north coasts of Australia. Our pearlers in the past largely established the sheep and cattle stations now existing in the North and North-West, and thereby helped more than anything else to people these portions of the interior. Our manhood is equal to the Australian average, as is shown by our success in securing twice in succession the Rifle Clubs Challenge Cup of the West coast, and by the official report now lying before me.

The Premier: They don't think much of the Australian average when they consider men from Koepang better than the Australian.

Mr. MALE: The telegram goes on—It states that the last 20 recruits sent from Broome to the Expeditionary Force are among the best they have had at the Western Australian camp at Blackboy Hill. The Broome municipality has been established 10 years. During the nine years ending October, 1913, it collected all its rates, amounting to many thousands of pounds, with the exception of less than £20. This

time of war is one in which we should all pull together, and, above all things, should keep our business and our industries in full activity. Is it not a fair business, and also an important national proposition that Government assistance on a business basis, or even on a more liberal basis should be forthcoming on the security of our warehoused shell to this important white outpost in the empty North with its excellent financial records, its prosperous past, its proved powers of recovery from the crushing blows of the cyclones of 1903, 1910, and 1912, the Koombana blow, and its insured future? At present, owing to the temporary closing of the shell and the pearl market, we are starving in the midst of plenty. Were the contracts with regard to the shell of the 140 boats fulfilled by the still wealthy buyers in London and New York—

The Premier: Still wealthy! That is the point.

Mr. MALE: Absolutely no point.

The Premier: It is a big point.

Mr. MALE: The telegram continues—we would not trouble our kinsmen, but as things stand for the first time in our life as a community we have to acknowledge we want assistance, and we turn with confidence to our race throughout the Commonwealth to acknowledge that we deserve it. The position is plain. Either we must be able by Government guarantee to realise on our own asset, and thereby fight through our own adversity as we have so often done before, and thereby keep our future safe for ourselves and for Australia, or the Government must treat us as bankrupts and paupers, must send up food and ships to transport our men (after paying their wages), and must transport a very considerable number of us Australians to some other place where they will not starve but where they will only add to the present unemployed. We place the matter before our fellow-men."

That gives a very good epitome of the position as it stands to-day at Broome.

As pointed out by the mayor, the town is absolutely dependent on the pearling industry. It has very little back country, a little squatting, but not to any extent, and no mining. There are nearly 300 boats engaged in the industry, employing from six to eight men per boat. Prior to the war these boats were easily saleable at a price up to £600 each. Many of them are fitted with compressors and engines for pearling, and were of considerably more value. To-day they are practically unsaleable and if left in the creeks or on the mud banks will very soon deteriorate in value and become unusable.

Mr. Bolton: Some of these people are very wealthy.

Mr. MALE: I am not referring to the very wealthy men, but when we consider that the average number of boats per owner is only two—

Mr. Bolton: Average?

Mr. MALE: There are 144 owners, and a total of 290 boats. I doubt whether you can find more than one owner with over six boats on the whole of the pearling grounds.

Mr. Bolton: Captain Biddles and Captain Francis.

Mr. MALE: Captain Biddles has been out of the industry for many years.

Mr. Bolton: Is he not interested?

Mr. MALE: Not to my knowledge, I do not think he has the slightest interest in a single boat at Broome. Captain Francis is interested, I believe, in either three or four boats.

Mr. Bolton: Streeter?

Mr. MALE: Streeter owns three boats.

The Premier: Do not they enter into contracts to buy shell?

Mr. MALE: Sometimes.

The Premier: Then why do they not keep their contracts?

Mr. MALE: Have they ever refused?

The Premier: Evidently they have or they would not come to us for assistance. Why do they not buy shell?

Mr. MALE: Why should they buy shell, it is unsaleable.

The Premier: I have never been asked to buy shell.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They do not want you to buy it.

Mr. MALE: The lay-up season has just arrived and the boats are now in the creek idle. In normal times the men employed on these boats would be receiving their wages, and a big number of them would be deported to Singapore, Koe-pang, or to other places from which they came. The unfortunate position is that to-day whilst the owners have an asset in Broome in the form of shell and in the form of property they are unable to raise a single penny with which to reduce their liabilities, with which to pay off their men, with which to buy even food for their men.

The Premier: Let them send their men back.

Mr. MALE: Prior to the war, as was pointed out by the mayor in his letter, shell was being sold for £225 per ton under contract, but these contracts, owing to the war, the contractors are unable to fulfil, and, according to the rulings of the English courts, all these contracts are void owing to the war, and cannot be legally enforced.

The Premier: Who told you that?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Is Ochse's contract void?

Mr. MALE: Ochse's contract can be rendered void in the English courts.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Have you tested it?

Mr. MALE: It has been tested many times over; not this particular one, but many others.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Mr. MALE: If the Premier knows more than the courts and legal profession in England, we must submit to his opinion. There are many owners in Broome, and I give this as an illustration that a man has say four tons of shell worth, in normal times, some £900, and he requires £250 or £300 to pay off his crew. But the shell is unsaleable; he is unable to realise the cash, although he has the asset there in the form of shell and boats. The Government have been asked to come to the rescue. They have been asked to guarantee a bank advance of £100 per ton to assist these men to pay off their crews and tide them over the duration of the war. The

asset is a good one; the security is a good one, and I firmly believe that the banks would make the necessary advance for a matter of 12 months or, if necessary, until the war is over.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You will not sell it till the war is over.

Mr. MALE: When the war is over, shell, like all other commodities of a similar nature, will again become saleable. The Government have not been asked to put up a single penny; they have been offered good security, and yet they refuse to give Broome the treatment which it rightly deserves.

Mr. Bolton: How much do you want, £50,000?

Mr. MALE: The Colonial Secretary was asked by myself to guarantee an amount of about £35,000.

The Premier: That would not assist Broome.

Mr. MALE: If the Premier knows it would not assist Broome, I must leave it at that.

The Premier: What you ask for is £20,000 to enable the pearler to pay the wages he owes to these Koepangers.

Mr. MALE: I asked the Government to assist the pearlers, and to prevent a crisis at Broome, to guarantee up to £100 a ton so that the men's wages might be paid and that those who have to be deported might be deported.

Mr. Green: Will you guarantee that you will never want them back?

Mr. MALE: Also to enable the pearlers to tide over the present bad times. For many years past, I might say almost since the inauguration of pearling on this coast, the industry has been bringing into this State golden sovereigns to the tune of 300,000 to 500,000 per annum.

The Premier: When?

Mr. MALE: Year after year it has been doing that, and the whole of the money, with the exception of small amounts sent away in the form of wages, has been retained in the Commonwealth. I maintain that at this juncture the State is not in a position and cannot afford to lose such a valuable industry and asset as that. To-day we should be preserving

our industries, not wiping them out. We should be endeavouring to keep our people in employment, not casting them adrift.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Our white people first.

Mr. MALE: Most certainly, and not turn them adrift or bring them down here to compete in the already overflowing unemployed ranks of Perth.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): They can get two meals a day down here.

Mr. MALE: We do not want to see any of these people drawing on the relief funds of the State. It is for men I am pleading, and not for paupers asking for a loaf. They are prepared to put up an asset, and they are asking only for some consideration; nay, they are not asking for as much as has been asked by the miners and farmers of this State.

Mr. Munsie: When did the miners ask for relief?

Mr. MALE: The miners and farmers have been asking for relief and have not been in a position to put up the same amount of assets as the pearlers are prepared to do. It has been pointed out that our white population has increased in a very short time from 150 to 1,100, and surely 1,100 people in that far distant North are worth some consideration.

Mr. Heitmann: It is surprising that you disciples of private enterprise at the first sign of trouble run for relief to socialism.

Mr. MALE: It is not socialism; we are asking for a fair business deal on fair lines, but the Government are prepared to see our fellow countrymen lose all their assets—

Mr. Bolton: Fellow Koepangers.

Mr. MALE: The Government are prepared to see our fellow countrymen bankrupt and ruined; they would, I believe, be even prepared to see them starve rather than help them in the way I have asked. Our industry is the fourth largest export industry in the State, and I maintain it has done more in opening up the North of this State than any other industry.

The Premier: For the blackfellow, yes.

Mr. MALE: Our big squatting industries have been pioneered and opened up by the pearler—the member for Pilbara can bear me out in that—and, as a result civilisation to some extent has followed, mining has followed, and even to-day the pearlery are doing their share of mining prospecting on the coast of North Australia. It does seem monstrous to me when I realise that the Government deliberately and with their eyes open have squandered and wasted some £75,000 in running steamers on this coast, steamers which are benefiting only a very few people.

Mr. Munsie: They took away your agency, did they not?

Mr. MALE: And yet to save an established industry, which has been worth to this State some £300,000 to £500,000 per annum, an industry which has given employment directly to hundreds of white men, and indirectly to many hundreds more, they will do nothing. The Government will allow the finest city in the North to go bankrupt, to be left desolate, and will not lift a hand to prevent its ruin and desertion.

Mr. Foley: Cannot you bring in the State sawmills?

Mr. MALE: The Government's advisers—and I presume they take advice sometimes—their inspector of fisheries at Broome, and their Chief Inspector of Fisheries at Perth, have I believe considered this scheme and recommended it, but apparently the Government are not prepared to act on their recommendation. The Colonial Secretary, when speaking in another place the other evening, said the Government had been advised that to make advances in connection with this industry would be too risky. I would like to know who the adviser was, for he could have known very little about the pearling industry, or about pearl shell generally. Is it reasonable to assume that because at the present moment shell has no value, it will always remain without any value? Is it not a fact that ever since pearling was established on this coast, shell has had a good marketable value,

and will not it have that same marketable value as soon as the war ceases?

The Minister for Mines: That is problematical.

Mr. MALE: It is not.

The Premier: It is.

Mr. MALE: Is it not a fact that at this moment factories in America and England are using the shell?

The Premier: Well, why do not you sell your shell?

The Minister for Mines: The trade routes are open.

Mr. MALE: Are those factories to close altogether, or will not they aim to do, as many other industries in the British Empire are endeavouring to do, capture some of the enemies' trade?

The Premier: Is not it a fact that you have had to control the output of shell in normal times?

Mr. MALE: No.

The Premier: What is the combine for?

Mr. MALE: Not to control the output, but to control the distribution. Have not the Federal Government controlled the output? Have not they said—"You shall work so many men and no more."

The Premier: Not white men.

Mr. MALE: Have not they a Royal Commission sitting to-day inquiring into the possibility of employing white men?

Mr. Foley: They are drawing their salaries and doing nothing else.

Mr. MALE: I venture to say the Government and their adviser knew very little about pearl shell.

Mr. Foley: Why does not private enterprise step in and buy all this shell up?

Mr. MALE: Have the Government consulted the banks which have been accustomed to handling and dealing with this shell? Have they consulted the brokers who are regularly employed in handling and dealing with this shell, or have they consulted their own personal prejudices? We know the views of the Premier in connection with this particular industry. As recently as last year he said deliberately in this House that the industry was of no advantage to the State.

The Premier: I did not.

Mr. MALE: If *Hansard* is not sufficient for the Premier, then he is hopeless. We know the views of the Honorary Minister in connection with this industry. He misses no opportunity to abuse Broome and the pearlers of Broome.

Mr. Heitmann: That is unfair.

Mr. Griffiths: You are not going the right way to get sympathetic consideration.

Mr. MALE: The Honorary Minister in this House referred to Broome as the greatest sink of iniquity outside of Asia.

Mr. Heitmann: You said he loses no opportunity.

Mr. MALE: He loses no opportunity to abuse Broome and its pearlers. These are the men to whom I have had to appeal.

Mr. Foley: And whom you are asking the assistance of.

The Minister for Works: The Honorary Minister was not there when you made the appeal.

Mr. Foley: You cannot kick anything out of us.

Mr. MALE: I pointed out that the industry was composed of small owners, and that there are 290 boats with 144 owners, and an average of about two boats per owner. These two boats have to maintain the owner and family, for many of them are married.

Mr. Heitmann: How many are dummies?

Mr. MALE: And to maintain the shell openers who are employed, and they collectively have to maintain the tradespeople and artisans and others who are living in Broome.

Mr. Heitmann: Out of the 140 odd you name, how many are white men?

Mr. MALE: I have already stated that there are at least 1,100 white people in Broome.

Mr. Heitmann: How many are white people out of the number of boat owners?

Mr. MALE: If the hon. member will only take the trouble to study the Acts of Parliament which are passed in this House—

Mr. Heitmann: That is not necessary.

Mr. MALE: Then the hon. member had better put a question to the Premier, and he will get his answer.

Mr. Heitmann: How many of the 140 owners are white people?

Mr. MALE: There may be two or three who are not, but the rest I think are.

Mr. Bolton: How many do you estimate?

Mr. MALE: On the 30th July, 1913, just to refresh the memory of the Premier, when I was referring to the pearling industry, the Premier, by way of interjection, said "It is of no advantage to the State."

The Premier: That is a mistake.

Mr. MALE: It may be a mistake, but unfortunately it appears in *Hansard*. *Hansard* is not allowed to make mistakes, even if the Premier does. The Premier deliberately stated, in the House—

The Premier: I did not.

Mr. MALE: That the greatest export industry in the State—and its exports vary between £300,000 and £500,000 per annum—is of no use to the State; and when he does that it is time we got rid of the Premier.

The Premier: I did not say it.

Mr. MALE: I do not wish to unduly labour the subject. I would like to repeat the remarks of the mayor of Broome, in his appeal, when he says, "In the midst of plenty, we are starving," thanks to the Government, who, in my opinion, are mean enough to take advantage of our distress, and are mean enough to take this opportunity of trying to squeeze us out of existence.

Mr. Heitmann: You would be very sorry if you got any assistance, it seems.

Mr. MALE: We have had knock-out blows, and we have faced hurricanes, which have destroyed our fleets, and drowned many of our men, but I say, "Thank Heaven" that at these particular times we have had a Government in power which were sympathetic towards us. We have recovered from these losses, which would have crippled any other industry, and probably have crippled them out of existence.

Mr. Heitmann: Rubbish. Are you different from any other community?

Mr. MALE: Even though the Government take a mean advantage of our deplorable position, as we have done in the past so will we do in the future, and somehow or other we will come out on top.

Mr. Heitmann: What are whining about?

Mr. MALE: In asking hon. members to support me in moving the adjournment of the House, I only ask them to extend to their fellow citizens in the north of this State that sympathy and assistance which they, in turn, have always been prepared to extend to them, and which they, as a right, expect them to extend towards them in return.

Mr. Heitmann: You are making political capital out of the misfortunes of your friends.

Mr. MALE: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [6.5]: I fully expected when the hon. member suggested that he would move the adjournment of the House this afternoon that we would have heard from him some practical suggestion to help us and the pearlers out of the present difficulty, but all that he has given us is a tirade of abuse against myself as Premier and against the Government in general. It is very evident to me that if the hon. member was actually desirous of obtaining assistance from the Government for the pearling industry he has rather peculiar methods of going about his business.

Mr. Male: I tried for three and a half months to get an interview with the Premier.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Premier must remember his treatment of them.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has occupied the time of this House for about two hours, and the most that he has said is that I have been discourteous towards him, that I have not acknowledged his letters, and that he has not yet had the ear of the Premier. These statements are not correct. The hon. member probably would know, as every other hon. member

would know, that the dates which he mentioned when he handed over the letters were when we were right in the midst of a general election campaign, and as the head of the Government I could not be expected to be in the office waiting for letters to come from the hon. member for Kimberley and to neglect, what is the essential duty and responsibility of the head of the Government, to tell the community what has happened in previous years and what it is proposed to do in the future. I am not in the position of the member for Claremont, who laughs rather loudly, of being able to draw 35s. a day while sitting in camp and getting somebody else to do my electioneering battling for me.

Mr. Wisdom: I earned it, but you never did in all your life.

Mr. Heitmann: You are a two-guinea-a-day patriot.

Mr. Wisdom: I would like to see you earn it; you never could.

The PREMIER: There is no military duty now calling the hon. member away.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The hon. member approached you in this Chamber before the election campaign.

The PREMIER: The hon. member did approach me in the Chamber and I told him that I would make inquiries as to whether we could render any assistance to the pearling industry. I told the hon. member, and I repeat it now, that if he expects the Government to find any monetary assistance for the pearling industry at the present juncture he is doomed to disappointment.

Mr. Male: The Premier promised me an interview.

The PREMIER: I did not. I promised the hon. member that I would approach the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank when he came to the State—and that was to be a few weeks after the date we had met and discussed the matter—and see if the Commonwealth Bank would be prepared to make advances if we guaranteed them.

Mr. Male: We have never discussed it.

The PREMIER: Now the hon. member comes along and asserts that I did nothing, but I have conclusive evidence from

the file that I approached the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank, who was ill in Perth and refused to see other people, for the purpose of seeing whether he would help the industry in any way. I did not make any declaration except to the hon. member. I got a reply however, from the Manager, according to whose statement the business was a risky one.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did you ever tell the hon. member that?

The PREMIER: I did not let it rest at that, however. We made further inquiries; we were not prepared to accept the statement made by the Manager of the Commonwealth Bank, and let that be an end to the matter. We made other inquiries and we were able to build up this file as a result of the inquiries we made. Some of the inquiries are of such a nature that I want hon. members seriously to consider whether it is desirable that we should render the assistance claimed by the hon. member for Kimberley and by the mayor of Broome. In the first place I want hon. members to understand that the pearlers had formed themselves admittedly into a combine.

Mr. Male: Some of them.

The PREMIER: And have made arrangements with a man named Ochse, but who is now pronounced "Oxy," to enter into contracts with him for the purchase of their shell for the 1914 and 1915 seasons.

Mr. Male: Some of them only.

The PREMIER: These contracts are as binding to-day as the day on which they were made. We have obtained legal advice upon the point, and find that the war between England and Germany does not terminate any contract between one English subject and another English subject.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It suspends it.

The PREMIER: It does not so long as they do not take advantage of the moratorium, and this man did not. The fact is that there are other buyers besides Ochse. These other buyers are in a position to take up shell, and have contracted to take it, and now they want the Government to come along and take the risks—for there are risks in the matter.

We are face to face with the fact that so far back as 1903, eleven years ago, shell was sold at £80 a ton in the world's markets, and under normal conditions. Now they want us to advance in a crisis like the present £100 a ton on shell stored in Broome. That means that £50,000 have to be found for pearlers who have that shell stored in Broome to pay their Koe-pangers for the work they have done for them in the past. This amount will not find a single day's work for the white citizens of Australia. Are the Government called upon to pay this money in view of the fact admitted by the hon. member that there are only 140 odd owners of pearling boats and that these have produced as much as £500,000 in a year? When a man working for 9s. a day gets out of employment and asks for assistance, for a meal or a bed, some hon. members call him a loafer and ask why he is not thrifty enough to have avoided that position. The pearler can make his thousands a year, and indeed boasts of the fact that he spends it as fast as he gets it. But immediately he meets with a difficulty or crisis like this he comes to the Government and asks them to find the money with which to pay his just debts.

Mr. Heitmann: That is putting rather a different complexion upon things.

The PREMIER: I want the position to be understood by hon. members. If I am warm on the subject it is because hon. members have adopted the attitude of accusing me of discourtesy and of not giving any consideration to the project. I am as anxious as the hon. member who brought the matter forward to do justice to this industry as to any other, but I am not going to do an injustice to the rest of Western Australia in order to do something which is not justice, and which is practically a favour to the people of the North-West.

Mr. Heitmann: Or to any other part of the State.

The PREMIER: Or any other part of the State. The pearling industry is operated by the engagement of indentured labour. Asiatic labour. I have a report showing the number of men en-

gaged in the industry. During the year 1913, according to the latest returns, there were 296 white persons engaged, and no less than 2,358 Asiatics. And yet we are asked to find £50,000 to send up for distribution amongst 296 white persons for the purpose of paying what is due to 2,358 Asiatics, whilst other industries are languishing for want of assistance. With regard to the remark of Mr. Male as to the Government guaranteeing advances by the banks against the shell stored in Broome, I may say that of course the banks would advance up to anything if they were guaranteed by the State.

Mr. Male: They would not.

The PREMIER: It is absolutely the best guarantee available, and it is a safe guarantee. If we were to guarantee the banks and they were to advance £100 a ton on shell until the war is over who can say whether the war will last two years or five years? All the time shell will be deteriorating in value.

Mr. Male: No.

The PREMIER: I say it will be deteriorating in value because it will be necessary to pay 6 per cent. for the advances. The war may last for years, and there will be no guarantee, supposing the war is over in five years, that there will be any market for the shell. As a matter of fact thousands of tons of shell are stored in London at the present moment ready to go on the market.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The PREMIER: Before tea I was explaining to the House that the position was such that if we were to comply with the requests which have been made up to date, it would be a question of finding a large sum of money, or guaranteeing the banks to find a large sum of money, on a very doubtful proposition. All I am desirous of doing is to discover ways and means to help this industry, and, while helping it, to be fair and just to the State. If I were to pledge the credit of the State to the extent of £50,000 say 12 months hence, and

were not able to see how I am to find that £50,000, while knowing full well that the proposition is doubtful, I should be doing something creditable neither to the State nor to myself. The fact that the banks are not prepared to advance against the pearl shell without a guarantee from the State is evidence that those who know the business best from the financial point of view are convinced that this is not altogether a safe proposition.

Mr. J. P. Gardiner: Are they not prepared to advance?

The PREMIER: They are not. At the present time there are 300 tons of shell stored in Broome, and before the pearlers lay up their boats there will be 500 tons. As soon as the buyers in London had notified the pearlers in Broome that they could not take delivery of any further shell, the banks absolutely refused to make any further advances. That, I think, is evidence, if evidence was needed, that the banks realised the fact that the business is a risky one. And I have to view the proposition from the standpoint of the State, as well as from that of the pearler. I wish to find ways and means, if I can fairly and safely do so, of assisting the industry. For the moment, however, we have no idea whatever, we are quite unable to imagine, what may happen to the pearl shell market after the war ends. Therefore, I have to be extremely careful how I guarantee any financial institution on behalf of the State. But the first claim I wish to make is that, before the State shall be called upon to guarantee the banks in respect of advances against this shell, the pearlers themselves shall exhaust every means at their command of carrying on the industry. I consider it is a fair proposition, and one which any hon. member can reasonably accept, that the industry itself shall take every possible step to carry on without asking the State to come to its assistance. We have evidence of the fact that there are in existence definite contracts for the purchase of the shell procured at Broome by the majority of the pearl

shellers—contracts principally with one buyer in London, Mr. Ochse. We have evidence that this buyer is extremely wealthy, having accumulated great riches out of the pearl shelling industry. Indeed, so wealthy is he that, according to evidence in our possession, in all his dealings up to date he has not yet had to claim the benefit of the moratorium proclaimed in Great Britain. He has been able to carry on without the assistance of the moratorium. Still, the pearlers of Broome have never yet, so far as we are aware, called upon that person to keep to the terms of his contract. We have obtained advices as to to whether the pearlers can so compel him, and the Crown Solicitor puts up the following minute on that aspect of the matter—

It is very important that the rights of the pearlers against Mr. Ochse under contract of sale should not be abandoned. For this reason I think that each pearler should make a tender of the shell to Mr. Ochse's duly accredited agent for acceptance or rejection, or that there should be obtained from Mr. Ochse in each case an unequivocal refusal to accept delivery or carry out the contract. If Mr. Ochse repudiates the contract or refuses to accept the shell, there would be a right of action for damages against him, and this right could be charged as security for bank advances together with the shell itself. Before the Government does anything, the matter should be referred to Broome for action to be taken, under legal advice, in the direction indicated.

That is advice which we have just received. We obtained advice because we learnt from other sources that the contracts could not be enforced. As against that statement I wish to point out that the contracts can be enforced, and that the assertion that they become null and void by reason of the fact that Great Britain is at war with another nation is utterly wrong. It is wrong because the war does not render void a contract which has been made between one British subject and another, made between a British subject

in England and a British subject in one of the British Dominions. Even a contract between a British subject and the subject of an enemy nation does not become void by reason of war, but is merely suspended for the duration of the war. In a case of the kind which we are now considering, however, the state of war has not even the effect of suspending the contract. So long as the buyer referred to has assets, the pearlers can make him comply with the terms of the contract. This they have never attempted to do. There are, however, other buyers besides this large buyer; and those other buyers are, no doubt, experiencing difficulty in complying with the terms of their contracts. As a result, those other buyers are loudest in their condemnation of the Government because we do not come along to relieve them of the contracts they entered into in normal times, because we do not at once take measures to save them, not from disaster, but from the ill effects of the war, which effects everybody is feeling, to a greater or less extent. Were I satisfied that at the close of the war the shell would find a ready market at a price which would cover the suggested advance of £100 per ton, then I would have no hesitation in guaranteeing the banks. But, as yet, I have not that evidence. On the contrary, all the information we have gained to date goes to show that the pearl shell market is an extremely uncertain one. The uncertainty arises from the fact that if anything happened to upset the equilibrium of the large buyer I have referred to, the market goes bang, since he practically controls the world's shell market to-day. That is the evidence we have. Further, we have evidence that as recently as in 1903, under normal conditions, without any such war as we are faced with at the present time, the greatest war known to history, even then shell went down to £80 per ton. If the Government were to advance £100 per ton, or guarantee bank advances at that rate, and the advance or guarantee had to be carried for a period of five years, we would have to find in addition interest on the amount at 6 per cent., or even more—say up to 8 per cent. That interest, of

course, would add to the cost of the shell before it reached the market, with the effect of rendering the position, from my point of view, an extremely precarious one, and one as to which I am not satisfied that I am called upon to undertake responsibilities at this stage. I desire also to emphasise that it is recognised to-day that the pearling industry of the North-West is to some extent overdone, that there are really more boats in the business than can carry on safely. To-day what is happening? Quite a number of engine boats has been put on, and the engine boat can procure considerably more shell than the oldtime lugger could obtain. The engine boats are being controlled by a few owners, and the eventual result is that the pearling industry of the North-West is getting into the hands of a few—into the hands of a combine in the truest sense of that word.

Mr. J. P. Gardiner: It always has been so.

The PREMIER: But not to the same extent as at present. I wish to ask hon. members this fair question: would I be justified, in view of all the possibilities I have outlined, in view of the uncertainty of the market after the close of the war, and in view of the certainty that the money which this State is asked to advance or guarantee would not find a single day's employment for a single individual—because the money is required for the sole purpose of being advanced against shell already procured—would I be justified in imposing on the State so heavy a responsibility? Let me point out, too, that this money would be spent for the benefit of pearlers who admittedly, by their own member's statement, have been making a tremendous amount of money out of the industry, and who boast that they spend the money as fast as they get it. Immediately a crisis comes upon us in the form of a war exceeding in magnitude any known to history, when they have hardly been closed down for a day, these pearlers approach the Government with appeals for financial assistance. One of the very first claims made, as shown by that letter of the 30th August to Sir

John Forrest, was the pearlers' claim that the Commonwealth Government or the State Government should render them financial assistance. I wish to explain to hon. members what is happening in the pearling industry. The latest statistics show that there are 296 white men employed in the industry.

Mr. Gilchrist: When?

The PREMIER: For the year 1913. As against the 296 white men there were employed 2,358 of coloured races. Those coloured men are engaged by the pearlers under Commonwealth law and Commonwealth regulations, under indentures approved by the Commonwealth Government. Therefore, the pearling industry, as existing at the present moment, is carried on by the will of the Federal Government, and not by the will of the State Government. Whilst I am charged with the responsibility of seeing that the industries of this State are kept going, notwithstanding the adverse conditions prevailing, yet I contend that the pearling industry, in view of the fact that it is controlled by the Commonwealth Government, should look to the Commonwealth Government for assistance. According to the statements of the pearlers themselves, if what was proposed some months ago were put into operation and the coloured divers done away with, the effect would be to close up the industry. I contend that the first Government to be called upon to assist the pearling industry must be the Federal Government. If it is worth the while of the Federal Government to permit coloured labour to enter Australia for the purpose of carrying on the pearling industry, then it is worth the Federal Government's while to decide whether the pearling industry shall or shall not continue to exist.

Member: Is it not a condition that the coloured men are to be employed on the sea alone?

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): There is custom for everything.

The PREMIER: As the Honorary Minister says, there is custom for everything. In connection with the engagement of coloured labour the pearlers

first of all apply to the Department of External Affairs to indent a certain number of coloured men to be engaged exclusively in pearl fishing. The department have placed the maximum which may be indentured at about 2,200. At present there are employed 2,186—to the end of the September quarter. On the granting of the permits and the arrival of the men, the employers immediately give a bond for £100 per man. The bond requires that the men are to be employed solely as members of a crew on a vessel engaged in pearl fishing, and the conditions of the bond state that “if the said persons, forthwith, after landing at Broome aforesaid, sign articles as members of the crew of a vessel engaged in pearl fishing, and if while the said persons are members of the crew of any such vessel none of them are engaged in any duties except those ordinarily connected with the vessel, and if in the event of any of the said persons being imprisoned in the Commonwealth for any offence under the Merchant Shipping Act of the United Kingdom, or any Act of the Parliament of the Commonwealth relating to navigation and shipping, or upon being given treatment in any public or charitable institution on account of illness or insanity or any other reason, the said employer pays to the proper Government authority or to the public or charitable institution concerned as the case requires, all moneys paid out or expenses incurred in the maintenance or support of the person employed or given treatment, and all expenses incurred in returning him to his own country, and if each of the said persons is returned to the place outside the said Commonwealth approved by the Collector of Customs at Broome forthwith, after he ceases to be employed as a member of the crew of the pearling vessel, then this obligation shall be void, but otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.” The bond lasts for three years as a rule, or for two years, or one year, if the employer likes, then after the bond is given the men are signed on with articles at Broome or other point of employment. At the end of the season the

men are usually discharged from a boat, which lays up from the middle of December to some time in February, generally about two months. Some of the men are discharged to leave the Commonwealth by the next available boat. Some are re-engaged by other masters who have open permits. Some who are not discharged remain in the Commonwealth until the boats are ready to proceed to sea again. They are permitted to live in their particular portion of the town during the laying-up season. The only other times the men are allowed to leave their boats is when they are ill and have to go to the hospital, or when they are taken to be put in gaol. Precautions are taken to see that they go back to the boats immediately upon their release from the institution. Those are the conditions under which men are engaged in the industry, and if we propose to keep it going, we have to guarantee not only £50,000 to the banks, but we have to find an additional £50,000 to carry on for twelve months, that is £100,000, and then only to keep the boats going half-time, or keep half the number of boats employed. It is a matter that requires serious consideration and, if I can be fairly satisfied that we are not taking an undue risk, I shall be prepared to render assistance to keep the industry going. But there is no comparison between keeping that industry occupied and industries such as mining, agricultural, or timber. There is no risk about a market for wheat or a market for timber or even a market for copper, tin, or lead, not the slightest risk, but there is a doubt about a ready market for pearl shell when the war has ended. The hon. member for Kimberley has moved his motion on the ground of urgency, which is of course necessary when moving the adjournment of the House. I would draw attention to the fact, however, that after all the complaints about the urgency, and his inability to get satisfaction from the Government, the hon. member left Perth about the 10th or 11th October to proceed, according to his own statement published in the Press, to Broome, because of the urgent nature of the pearling industry difficulties. Yet

the hon. member did not reach Broome until the 14th or 15th November.

Mr. Male: The statement is absolutely incorrect. I went from Perth to Broome in the same boat.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): How did you get back to Pilbara?

Mr. Male: By another boat.

The PREMIER: The hon. member proceeded to Broome to inquire into urgent matters connected with the industry, but I have no recollection of any correspondence reaching my department after the hon. member had got to Broome. He remained in the Pilbara electorate to keep the industry which the Honorary Minister represents going. That was the urgency of the matter which caused the hon. member to proceed to Broome with such haste. I recognise the fact that the matter is one which requires careful and to some extent urgent consideration, but, in order to satisfy hon. members that we have not neglected the matter, I may state that at the outset, while making further inquiries, we arranged that shell should be stored in Government sheds in Broome at a low charge. That was from last month and it is to continue to the end of December. In the meantime, we received reports from our inspectors, and our fisheries inspector warned us that the matter required a tremendous amount of consideration before any action was taken in the direction of giving the assistance which had been asked by the pearlers. In the face of this advice, will hon. members say that it does not matter whether we spend all that money in the direction of paying the debts of people who must leave the Commonwealth in the course of time; and to bring that about I am to give a guarantee on behalf of the State to the tune of £50,000. I have already been taken to task for not conserving the interests of the State, but I know that it will require all our attention in the next twelve months to keep going those industries in which white labour is employed, and in many cases keep them going half-time. The Governor of the Commonwealth Bank promised to make inquiries in re-

gard to the pearling industry and he did so, and I believe that if we can arrive at some basis which will be satisfactory to the pearlers as well as to the Government, we can get the Commonwealth Bank to guarantee advances. I will not, however, be forced by the kite-flying which has taken place during the past few weeks at Broome in particular, into guaranteeing the State, unless I am perfectly satisfied that I am doing it in the best interests of the State and not in the interests of a few who are concerned about their personal welfare. We would not be safe in guaranteeing the advance of a penny above £50 per ton; we recognise that there will be some difficulty in keeping the industry going with that payment of £50 per ton against shell recovered, but unless any further stand which may be taken be reasonable, and it can be shown to me how the Government can help with safety, and I can have the backing of those who know the business, and also that the pearlers themselves have exhausted every means at their disposal to keep the industry going, I am not going to be forced into the position of carrying the responsibility. I must be fully satisfied that I can answer for my action when the time arrives, and that may be at any moment after twelve months have passed. All I ask is that fair consideration be given to the matter from hon. members.

Mr. Male: That is all we ask.

The PREMIER: That fair consideration be given to the matter side by side with every other industry on the basis of its value. In connection with other industries, we are to-day asking them to merely exist and to carry on their debts until such time as the State can recover from the delicate position it is in. Yet the pearlers, because they cannot sell the shell, ask us to give them from £100 to £125 per ton on it, and that advance is to be made against something which does not mean anything except wealth for those who produce it. The production of pearl shell will not help the Empire; soldiers cannot eat pearl shell, but they can eat our wheat and wear our wool. Shell is only used to make nice ornaments, that there may or may not be a

market for. I am told that 40 per cent. of the shell was utilised in Austria, and we cannot foresee what will happen in that case at the end of the war. I regret as much as anyone that the industry finds itself in a difficult position, but we have to very carefully consider what assistance we can render it. If I sign my name as a guarantor for the State, I will have to answer for it eventually, and unless I am perfectly satisfied in regard to the whole matter, I prefer to leave my present office than be forced by heroics into the position of having to sign something which might not be in the best interests of the State. Some other means than those suggested to date will have to be found before I can agree to a guarantee which in my own conscience I must know I am entering into in the interests of the State as well as in the interests of those engaged in the industry.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [7.55]: I have listened with some interest to the speech of the member for Kimberley and to the Premier's reply, and if there have been any heroics at all they have come from the Premier himself. In this connection, I overheard an interjection from the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner)—who was absent most of the time while this matter was being debated—that we were not going the right way about getting assistance from the Government. If the hon. member had been in his place whilst the member for Kimberley was addressing the House he would have heard such a tirade of interjections from members on the Ministerial side led by the Premier, which would have justified to the fullest extent any little warmth that the member for Kimberley exhibited. I do not think that personal allusions to an hon. member's firm or to business transactions are the right way of solving a difficulty of this kind. It is idle to accuse the member for Kimberley for instance, of being connected with a wealthy company or firm and then say, "Why do you not find the money to buy the shell?"

The Premier: Who did?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member did, and the insinuation that the firm had entered into a contract for the purchase of this pearl shell with a firm of foreign extraction belonging to the arch enemy of the Empire, is beside the question. The Premier bungled over the name Ochse.

Mr. Foley: What is it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know what it is.

Mr. Foley: Neither does the Premier and he admitted it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The inference the Premier wished to convey was that this was a German firm that had repudiated its liabilities.

The Premier: I told the House he was a British subject.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier did not say that this man was a British subject, but he argued that a contract between one British subject and another British subject could not be broken by the war. But he was not referring to Ochse at all. It was in response to an interjection I made myself to the effect that the contracts were suspended till the termination of the war. However, the fault is by no means on the shoulders of the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male). He has clearly stated the steps he took to bring this urgent question before the Premier. He has given dates and read letters to the House which, I think, fairly prove that the hon. member has some grounds of complaint at the manner in which the Premier failed to receive him and discuss this matter with him. Some 3½ months have gone by since the hon. member first appealed to the Premier, and the Premier has never deigned to grant him an interview at which to discuss this matter. That in itself is quite sufficient ground for complaint and for any warmth which the member for Kimberley might have displayed in putting the case before the House. He approached the Premier in the House before we adjourned, about the middle of September, and he had no direct answer from the Premier until after that date. Even then

his answer was "Go to the Federal Government; the member is Mr. Gregory."

The Premier: He did not send along that letter until the 15th September. Either he or Sir John Forrest withheld it until after the elections.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The member for Kimberley has given all his dates, including those on which he unsuccessfully attempted to get an interview with the Premier. Whenever I have occasion to wait on the Premier, he always receives me promptly, and therefore I was surprised to hear that he had put off the member for Kimberley, as apparently he did.

The Premier: At a time like the present everybody insists upon seeing the head of the Government.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, this essentially belongs to the Premier and Treasurer. It is a matter of policy in the first instance, and of advances in the next.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is a matter of policy first and of advances next, and therefore any one would go to the Premier on it. From first to last the Premier never gave a direct reply to the hon. member until six or seven weeks had elapsed.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The position is that the hon. member asked the Premier for bread and was offered a stone. The report published in the newspapers yesterday morning in connection with the trouble at Broome shows that the position there is serious.

The Minister for Works: It was not engineered, I suppose?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister ought to be able to tell us.

The Premier: In any case, it is a Federal matter.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No. It is for the State Government to preserve law and order.

The Premier: The terms of the indentures of those men show that it is not the responsibility of the State.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Most de-

cidedly it is. Why are you swearing in special constables to keep the peace up there? Are the Government to repudiate their responsibilities? Are you to allow people to run riot in any part of the State, an industry to be wiped out, because you believe the responsibility rests with some other Government?

The Premier: The mayor of Broome appreciates that it is a Commonwealth matter, as is attested by his writing to Sir John Forrest.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He was prepared to appeal to any one in the emergency. If it is a faked account, as the Minister implied, it is up to Ministers to find out the true position, but in the absence of proof to the contrary we must accept the statement of the position as published in the Press.

Mr. Male: The Premier has had a wire from Broome.

The Premier: And recognising that it was a Commonwealth matter, I repeated it to the Prime Minister.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Has the Premier had any satisfaction from the Prime Minister?

The Premier: It is not question time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is not fair. The position is that Broome is in a parlous condition, if we are to believe the report. There have been riots, for what reason I do not know.

The Premier: By the people who, we are told, are more orderly than the Britishers.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not suppose they are any more disorderly; but is that going to settle the difficulty?

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: What proof have you that the riot arose out of the depression?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: None whatever. I am going on the published report. Apparently there has been trouble at Broome, and it may have arisen from the fact that there is a shortage there.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You have no proof of that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Nor have I any proof that the hon. member is sane. I maintain that the Government have a

duty to perform, namely, to keep the peace in that district just as in any other portion of the State; and if they cannot do it with the resources at their command, they can apply to the Federal Government.

The Premier: That is not a fair statement of the position. The men causing the trouble are brought out under indenture granted by the Federal Government and the people who, on bringing them out, entered into a bond with the Federal Government, are called upon to see that those men behave themselves.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No; the Premier is putting the case wrongly. The men have a right to be ashore in Broome at certain times, and it is the duty of the Government to preserve peace and good order.

The Premier: No. It is for the Federal authorities. It is stipulated that these men shall reside in certain places, and there only.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They are in Broome to-day.

The Premier: They have no right to be there.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then why not turn them out?

The Premier: That is what the pearl-ers want us to do, namely, to undertake the expense of sending them away.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier and his colleagues have a duty to perform, and they cannot get away from it. If there is trouble in Broome they must take their part in settling that trouble. It does not matter why or how, or by whose permission those men are there. If there is trouble, law and order must be maintained if it can be done with the resources at our command, and, failing that, we can go to the Federal Government. As to the condition of the industry, it appears that, from whatever reason, the pearling industry is hung up, and there is no market for the shell. Whether it is a combine, as the Premier implies, or whether it is merely owing to the contingencies of war, the fact remains that the industry is hung up.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary

Minister): And is likely to be for the next five years.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Shell has accumulated—the interviewer says to the tune of 450 tons—and on the Premier's own admission, it is in the Government warehouses. Apparently the Government have to some extent realised that they must render any reasonable assistance within their power, and they have allowed the shell to be stored in the Government sheds; I presume in order that, in case of ultimately rendering financial assistance, they will have the shell under their own control. The question is, what do these pearl-ers ask for? They do not ask for money, as the Premier intimates, but for a guarantee.

Mr. McDowall: What is the difference?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Under a guarantee one does not pay until called upon to liquidate.

Mr. James Gardiner: One generally is called upon to liquidate a guarantee.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But not immediately. At the present time the Premier is not asked to fork out £20,000, £30,000, £40,000, or £50,000.

The Premier: I am asked to earmark it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, the Premier is asked to guarantee the State's financial institutions to find the money. That is what I gather from the statement by the mayor of Broome. All that the pearl-ers want is a guarantee to the financial houses in order to obtain sufficient money to pay off their crews, liquidate their liability, and get rid of about 1,000 Asiatics who ought to be returned to their native lands at the end of the season. I do not know that it is unfair for Broome to ask for assistance within reason. I admit the Premier's contention that to give up to £100 per ton would, perhaps, be excessive and unsafe, but surely there must be some safe limit to which he can go by way of a guarantee. If it is £50 a ton, why not say so?

The Premier: Why not say that the pearl-ers themselves should exhaust every other means first?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly.

The Premier: Well, they have not done so, and have not attempted to.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What have they not done?

The Premier: Kept these people to their contracts.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They are prosecuting them now. The Premier knows the difficulty of enforcing payment on a French or a foreign subject.

* The Premier: He is a British subject in London. You will know something about the matter directly.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is what I am trying to find out. After listening to the Premier for a full hour, we have found out nothing.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): And to your colleague for two hours.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier has gone around the subject and said he would do all he could and would give it consideration. That is what his speech amounts to, and he has compared the assistance he is going to give to the farmers, miners, and timber workers, and others, with that required for the pearling industry, and he now maintains that we cannot eat pearlshell. There are a hundred and one things we cannot eat, copper and timber included. The Premier is going to advance against tin and other minerals. We cannot eat timber and wool, but we can utilise them, and, in the same way, pearl shell can be utilised.

The Premier: In what way? way. The trade of Broome is from £350,000 to £500,000 per annum, and it goes into the general circulation of trade and commerce.

The Premier: A few days after they struck trouble they had not a penny.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government were exactly in the same position. As soon as war was declared they had not a penny to their names, and sought to impose additional heavy taxation on the people. Now the Premier has received a loan from the Commonwealth and is relieved somewhat.

Mr. Foley: Why did not private enterprise give assistance to the pearlers?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier, like a prodigal son, borrows from usurers—

Mr. Foley: There are usurers among the pearl buyers.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Do hon. members wish to see Broome and the whole pearling industry wiped out altogether? Broome does a big trade and brings considerable revenue to the Commonwealth, and a portion of that revenue is returned to Western Australia. Broome maintains a large population; true, a great proportion are of the coloured races, but the mayor states that the number of whites has increased to 1,100.

Mr. Male: That is right.

The Premier: Discount that by about 20 per cent.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The member for Kimberley says it is right.

The Premier: Of course he does.

Mr. Foley: How many names were on the roll at the last election?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Surely these people are entitled to some consideration. We cannot do it with a wave of the hand, and deny them consideration. They belong to us and to our country; they have settled there with the connivance of all Governments. They have carried on their avocations, and we welcomed the wealth accrued from the industry, and on these grounds we are entitled to give them every consideration. The only point is that we should take steps as far as we can to protect and establish and maintain credit in Western Australia.

The Premier: Where are your financial institutions?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is of no use the Premier talking in that way. The mayor says the financial institutions are prepared to find the money if they can get a suitable guarantee.

The Premier: They have never told us that yet.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier can easily find out if that is the case.

The Premier: It is not my responsibility to find out.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is the Premier's responsibility to give assistance in a legitimate way, and to obtain the information regarding it.

The Premier: The banks have been doing well out of it, according to the mayor's own showing.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There are many foolish statements bandied about that different ones are doing so much better than the other fellow.

The Premier: If you had remained in your place you would have heard the member for Kimberley read it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I was in my place, and did not hear the amounts the banks have made out of this trade. An opinion may have been expressed by one individual, the same as the Premier is fond of saying how well some people are doing.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It was in a letter from the mayor of Broome.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is nothing in the letter from the mayor of Broome as to what the banks have made.

The Premier: A bank has more than paid expenses during the six months from the time of starting business.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: A bank—presumably it has a good deal to do with the pearling industry, but there are squatting operations which the banks have to finance as well. It is not all attached to the pearling industry, though it is largely due to that industry. That again is not the point. The expense of running a branch bank at Broome would not amount to many thousands of pounds a year, and it might be very small business indeed that would enable a branch to pay expenses out of the pearl shell transactions.

Mr. Foley: Did not the member for Kimberley say Broome had no back country, and that all of it came from the pearl shell industry?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think the hon. member himself is interested in a cattle station out there. The Premier has argued that it would be dangerous to give a guarantee against the value of shell because he says it deteriorates, but I am advised that it does not. It has always got its value, and I see no danger in that respect. There may be danger of the demand falling off. We have known the time when the demand has fallen away

and pearl shell has been about £80 a ton, but surely it is quite feasible to give a guarantee up to a figure which would make the position of the Government perfectly safe. I do not think we ought to deny these people all assistance because there is some danger attached to giving a guarantee up to the limit they ask. The thing is to find out to what limit the Government can safely go, what arrangements can be made, and if the Government can safely help them by giving a reasonable guarantee up to £50 or £60 a ton they should offer it and help them out of their difficulty. This industry is of very great importance to the State. I would be very sorry to see it closed up and if there is the slightest danger of such a thing happening, I would be quite prepared to take my share of the responsibility with the Government for assisting these people who are in a corner. They have just as great a claim on us as any other section of the community. We have no right to single out any one portion of the community and say that portion only are entitled to assistance. Farmers and settlers must have full and ample assistance. We have given it to them for years past and will continue to give it. Our miners, too, must be assisted within reason, and the pearlers, notwithstanding that they work their boats with Asiatic labour under permits from the Federal Government, are just as much entitled to our consideration as any other section of the community. The Premier asks why private firms could not advance against the pearl shell. Private individuals will not do it, and in many instances cannot do it. They cannot go on indefinitely pledging themselves to large sums of money unless they can see an opportunity and fix a time when they can realise upon the goods against which they are advancing. The Government are in the happy position that they can give a guarantee; they may ultimately have to find the money, but that day is probably a considerable distance off.

Mr. Foley: You admit socialism is superior to private enterprise?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not see that there is any socialism about this at all.

Mr. Foley: It is socialism all the same.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Does the hon. member suggest it was socialism when Mr. Lloyd George guaranteed the payment of bills of exchange to the Bank of England?

Mr. Foley: Yes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is not much socialism about it. The resources of the Empire were strained, and we, instead of acting similarly, created a panic.

Mr. Foley: The private institutions in England did not do that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They were called into daily consultation, and assisted the Government.

Mr. Foley: But they got their share out of it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And they have lately found 300 millions of money to help to carry on the war. It is absurd to talk as the hon. member does. Without the financial institutions the Government would be helpless.

The Premier: You recognise that they were not philanthropists; they did not give the 300 millions.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course not. Does the Premier give all he possesses to the Government? I would like to see him give that £300 out of his salary which he promised to return to the Treasury. I hope the Premier will be as good as his promise made to-night, and that he will have such inquiries made as will warrant him giving a decision one way or another. If assistance is to be given, it must, to be of any benefit, be given promptly. The Premier professes to be ready to give reasonable assistance. Let it be found out at once what that reasonable assistance is. If he cannot do it, he ought to have told the member for Kimberley in plain words three months ago, instead of hanging the subject up.

Mr. GILCHRIST (Gascoyne) [8.29]: I rise to address myself to this question without any party bias. The air, I am afraid, is rather hazy on account of the personalities which have been hurled from both sides of the Chamber. I am fully sensible of the financial difficulty into which the war and other circumstances

have landed the Treasurer, and I have a feeling of sympathy for him because of the insistence of the demands which are being made from all quarters for help. I ask him that in this case he should approach the matter from the standpoint of the industry—not of the wealthy pearl-ers of the North-West—but of the pearling industry and of the North-West itself, and try to give it that consideration which is looked for from the Premier of the State. The plea of the hon. member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) needs no endorsement. I think it ought to be generally admitted that an industry, so profitable to the public revenues of the State, and so important a factor in the occupation of our great empty North-West territory, should be saved from the financial disaster which seems to be threatening it. The continuance not only of the town of Broome, but also of the industry, is entirely dependent upon the pearl shell market being kept open, or that guarantee which is asked for to financial institutions being given in order that they may be justified in giving sufficient assistance to enable the industry still to be carried on.

The Premier: That is subject to the purchaser of the shell refusing to comply with the contract.

Mr. GILCHRIST: I understand that. I trust that the Premier, as he has promised to-night, will take into consideration all the circumstances surrounding this matter, and will give a decision at the earliest possible moment. The newspapers of the North-West anticipated trouble in the way of riots among the Asiatic portion of the population, and I am afraid if there is any more delay in dealing with the financial side of the question we may before long be faced with a more serious rising than occurred a few days ago. There must be a certain amount of prejudice against the pearling industry because of its employment of Asiatics, and that has been confirmed not only by the interjections of the Honorary Minister but also by the continual interjections this afternoon from the other side of the House. The Premier made refer-

ence to the fact that there are only 296 white men directly employed in the pearling industry in Broome, but he misses the point that the industry in Broome is supporting 1,100 white people in the town of Broome itself.

The Premier: And 2,358 blackfellows as well.

Mr. GILCHRIST: It is supporting a number of people in Perth.

The Premier: The Perth people are supporting a lot of pearlers.

Mr. GILCHRIST: Not at all. It is supporting a large number of people, not only in the town of Broome, but also in the various towns of the North-West. I have no patience with the humbug and hypocrisy that indignantly object to building up an Australian industry and establishing settlement in the North-West upon a firm basis by the employment of Asiatics, and at the same time applaud the co-operation of Japanese warships with Australian warships in the Pacific, and approve of the use of Indian Ghurkas and African Turkos to fight, at the sacrifice of thousands of their lives, shoulder to shoulder with our own Australian volunteers. And what for? For the safety of our Empire, the protection of our trade, and the vindication of our honour. I did not rise to speak in the interests of the town of Broome, however, but in order to place before the Premier the case of the pearlers of Shark Bay, which I think in many respects is more pressing than that of their confrères at Broome. The pearling industry in Shark Bay is quite distinct from that on the coast further north. The shell is much smaller, is of considerably less value, there are very few Asiatics employed, and at the same time all the master pearlers are in a small way of business. The slump in the pearl market twelve months ago placed many of these men in a very precarious position. The outbreak of the war has completed the process, so that the outlook is very dark indeed for them. I would suggest to the Premier, if I might, as a first measure of assistance, that the Government should forego the rents on the Shark Bay pearling bank during the dur-

ation of the war, and also that they should guarantee, in some way or other, the pearl shell that is being won from those banks in Shark Bay, if to do nothing else than to cover the household expenses of the pearlers themselves and to save them and their families from serious trouble. I am thankful to the Premier that, although at the beginning of his address he assured the hon. member for Kimberley that if we were expecting any assistance for the pearling industry we were doomed to disappointment, toward the close of his speech he said he might be ready to guarantee to the extent of £50 a ton on shell.

The Premier: That statement is not correct; I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. GILCHRIST: I am sorry if I misunderstood the Premier. At all events he showed a much more sympathetic attitude toward the industry at the close of his address than at the beginning. I am prepared to meet the Premier. I do not want to ask anything unreasonable, but only to ask that these small men, who are employing white men, and doing a lot of the pearling themselves, should be given that assistance which other industries of the State are looking for at this particular time. By a sympathetic consideration of these very modest requests the Premier will be saving a worthy industry, and will be earning the gratitude of a hard-working set of people.

The Premier: And I shall then be attacked for increasing the deficit. Advice is the cheapest thing in the world to procure.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara) [8.40]: I desire to say a few words on this question, and will endeavour as far as possible to refrain from party politics. I may say that it is self-denial on my part to do so after the speeches made by the hon. member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) and the leader of the Opposition (Hon. Frank Wilson). Mr. Male said that he failed to get the Premier's ear. Evidently by the information which the Premier has given the House he has paid some attention to the question, whether the hon. member for Kimberley got his ear or not.

It is possible, therefore, that somebody else had some interest in the North-West as well as the hon. member for Kimberley.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is no reason why the hon. member should have been treated discourteously.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): No reason whatever.

Mr. Heitmann: The hon. member for Kimberley was insulting.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): The hon. member knows as well as I do—for he has held the position of Honorary Minister—that the pearling industry is under the control of the Colonial Secretary, and that before the Premier could act he would have to go to the Colonial Secretary for information upon it. If he had wanted an early reply he would have done as I have done ever since I have been in Parliament, namely, gone to the Minister immediately affected. The Minister affected would then bring the matter before the Premier or Cabinet.

Mr. Heitmann: Evidently the hon. member did not want an early reply.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): No; he wanted to get into the Pilbara electorate to assist me into oblivion.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He nearly did it, too.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): During this debate the hon. member for Kimberley first, and later the hon. member for Gascoyne, have stated that this condition of things has been brought about solely owing to the war in Europe. It is quite a different tale to that which these hon. gentlemen told when walking round the North-West using what they termed arguments against the war tax. They said that the war had nothing whatever to do with it. It was not the war, but "Scaddan's bad financing." Now they tell us it was the war.

Hon. Frank Wilson: So it was.

The Premier: So it was; so it is.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): There is another question I would like to reply to. Almost immediately the war broke out the Mayor of Broome wrote to Sir John Forrest, the

leader of Western Australia. He got nothing from Sir John Forrest.

Member: Not even his ear.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): And therefore the hon. member for Kimberley comes along and abuses John Scaddan. I think in a position like this the hon. gentleman should rather have devoted his attention to giving the House some idea of how to relieve an undoubtedly acute position. The hon. member did not attempt to give us any idea, or put forward any proposition which the Government could consider or could reasonably deal with. Having studied the papers I claim that the Premier, the Colonial Secretary, and Cabinet, have had no proposition yet placed before them which any Government could reasonably consider or reasonably give an answer upon. A few days before the election took place in Pilbara the pearlers fishing outside Hedland came to me and asked me if I would make a promise that the Government would advance on shell. I told them that immediately before an election I would make no promise or any comment one way or the other. I said that if on the following Thursday I was returned, and they came to me and put a proposition before me I would give it the best consideration I could, and induce the Government to do the best they could for them. Just before I went to my meeting I was warned to look out, and that these pearlers were going to make trouble for me.

The Premier: The Koepangers.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): These are whites, not Koepangers. I may say it did not stop my power of speech on that occasion. This is the position that we had to meet: that right along the pearlers, through their representatives or of their own volition, have never put a definite proposition before the Government. They simply ask us in a bald manner to advance £120 per ton on shell. That is a proposition that no Government under existing circumstances could accept. Under normal conditions it would be a dangerous proposition, but at the present time it seems to me to be

almost a certain sacrifice of the funds of the people of Western Australia. I submit that there is likely to be a serious problem at Broome. No matter what may become of the Koepangers, Japanese, Javanese, Malays, Cingalese, Chinese, and other brands of Asiatics in Broome, the Government of Western Australia and the people of Western Australia have to remember that there are large numbers of white people in that district, who will have to be looked after. And that is where I come in. I am not going to fly into heroics about the White Australia principle, but in reply to that remarkable dash of the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Gilchrist) I wish to point out that if this war is to break down the White Australia principle, then it would be better for Germany to take Australia.

Mr. Gilchrist: That is a ridiculous position to put up.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I shall not go very closely into what has been said. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) has urged that with 2,000 or 3,000 Asiatics in Broome there has been very little disorder; and the hon. member said that this had never been known among a white population. I wish to point out to the hon. member that at Lake Darlot, for one instance, there was a population of something like 5,000 white people—

Mr. Male: I said a seaport.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): And not a police constable within 300 miles of them—

Mr. Male: Lake Darlot is not a seaport.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): And yet we never knew of one instance of disorder throughout those gold-fields. Many other examples of the orderliness of white people might be adduced. In regard, now, to this great struggle which has taken place quite recently in Broome between two distinct races of Asiatics, I wish to remind the House, if hon. members have forgotten it, that this is not the first occasion on which a racial fight has occurred. As a matter of fact, racial fights are quite an ordinary thing. They do not occur annually, perhaps, but very nearly so. In the lay-up season

there are frequently serious riots between the various races of Asiatics in Broome. But very little is said about these riots on other occasions. The Press keeps that kind of thing very quiet, and the white people of Broome say very little on the subject. On the present occasion, however, the Press and people of Broome want to make the most of the disturbance, and they have made the most of it. In my judgment, this last riot was no more serious than many a riot which has preceded it. Now, I wish to express my entire agreement with the leader of the Opposition in his statement that there is a serious position confronting us. The request made by the buyers cannot be considered, for many reasons. The first reason is that the amount of the advance asked is altogether beyond what may be the selling price of shell for many years to come. I may inform those hon. members of the House who do not know the pearling position that 40 per cent. of the world's shell was, previously to the war, utilised in Austria, and that a further considerable percentage went to Germany. If things go as we hope and believe they will go, Austria and Germany will require no pearl shell for a long, long time. Seeing that pearls and pearl shell are purely ornamental articles I can easily conceive that the people of the whole of Europe will not require these articles of ornament for possibly the next ten years. There will be many, many things to do in Europe before the European nations will be able to start buying pearls and pearl shell again. For that reason it must be realised that the pearl fishing industry must, for the time being, cease, or practically cease. There will be no market for the shell. The proposal is that the Government shall advance or guarantee something like £50,000 to pay wages owing for the present season. The pearlers ask this also in order that the boats may be kept at sea, instead of being laid up and thus deteriorating. Now, to keep the boats at sea we must be prepared to buy the shell next year; and, as I have pointed out, pearl shell will not be

saleable next year. This time next year pearl shell will be worth no more than it is to-day. Thus, we shall have to go on and find money for the purpose of continuing the industry through another year. I say, with all due respect to those who think differently, that at the present juncture we have not the money to spare to feed a couple of thousand Asiatics, when our own people are likely to be in serious straits for food and shelter. As regards the white population, however, I should like to consult with the members for Kimberley, Roebourne, and Gascoyne, and endeavour to arrive at some concrete proposal for assistance to the white people. From my own personal knowledge I am certain that assistance is absolutely necessary. I have received numerous wires from people I know personally, from men who are as good citizens as are to be found in Western Australia, assuring me that the difficulties of the position are becoming most acute, and that Government assistance is absolutely indispensable, either to enable the white people to continue to live in Broome, or to bring the white workers and their families south, and for the time being keep them here. That is the proposition we are up against, the proposition which we have to meet; and I say unhesitatingly that with a proposition like that confronting us we should endeavour to leave party politics out of it, and do the best we can for our white fellow citizens who are in distress.

Mr. J. P. GARDINER (Roebourne) [8.53]: I think the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) and other hon. members who have spoken, thoroughly realise that the position in the pearling ports of the North-West has assumed a most serious aspect. We are confronted with the position that at Broome and the other ports there is a heterogeneous crowd of coloured men. In Broome there is represented almost every variety of Asiatic and coloured man that could be mentioned. As stated by the member for Kimberley these Asiatics not being able to thoroughly understand the position, there will undoubtedly be grave trouble

if they are unable to obtain payment of the wages owing to them. There can be no question of the seriousness of the situation. I agree with the statement of the leader of the Opposition that the coloured men are not allowed ashore except with the permission of the authorities; but if they are not paid what is due to them and then repatriated, some other steps will have to be taken. The Asiatics will not remain quietly living in places like Broome, Port Hedland, and Onslow, with money owing to them by the pearlers whilst they are not permitted to obtain reasonable employment and to live as they should. It seems to me, however, that it is hardly within the province of the State to make the heavy advances suggested by the member for Kimberley. It must be borne in mind that the Federal Government reap by far the greater share of the financial advantage derived from the pearling industry. As the Premier pointed out this evening, the Federal Government have granted the pearlers permission to indent labour from various parts of Asia. The Federal Government force the pearlers to enter into bonds for the deportation of the Asiatics immediately on the completion of their service. Further, the Federal Government collect the major portion of the revenue derived from the pearling industry, inasmuch as they collect Customs duties and other charges. Until I moved for the information in this House, it was not generally known that the pearling industry, not alone of Broome but of the whole of the North-West, contributed only £365 per annum to the Treasury of this State. I am excluding income tax.

The Premier: An officer of the Taxation Department had to be sent to the North to compile the income tax returns for the people there.

Mr. J. P. GARDINER: The State of Western Australia has to maintain the police and other Government services in the North-West, and undoubtedly those services show a loss to the State, absorbing more than the total revenue derived by Western Australia from the pearling industry. However, like the Honorary Minister (Hon. R. H. Underwood) I rea-

lise that something must be done. Hordes of coloured men are congregated at the North-Western ports, through the pearl-ers indenting them. Money is owing to these Asiatics; and, in my opinion, the pearlers should be in a position to obtain that money. Notwithstanding the statement of the member for Kimberley that there are in Broome 141 owners of pearling boats, I venture to assert that if the absolute facts could be ascertained it would be found that there are not 20 legitimate owners of pearling luggers in Broome. There are numbers of nominal owners, but how many of those have paid for their boats? They are nearly all in the clutches of the big merchants, such as Robison & Norman, who make substantial advances on which they charge high interest, and then compel the small pearler to sell his shell at a rate which probably is not altogether fair, and further compel him to deal at their stores. As a matter of fact, it is the big merchants who own the boats; and in nearly every instance they compel the ostensible owner to deal entirely with them. The man who has acquired a lugger at a small deposit is kept in such a position, kept so tied up, as to be compelled to work for nothing practically; unless, indeed, he should happen to find a good pearl, which will cover his liability and so redeem him from his bondage to the big merchants. I agree with the member for Kimberley that on paper there are 141 owners. If, however, we could thoroughly fathom the agreements existing between those nominal owners and the merchants, and if we could get to the bottom of the position, we should probably find that there are not in Broome 20 owners whose luggers are not under the absolute control of the big merchants. Still, that is beside the question. Something must be done. If the Federal Government will not intervene, then the State Government must; and I agree that some advance should be made to the pearling industry, although I consider that £120 per ton is altogether exorbitant. I would certainly not advise the Government to go even to the extent of advancing £100 per ton on pearl shell. We have no guarantee or assurance that

in years to come the market value of pearl shell will reach £100. At the present juncture pearl shell has no market value. As the Honorary Minister pointed out, by far the largest proportion of pearl shell has hitherto been absorbed by Austria and Germany. I venture to prophesy that 10 years hence pearl shell will not be worth much more than £100 or £120 per ton. The Premier pointed out that some years ago, under normal conditions, pearl shell was worth only £80 per ton. In my opinion, it is in the highest degree improbable that during the next 10 years its value will exceed £100 per ton. We have to bear in mind, in considering the pearling industry, that the shell is not a necessity or an essential of life, but merely a luxury. I do not believe that when the war is over people will have any time for luxuries such as pearl shell. I believe that people will rather seek to promote industries whose products are of necessity or utility to the world in general. I was surprised to hear the member for Kimberley condemn the State steamship service. He said it had been responsible for the squandering of money, whereas we know that it has rendered valuable assistance to the north-western portion of the State. Many pastoralists in the Honorary Minister's electorate and in mine also as well as in that of the member for Kimberley have eulogised the service and have availed themselves of it in order that they might get their stock to market. The service has been conducted entirely in the interests of the pastoralists.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow a discussion on the State steamers.

Mr. J. P. GARDINER: I only desired to draw attention to the hon. member's inconsistency. He condemned the inauguration of the State steamship service, and, by the way, I might mention that the people of Broome, it was rumoured, had issued a circular that under no circumstances were the merchants to ship goods by the State steamers; yet immediately a little trouble overtakes them, though they may have condemned everything that the State may have done, they approach the Government and say, "We wish you, not-

withstanding your depleted revenue, to make advances to us or guarantee us to the extent of £45,000, in order that we may pay the debts we owe to Asiatics employed by us and continue the industry." I consider that the Government should go into this matter very thoroughly. I anticipated that we would have had some concrete proposition from the member for Kimberley, but unfortunately he occupied the whole of his time in condemning the Premier for discourtesy. I confess I am not competent to devise a scheme whereby the industry may continue and whereby the State may obtain a fair deal. I thought the member for Kimberley would have submitted a tangible scheme which, while assisting the industry, would not have unduly burdened the State. He failed to do so, however, and Cabinet ought, therefore, to consider the means by which the industry might be kept going. The position is serious in Cossack, Onslow, and Port Hedland, and more serious we know at Broome and the Government should do all they can at any rate to protect the white people who are residing in those places and who will suffer if something is not done in the immediate future.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER (Irwin) [9.4]: We are all concerned in the future of the pearling industry and we want to see legitimate assistance given to it to tide it over its present difficulties. The Premier has to recognise that each industry must be assisted in accordance with its relative value to the State as a whole. He has also to realise that the advances he makes against this industry are such as a reasonable man would make, expecting to have them repaid. He has further to ask himself that when the war is over and distress has gone, has the profit of that industry not a value in the markets of the world, a regular value. The House will rather applaud the attitude taken up by the Premier with regard to the amount to be advanced. I believe that before war broke out pearl shell had a value of £220 per ton. Now, these people want an advance of £100. If that £220 per ton was caused by a legitimate world's demand, then £100 a ton does not seem

to be a large amount to advance against it even with war on, but when we find that financial institutions, which I presume up to now have carried on that industry, are not prepared to advance that £100 per ton without a Government guarantee, the Premier is quite right in shying a bit before agreeing to the request. He is quite right in saying "If these people who know the business from A to Z, and who have been in it all their lives are not satisfied to advance against a thing that had a value of £220 a ton, and which we ought to assume in all these industries, it would realise again immediately on the conclusion of the war," then he might readily say, "I am not going to guarantee £100 a ton or guarantee the bank's advance of £100." I make this suggestion: the four members who have spoken and who represent the district affected say that there is an urgent necessity for assistance to be given to this industry. It appears to us also that there is necessity for assistance, and we do not want the industry which has been defined as one which catered for the luxurious rich rather than for the general community, we do not want even that, worth as it is to us half a million, to die, if it can be assisted upon terms that the State will say are such that the Government of the day can give. The four representatives of the constituencies concerned have expert knowledge, and why cannot they meet and propound a scheme for assistance instead of tearing one another to tatters over the benches of this House.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): I have not started yet.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: The four hon. members should reason out a scheme and go to the Premier with it. They have heard the practical lines on which he says he is willing to assist, and if they will accept it, with the leader of the Opposition we will stand behind it and take our share of the responsibility.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [9.10]. I do not wish to deal with the details of the pearling industry, I only

desire to point out that in England when war broke out the necessity was emphasised for keeping all the industries and trades going, and seeing that the people were kept occupied and that nothing was stopped. Bank holidays were continued for three days at the end of which time the Government gave guarantees for no less than three hundred millions sterling. How necessary is it that we here should see that our industries are continued. This is the beginning of a good many requests which will be made to the Premier and the request of the member for Kimberley is a small one after all. It is merely that the Government should give a guarantee to the extent of £35,000 against pearl shell. The Premier should have immediately agreed to the request when it was made to him. The Premier himself as soon as he got into trouble went to the banks. The Premier's friend and leader, the Prime Minister went to the banks and got ten millions of money in order that he might lend some of it to the needy Premier of Western Australia. The pearling industry as well as every other industry in the State is the Premier's concern, and if he can keep it going by merely giving a guarantee, not by paying a penny in cash, he will be doing very well indeed. When it comes to the agricultural industry, and it will come to that in a day or two, I hope every member will be in favour of giving it considerable assistance in order to keep it going. There will be requests from other industries and as each comes along I hope it will be treated with more consideration than the Premier has given to the pearling industry. I hope the member who makes the request will be treated with more courtesy than was accorded to the member for Kimberley. The member for Kimberley has always been courteous to the Premier and every hon. member has received the utmost courtesy at that gentleman's hands. Notwithstanding the bombastic remarks of the Premier, I hope he will see that this industry is helped and that the people at Broome who have done so much for the State will not be allowed to go

to the wall for the sake of the little assistance which has been asked.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley—in reply) [9.13]: It is not my intention to make many remarks in reply. I do not regret for one moment having brought this motion before the House. I think it has done good and I thank the Premier and other hon. members who have spoken, for their remarks. I was justified in pointing out that I had been trying to bring the matter to a head for three and a half months, and I am glad to say that this evening I have done so. The House must realise that we are up against a difficult proposition and all I regret is that the matter was not tackled earlier. It was brought forward long ago, but it was delayed until now when something had to be done quickly. I take it from the remarks which have fallen from the Premier that he is still willing to give some consideration to a proposition that may be of assistance to the industry. I still feel there are hopes that we may come together on this matter. The Premier has received certain advice which, until this evening, I was not aware of. That advice pointed to the risk in financing to the extent of £100 a ton against shell. Probably the person who gave that advice is closely connected with general finance and general banking, but perhaps is not altogether in the know in regard to this particular industry.

The Premier: I had it from other sources as well, and all were on the same basis.

Mr. MALE: I would like to read to the Premier a cable from the High Commissioner in reply to one sent him last month. It is as follows:—

With reference to the telegram of the 14th November, pearling, at present no new markets. Auctions postponed indefinitely; home market small, but anticipated may increase.

That is a cable received from the High Commissioner. He does not say there is no hope for pearl shell. He says at the present moment the auctions have ceased. We knew that.

Mr. Smith: What is the position at Thursday Island?

Mr. MALE: Exactly the same as in Broome.

Mr. Smith: Have the Queensland Government come to their assistance?

Mr. MALE: I do not know. I believe all the boats there have been laid up. The High Commissioner says the Home market is small, but it is anticipated it may increase. The Premier and one or two others have stressed the fact that Austria and Germany are large consumers of shell. I admit that; but we have in America the consumer of more than half our output. England consumes a fair quantity, and France does the same.

The Minister for Mines: Is it not possible to get the shipments direct to America?

Mr. MALE: I think it will be before long. The American factories are not going to close down indefinitely; but American finance has been hit very hard and they have found it almost impossible to get rid of their copper ores and other products, and for the moment America, like other countries, has had to stop buying shell and use up what little stocks they have on hand.

The Minister for Mines: They have more important uses for their money just now.

Mr. MALE: Just so, but they have their factories, as in England, and those factories are not going to remain idle for long. Although Austria and Germany are not buying shell at present, the world will continue to require buttons, which are the backbone of the industry.

The Minister for Mines: What is the lowest sum per ton which will enable them to carry on?

Mr. MALE: The divers and men connected with the industry are keen to meet the pearler and assist him by fishing shell at the lowest possible margin, so that they may be kept employed. A schedule of wages was drawn up which the pearl-ers considered they might be able to pay, provided they could keep going next year. That schedule was to be submitted to the men for their consideration, and I was given to understand that those men were only too willing to accept the conditions. In regard to advances,

which is a big question when pearling is prosperous, the men were prepared to take a merely nominal sum, and on the basis of the schedule of wages drawn up on the scale of prices which would be required for the supply of rations and gear during the year, it was estimated that shell could be fished at a maximum cost, on a 4-ton average per boat, of £130 per ton. During the past year the cost of shell has been £180 per ton. It has been asked by different members, why the pearl-ers are not in a better financial position than they are to-day. The bulk of their shell is not sold until after August. The shell has cost them at least £180 to fish, and from early in August they have not been able to realise one penny on the shell accumulated.

The Minister for Mines: If it is going to cost that much there is no possibility of making advances that will allow them to continue.

Mr. MALE: Even if the maximum cost of a 4-ton average is £130 per ton, there will not be very many boats working. A man who is in a position to lay up probably will not bother to work his boats at no margin of profit at all. There are others who may be willing to work at practically no margin. It would be economical to work at no margin of profit, for the reason that a man would save the deterioration of his boat, which would more than offset what he would lose by working the boat at no margin of profit. Over and above that, the very life of the industry, the first necessity, are the divers. If those men are dispersed, and leave the State, it may take years to build up another set of capable divers. They are one of the best assets we have, and without the efficient diver it is impossible to get the shell. Some comment has been made by the Premier in regard to the combine. A combine exists amongst a certain number of boats, not for limiting the production of shell, but for regulating its sale. That combine does not include one-half of the boats fishing on this coast, and therefore it is not in any way a serious matter. Nor does it interfere with the quantity of shell fished; it only does what is done

in nearly every other industry, namely, attempts to regulate the sale of the product, so that the best price may be secured. In connection with the contracts which have been made with the firm of Oehsi & Co., the Premier, from information received, implies that the firm is in a position to carry out its contract. I have received equally good information to the contrary. I believe some of the contractors are taking steps to get their contracts carried out, but on legal advice received from London, and from the rulings of the courts in London, it has been shown conclusively that those contracts cannot at present be legally enforced. If that be the case, it would be mere foolishness on the part of the pearl-ers to send good money after bad, for blood cannot be squeezed out of a stone. Certainly that firm might be forced to hand over its affairs to a liquidator, but that would offer very little satisfaction to the industry. The Premier has stressed the point that until the pearl-ers have used every endeavour to assist themselves, it is not his province to come in and assist them. It can be conclusively proved that the pearl-ers have done everything possible for their own assistance. They have approached their bankers, but the bankers are not allowed to lend out money just as they please. They have their shareholders to consider, and unless the product, whether shell, wheat, or wool, is saleable, they will not make advances against it. It does not matter how good the security may be, unless the banks can see a chance of realising on it, they will not advance against it.

Mr. Smith: Cannot they offer the banks any collateral security?

Mr. MALE: They have the security of their boats, but at the present time even the boats are unsaleable.

The Minister for Works: Have they not any other security?

Mr. MALE: Some of them have, but some will not require assistance from either the Government or the banks. Those who do not require assistance are not going to pay interest and other charges for the sake of getting an advance.

Mr. Bolton: In the present position, if I had shell and could get £100 from the Government for it, I would take the money.

Mr. MALE: I would not; I have more faith in shell. The pearl itself, of course, is an absolute luxury, and is therefore unsaleable to-day. For some time to come, if not absolutely unsaleable, pearls will be considerably reduced in value, because people will not have money for luxuries. But when we come to the actual mother-of-pearl shell, of which buttons are the backbone, when it is realised that every one of you have pearl buttons on your shirts, and that those buttons are in universal use, it will be realised that the shell is anything but a luxury. Of course one cannot eat it, but neither can one eat copper or tin.

Mr. Bolton: But the metals make the guns.

Mr. MALE: And the shell serves to button up the shirts of the men who use the guns, and for that reason it will have a marketable value. Even now I do not despair of being able to fix up something with the Premier. I am still in hopes that we shall be able to do something, but that something must be done very quickly. I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

QUESTION — UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many students from the Training College have been attending the classes in the arts faculty at the Western Australian University, and under what conditions? 2, How many Government assisted students are attending the classes in the engineering faculty, and under what conditions? 3, How many Government assisted students are attending the classes in the agricultural faculty, and under what conditions?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Twenty-nine students from the Training College attend classes in the arts faculty at the Western Australian University. The conditions are as fol-

low:—(a) That they have matriculated; (b) that they are given free railway passes to attend the University lectures. 2, Eight officers in the Public Works, Railway, and Water Supply and Drainage Departments attend classes in the engineering faculty. They are granted leave of absence without pay for such time as is necessary to attend the course. 3, There have not been any students attending the agricultural faculty this year. Students who intend to take this course must devote their first year to science, and this practice has been followed during the present year.

QUESTION—ROAD CONSTRUCTION, BULLSBROOK.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY asked the Minister for Works: 1, Did the Works Department in the year 1912 construct a road 180 chains in length in the Swan Roads Board district, and known as the West Road, Bullsbrook? 2, At whose request was the said road constructed? 3, What was the estimated cost? 4, What was the actual cost? 5, Did the Swan Roads Board protest against the expenditure of so large a sum of money on the road on the ground that it was only a minor road serving a very small number of people, whilst there were many main roads in the district in need of attention? 6, Is it a fact that three previous Ministers for Works (Mr. Price, Mr. Daglish, and Mr. Johnson) had refused to make a grant for the road on the ground that the expenditure was not justified? 7, Why did the department construct the road in defiance of the wishes of the board? 8, Why did the Department construct the road itself instead of placing the work in the hands of the roads board for the district? 9, Is it a fact that the road was so constructed that although used only for light traffic it became in so bad a condition within six months that the settlers had to break up blackboy trees to fill up the ruts? 10, Is it a fact that within twelve months of the construction of the road it became in a practically impassable condition? 11, When did the department first formally

hand the road over to the board? 12, Did the Minister in October of 1913 lead the board to believe that the department would place the road in repair? 13, Is it a fact that the board estimates the cost of putting the road in repair at £438? 14, Is it a fact that the departmental estimate for the said work is £164? 15, Is it a fact that he had recently withdrawn his offer to put the road in repair and substituted an offer to contribute £82 towards the work? 16, Has this offer been refused by the board? 17, Has he since demanded that the board shall repair the road under threats of taking "other steps"? 18, What are the "other steps" contemplated? 19, Is he aware that the total contribution by way of rates of the whole of the settlers served by the road is up to the present time only £7 per annum?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The Public Works Department attended to 190 chains in 1912. 2, Mr. Jacoby, M.L.A., then member for the District, the Swan Road Board, and the Bullsbrook Progress Association. 3, The Swan Road Board asked for £300; the estimate of the Public Works was £400 for 190 chains. 4, £406 10s. 4d. 5, Yes, giving a reason that the department did not make sufficient grants for maintenance, etc., of main roads, which should be maintained from the board's own funds plus the annual subsidy. 6, No record can be traced of such decisions. 7, The department did not defy the wishes of the board, but owing to representations made previously by the member for the district, the board and the progress association, and the reports of officials, the department had ample evidence that the road was necessary to serve the settlers. 8, At the time the work was under construction the department had available men and plant from works which had been completed. 9, The road was constructed to withstand the traffic of the settlement served, but through wilful neglect of ordinary maintenance on the part of the board, it became rutted in portions of same. 10, No. 11, The road was never taken out of the hands of the board. 12, In October,

1913, the Minister, after listening to representations made by a deputation, agreed to inspect the road, and after inspecting to decide what degree of assistance, if any, should be rendered. 13, Yes. 14, Yes, to fill in the ruts, and place gravel on the road. 15, No. 16, Yes, the offer made by the department to contribute on the pound for pound basis was refused. 17, Owing to the board's refusal to contribute half cost, the Minister advised the board that other steps would be taken to place the road in order in the interests of the settlers. He advised the board to reconsider the matter. 18, No decision has yet been arrived at because the board has not replied to the letter dated 13th November, 1914. 19, No.

QUESTION — MINING LEASES, GOLDEN MILE, RENEWAL.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When did the gold-mining leases of the dividend-paying mines on the Golden Mile expire? 2, Have these leases been renewed, and for what term? 3, Did the Government receive any consideration for these renewals? 4, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Twenty-three leases, belonging to 11 dividend-paying companies on the Golden Belt, expired on 31st December, 1913. 2, These leases have been renewed for a term of 21 years. 3, No. 4, Because no statutory authority existed for demanding any special consideration.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Why did not you alter the law?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will tell you in due course.

BILL—TRADE DISPUTES.

Introduced by Mr. Hudson and read a first time.

BILL—GRAIN AND FOODSTUFF.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 the words "artificial manures" means any chemically prepared fertiliser" be inserted.

The Premier said he desired to keep the wheat in the State in order that we should have enough, and it will be just as necessary to deal with fertilisers. It will be useless to put in seed if we have not fertilisers, and importations have almost ceased. Fertilisers should not be shipped away and the price should not be inflated.

The CHAIRMAN: This Bill was introduced for a special purpose, and the Standing Orders have been suspended to allow it to be passed. The amendment introduces another article which is entirely foreign to the subject of the Bill, and which to my mind is not in order. The measure was rendered necessary by the dry season, necessitating the State making provision to control foodstuffs for the people, as there may be a shortage. As regards fertilisers, there is absolutely no alteration in the position as compared with last year, and there is no necessity for urgency. I consider the introduction of fertilisers into the measure is not relevant, and on that account I rule that I cannot allow the amendment.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You will notice that I propose to alter the title.

The CHAIRMAN: The question of the title of the Bill is not now under consideration. The Bill was introduced and passed the second reading for a certain purpose. The intention now is to alter the whole scope of the measure, and if the amendment was allowed other amendments, embracing machinery, harness, and clothing, which are entirely foreign to the Bill, would have to be admitted. A similar ruling was given last year.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In view of your ruling, I move an amendment—

That in the definition of "foodstuff" all the words after "live stock" be deleted.

Under the Control of Trade in War Time Act any commodity may be proclaimed a necessary of life by the Governor, and

under this clause the definition of "food-stuff" may be extended to include any such commodity.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the hon. member proceeds further, I will deal with the question before the Chair.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I thought you had settled that.

The CHAIRMAN: I have given my ruling, but it is open to the hon. member for Northam to dissent from it.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I accept your ruling.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In view of the explanation it appears to me that the Bill goes further than you, Sir, recognise as the legitimate scope of the Bill. Under the control of Trade in War Time Act necessities of life mean such products, goods and chattels as the Governor may by proclamation declare to be necessities of life for the purposes of the Act. Apart from that I think the measure goes too far. In the South Australian Bill, which we are supposed to have copied to a large extent, the legislation is limited to fodder, hay, chaff, bran, or any other commodity of life used for the feeding of live stock. The extensive powers sought under this measure are not given. I view with some misgiving legislation of this kind and think it is calculated to upset ordinary channels of commerce. The difficulty is as to where we are going to stop. The more we can allow commerce to pursue its ordinary channel the better it will be for the State, and we do not want to interfere with it unless it is absolutely necessary. Whilst I am at one in giving the Government all the powers necessary to protect the foodstuffs of the community, and acquire foodstuffs if necessary for the purpose of preventing their export from our shores, I do not want to see a power of this description exercised perhaps in an unwise direction. The Government would be wise only to ask for such powers as they deem necessary at the present juncture. If the Premier will agree to confine this measure to foodstuffs such as flour and grain, and products of that description, he will be doing much better than if he tries to get absolute power such as is included in the definition.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition first of all assured the Committee that he is desirous of giving the Government all the powers that are necessary for protecting the interests of the community, particularly with regard to food-stuffs, and in the next breath he says it is not desirable to give the Government power to protect the interests of the community except so far as flour and grain and such commodities of the kind are concerned, and that we should only take those powers which we considered essential at the present moment. I do not agree with this argument. If the executive are worth anything at all at a time like the present they should have almost unlimited powers. There must be such powers because we cannot keep Parliament sitting from day to day to meet every emergency that arises. We must have an executive to act for Parliament, and for the people after Parliament rises, and we must have power to do anything that is essential to protect the public, and we must also carry the responsibility. We have already discovered that in some directions there is a possible shortage of food supplies and necessities of life. We are asking for powers to prevent that shortage, or what might be a shortage becoming a certain shortage, and difficulties arising in some months to come. We have no guarantee that there will be no shortage in other lines, and if such a shortage arises the executive should have power to control the supplies as in the case of the other commodities mentioned. It is merely a question of giving power to meet conditions not only which now arise but which may arise in the future. If the executive can be trusted with the other powers contained in the Bill they can surely be trusted with the balance of the powers. It is a measure which should be operated with due care and caution, but there is not the slightest intention on the part of the Government to put it into operation if it can be avoided.

Hon. James Mitchell: You do not want it in regard to potatoes.

The PREMIER: We might. Then there is just the possibility of a shortage in Australia of mutton at no distant date.

Already through a recurrence of bad seasons there has been a tremendous loss of sheep in Western Australia, this year perhaps more than any other. The other States have been suffering in the same way, and there may be a shifting of mutton before Parliament meets again. Without the powers contained in this Bill we should be unable to do anything. We discovered immediately we appointed the Commission under the Control of Trade in War Time Act that there was a shortage in cream of tartar, so that we had to keep a close watch on its movements. Hon. members will know that cream of tartar is essential in the making of self-raising flour. There is only a limited quantity of this stuff available.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: While it is necessary to give power to deal with grain or the purchase of grain there is no reason at all why the Government should seek to have power in regard to potatoes or fruit that they would not possess in the ordinary way.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot say what will be necessary a few months hence.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We do not want to restrain people from developing their land, and we want the biggest possible output from them. The Premier has made out a good case from his point of view for the control of chaff and grain and hay, but no case at all for the control of any other product.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The danger in legislation of this sort is of restricting instead of encouraging. We want to encourage people to trade as freely as they have done in the past.

The Minister for Works: The Bill will not affect that in the least.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have only the Minister's word for that.

The Attorney General: One of the objects of the Bill is to assist production.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have some hesitation in supporting the measure. Now that the Federal Government have removed duties on grain there is no urgency for legislation of this sort, as was the case when it was first intro-

duced. The fact of imports of grain being free from the producing countries of the world will pretty well keep the price of flour within reasonable bounds. I look upon the legislation as only necessary to retain what we had got in the State and not to interfere with prices. I want the farmer to have full value for his product.

The Minister for Mines: Do you mean the price is regulated by supply and demand?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The prices regulated by the world's markets. If we are an exporting State our market value is the price we can get in the markets of the world, less the cost of transit. If we are an importing State, as we are soon likely to be, the market price is that at which we can land our product at the nearest port from the producing countries.

Mr. James Gardiner. The Prime Minister said they could import it for 5s. 8d. from Chicago and land it in Australian ports.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is the market value plus the cost of getting it from the port to an inland market. If we give these drastic powers to the Government a position of affairs will be created that will interfere with the operations of producers and traders, in that they will know that the Government can at any time commandeer stocks at their own price. The board has to negotiate. There is an appeal to the Commission, but we know what that means. The price that is fixed is the price that the Government will pay. From the interjections of our friends opposite it is evident that they are seeking to get something cheaper than the market price, for the benefit of the consumer.

The Attorney General: This is a second reading speech.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Let the clause be limited to actual necessities of life.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: The amendment would defeat the vital object of the measure. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) mentioned potatoes

as a product which should not be interfered with, but potatoes are certainly among the necessities of life. The application of this measure depends upon the board to be appointed. As a farmer I have no distrust of the Government or of any board which may be appointed by the Government. If we exempt one necessary of life, we must exempt the lot. In a few months meat will be a serious question, and therefore meat should be included now, instead of our being called together a little later on, when it will be very inconvenient for us to assemble, to provide for its inclusion.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Constitution and appointment of board:

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to Subclause 2 :—"Provided that no civil servant shall be appointed as a member."

My desire is to remove any possibility of political influence being exercised on the board.

The Minister for Works: Political influence is more likely to come in if there are no civil servants on the board.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: If the Government in their wisdom saw fit to put Mr. Sutton on the board, then this amendment, in preventing Mr. Sutton's appointment, would deprive the farming community of the services of a man for whom they have the profoundest respect, and whose heart is in assisting them. I am taking it for granted that we will try, between the three parties, to have our representatives. The Country party will oppose the amendment.

The PREMIER: I hope the amendment will not be carried. I hardly understand the object of the mover, who gave no reasons. Undoubtedly, the amendment is a reflection upon both the Government and the public service. I give no guarantee as to whether there will or will not be a Government servant appointed to the Board. Possibly, a worse man might be obtained from outside the service than could be obtained within it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Do I understand from the Premier that he will confer with the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Country party in making the appointments, or that nominations may be sent in by those leaders? In that case there will not be much objection to the clause, but there should be a business man on the board.

The Minister for Works: Are not civil servants business men?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I wish the Premier to give me an assurance that there will be a business representative on the board.

The PREMIER: I do not feel called upon to give to every member of the Chamber, as he rises in his place, an assurance of what I will do. I have already given an assurance that I will consult the leaders of the Opposition and of the Country party in regard to the personnel of the board. The Government, after all, have the final responsibility of the appointments; and if one member of a party sitting opposite suggests a person whom we, in our discretion, consider absolutely impossible as a member of the board, we will not recommend His Excellency the Governor to appoint that person. I do not give an assurance that any names suggested by the leader of the Opposition or by the leader of the Country party will be accepted by the Government.

Mr. THOMSON: The Premier states that I gave no reasons for my amendment. I will only say that I thought we were endeavouring to push on with business. If the board consisted of a business man, a farmer, and a solicitor, there would be a combination capable of dealing with the knotty problems that will arise. Mr. Sutton is a member of the Foodstuffs Royal Commission now sitting, and so could hardly be a member of the board, seeing that appeals lie from the board to the Royal Commission. Civil servants may possess the experience required on the board, but an independent board will result in better working.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4, 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Who to preside at meetings:

Mr. TAYLOR: In regard to Subclause 2, the Premier on second reading said that the Chairman would have his casting, as well as his deliberative, vote, only when two members of the board sat, not when the full board sat.

The PREMIER: I said the Chairman could not exercise a casting vote when three members sat, because the conditions prevented it. With only two members present, the chairman must exercise his casting vote in the case of disagreement. We want decision; and, after all, the final responsibility rests with the chairman.

Mr. Taylor: If he has power to exercise both votes he can bring things to a standstill.

The PREMIER: The hon. member misunderstands the meaning of a casting vote; it only operates when there is equality of voting.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Method of exercising Board's power to acquire:

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That at the end of line 2 the following words be added:—"This section shall not apply to grain or foodstuffs reasonably required by the producer for the purpose of carrying on his business."

All that I am aiming at is that the farmer shall be in the position to conserve all the seed and chaff that he may require to carry him on until the following season.

The Premier: The new clause the member for Northam proposes to move will cover that.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I had a new subclause to propose, but I did not intend to go quite so far as the member for Katanning. Mine was more in accord with that of the member for Northam and it was to the effect that the board upon being fully satisfied as to the quantities required, may exempt from the

operations of the Act the legitimate requirements of the holder. There may be men who are honest and will say, "Those are my requirements" and the board will not desire to penalise them. We do not want others to hold requirements that are not legitimate.

The PREMIER: I hope the member for Katanning will withdraw his amendment, because what he desires is covered by what the leader of the Country party has suggested.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will you accept the amendment of the member for Irwin?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. THOMSON: I am prepared to withdraw my amendment so long as the farmer is protected; that is all I desire.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to the clause:—"Provided that the Board on being fully satisfied as to quantities required may exempt from the operations of this Act the legitimate requirements of the holder."

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not quite so hopeful that the Board will act reasonably. If this amendment is carried, my notice of amendment will not be necessary. I cannot, however, accept it unless the word "may" is altered to "shall." I move an amendment on the amendment—

That the word "may" be struck out and "shall" inserted in lieu.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I agree with the member for Northam that it should be made compulsory. I had prepared an amendment which was to the effect that the Board should not have the power to acquire compulsorily any grain or foodstuff upon a declaration being made that the owner required it for his own use. If one wants to send stock away by rail at the present time, for purpose of depasturing, it is necessary to put in a declaration that it is intended to bring that stock back again.

The PREMIER: Hon. members should take a reasonable view of the Bill as a whole, and bear in mind the fact that, while we have to definitely lay down certain principles, there are other essentials

which we should leave to the discretion of the board, or commission; and so long as we direct the board to take into account the owner's own requirements, it ought to be sufficient. If we insert "shall" we open up grounds for litigation and delay, because the farmer will object that he requires the stuff, and the board cannot then go any further.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I wish the question to be put beyond doubt. The farmer should be allowed to keep feed for his animals, and seed for his crop. Already, under the Foodstuff Act, a great deal has been done which should never have been done, and we may expect the same from the administration of this measure.

Mr. HUDSON: I appreciate the compliment paid by the member for Katanning when he suggested that I should be appointed a member of the board. However, I do not think he contemplated the number of amendments likely to be made in the clause, or he would have had more consideration for me. It would be better if the movers of all the various amendments were to retire and confer as to the best form in which to express those amendments. We might then be able to get along.

Amendment (Hon. J. Mitchell's) on amendment put and negatived.

Amendment (Mr. James Gardiner's) put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 13—Price to be as agreed, or as fixed by Commission under the Control of Trade in War Time Act:

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That after the word "shall" in line 1, the words "within three months" be inserted.

This amendment is in response to a request which I received to-day from the Chamber of Commerce. I also received a letter to-day from the W.A. Flour Millers' Association, who appreciate the fact that the Bill is intended, in part, to prevent wheat gristed in Western Australia being sent out of the State in the form of flour. The letter is as follows—

At a full meeting of the above association held to-day a discussion took place on the Bill which is now before the House, dealing with foodstuffs, and it was thought that the association might help the Government if an undertaking were given by the association not to sell flour for export until such time as the Control of Trade Commission is satisfied that the seed wheat and food requirements of the State are assured. As chairman of the association I have pleasure in giving this undertaking, and also attach hereto a list of the various milling companies which are members of the association. (Signed) W. Padbury.

The members of the association are: The Peerless Roller Flour Mills, Guildford; Ockerby & Co., Ltd., Perth; Perth Roller Flour Mills; York Flour Milling Co., Ltd.; James Gillespie, Ltd., Northam; Great Southern Flour Mills, Ltd., Narrogin; F. & C. Piesse, Katanning; and William Thomas & Co., Ltd., Northam.

They have all undertaken not to export any flour until the Commission are satisfied that we have sufficient for our own requirements. The action of the millers is one upon which we may well congratulate them. If there is to be a shortage they are not going to be responsible for having brought it about. In these circumstances I am satisfied that the board will not be called upon to do much except, perhaps, where they may find stored large quantities of wheat suitable for seeding purposes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Why the three months?

The Premier: The Chamber of Commerce suggested it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The board is not going to buy wheat from the Chamber of Commerce but from the farmers. There is no reason why the Premier should not pay cash, as the millers do. I do not mind agreeing to 30 days, although I think it should be cash. The board will have to pay when the Premier hands over the money.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Provision is made for interest. I have an amend-

ment providing that a certificate shall be given showing the amount, when and where payable, and that the date of payment shall not be more than three months. We do not want to be unreasonable. If the Government make provision for the payment of interest, the people I represent will be satisfied so long as the certificate is limited to three months, which will make it practically a marketable security.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Unless the words are inserted the Premier could be made to pay cash.

Mr. James Gardiner: He must pay interest if there is delay.

The PREMIER: I do not think the court would uphold the interpretation of the member for Northam.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier has made use of the Chamber of Commerce to get protection for himself. If he takes a man's goods he should pay for them and pay promptly.

Mr. Bolton: The representative of the farmers is satisfied.

Mr. James Gardiner: The board would not be buying for themselves.

The PREMIER: The member for Northam should accept the advice of the member for Irwin and be reasonable. Provision is made for the payment of interest if the amount is not paid promptly, which would be accepted as 30 days in accordance with the trade arrangement. Without seeking their advice the Chamber of Commerce wrote suggesting three months.

Mr. Hudson: Have they also fixed a month as a reasonable time for payment?

The PREMIER: I think that is the custom of the trade. I will be imposing a penalty on myself if I do not pay promptly, because interest will be payable from the time the certificate is given. I will not give an inspector £2,000 or £3,000 to carry around in his pocket until he can purchase some wheat.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Millers pay cash.

The PREMIER: The maximum of three months is inserted on the advice of those who know best.

Mr. WANSBROUGH: The suggestion of the Chamber of Commerce will overcome the difficulty in the case of a farmer from whom a quantity of wheat is acquired by the board. The insertion of the words will fix a time limit within which he can expect payment, and it will be a negotiable security which will be almost as good as cash, seeing that he will be getting interest on the money.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The farmer is entitled to payment and members will be allowing the Premier to buy when he likes and to take three months' terms. To say that these certificates, bearing five per cent. interest, will be equal to cash, is absolute nonsense. The miller might get money for six per cent., but for a representative of the farmers to say they can get money at five per cent. is ridiculous.

Mr. James Gardiner: No one said so. You are always irresponsible in your statements.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am never irresponsible. The hon. member who just spoke said a farmer could go to the bank and get the money. The member for Irwin, on the second reading, discussed this point, and said there would be a term in the certificate in order that sellers might have a negotiable document.

Mr. James Gardiner: That is what they are giving us.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If no one else will say a word for the small farmers, I will.

Mr. PIESSE: Although the method proposed seems unbusinesslike, we should recollect that the Government have undertaken a big task to assist the farmers. We recognise the financial position of the State. I take it that a bill will be given bearing interest, and that it will be possible to discount the bill at the bank.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, simply a certificate.

Mr. PIESSE: I take it the certificate will be a bill. If the bill is discounted there will be a slight loss, but if the farmers who have wheat to sell know that the bulk of the grain is being ac-

quired to assist those without wheat, they will willingly make some slight sacrifice.

Mr. Munsie: If they do not do it willingly, they should be compelled to.

Mr. PIESSE: It is the custom to pay cash in the ordinary course of business. It is essential in the circumstances that a large sum of money should be required to help the farmers over their present difficulty, and I hope some consideration will be given to them.

The Premier: Whatever cost we are put to through the measure from the point of view of seed wheat will be repaid by the farmers.

Mr. PIESSE: If the certificates that are given are not negotiable hardship will be inflicted. If the purchase price is paid by bills the bills can be discounted.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: At the present time farmers are getting cash from the millers for their wheat. This Bill proposes that the Government can stop the millers from buying, and only purchase under a three months' bill.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: It means that. Further, it means that they pay the farmer five per cent., whereas the latter could have got cash from the millers.

The Minister for Lands: It does not say they will not get cash.

The Premier: Who said we will not pay cash.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The Government have power to withhold the money for three months and pay five per cent. on it. It is certainly hard upon the farmers, and an unreasonable position to place before the members. It is not right that those who have wheat to sell should be placed in a different position from that under which they could sell to the millers or to someone else.

The PREMIER: I wish to remove any possibility of the remarks of Mr. Lefroy being circulated without saying something by way of refutation. These remarks are calculated to do the State a tremendous amount of harm. All the business that this hardup Government has transacted since 1911 in the way of purchasing wheat from the farmers has been on a cash basis. I do not wish the position

to be misrepresented or misunderstood, and the credit of the State damaged. We have been able to pay cash for all the wheat purchased—and there has been a considerable amount—and I may add that this has been purchased for the purpose of tiding farmers over their difficulties. One would imagine from the remarks of members opposite that the Government had been refusing to pay for claims against them for the purchase of these food-stuffs. I see no reason why we should not continue to pay on a cash basis as in the past. I think it was the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) who suggested a compulsory system by which we should pay within a period of, I think, six months.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I ask the Premier to withdraw that statement; I did not make it.

The PREMIER: I stand corrected. At all events the hon. member discussed the question of compelling the Government to pay within a certain period.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did.

The PREMIER: The hon. member only echoed it; he must have said it by way of interjection. The Chamber of Commerce at all events requested it. We had a provision in the Bill for cash payment, but the Chamber of Commerce sought to make a limit of three months the maximum period in which the sellers should receive payment, so that they would know for certain, that is, within three months, that they could get the cash and could act accordingly.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: So far as payment is concerned, we are quite satisfied that the three months is only the maximum period that the Premier is asking for.

The Premier: I did not really ask for it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We realise that the documents can be placed in the bank and that advances can be made against them. We have no complaints about the matter at all. I think hon. members have failed to see that there is storage, which the Government are proposing to pay. It has been suggested to me that 6 per cent. should have been the amount fixed. I am

somewhat inclined, however, to waive the point of storage.

Mr. S. STUBBS: We have wasted a good deal of time. I wish that all the transactions I have on my books were on the same basis as the present transactions that are being operated on behalf of the Government in the Wagin district for fodder. The conditions are plain and straightforward; directly you deliver the product on the railway station and the weights are given and checked, the sovereigns are there. It is only wasting the time of the House to go on.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) of Subclause (1) the word "and" be struck out, and that after the word "owner" the following be inserted:—"and other person or persons claiming to be interested."

It may happen that the owner is not the only person interested; and if another person claims to be interested the board should listen to him.

The PREMIER: My only objection to the amendment is that it may place obstacles in the way of the operation of the measure. For instance, it may be necessary to take immediate possession and at once to fix a price because the owner would not be available at a later date. The board, if not satisfied as to ownership, would pay the amount into court. Apparently, what the mover wishes to provide is that, before a deal is completed, any person interested may, if he so desires, step in and question the price fixed between the board and the owner. I fear that under this amendment it would be incumbent on the board to advertise every transaction, giving say 30 days' notice.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. ROBINSON: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to paragraph (b) of Subclause (1):—"After hearing the parties and any evidence then may wish to call."

The Premier stated to the leader of the Opposition that the meaning of paragraphs (a) and (b) is that if the parties

do not agree on a price they can go, by way of appeal, before the Commission, who will then fix the price for the parties. The measure, however, does not say that. It says that if the parties do not agree, then after 14 days the price is to be fixed by the Commission, who may fix it quite arbitrarily, without hearing anybody at all. My amendment is to the effect that the parties may appear before the Commission and discuss the question.

The Premier: But it is provided that one party or the other must apply to the Commission.

Mr. ROBINSON: But the other party may not be called on. My amendment is to move the Commission to give effect literally to what the Premier stated in moving the second reading.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to the amendment, which is exactly what is intended, and what is provided for by the Bill.

Mr. HUDSON: I do not think there is any necessity at this stage to introduce machinery clauses for the purpose of endeavouring to bring the parties before the Commission. At a later stage of the Bill provision is made to give the Government power to make regulations for the carrying out of the measure, and those regulations will provide machinery for bringing the parties before the Commission.

The PREMIER: The amendment merely repeats what is in the Royal Commissioners' Powers Act.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: With regard to Subclause 3. The Country party are rather in a difficulty over this question of the Royal Commission. We were particularly anxious that instead of a Commission there should be a Commissioner, and we should have been glad to insert Mr. Sutton's name there. I quite appreciate the position of the Government in this respect. Whilst the action of the present Commission may not be satisfactory to us, the Government always owe an obligation to stand by the people whom they have appointed. I do not wish to make any observation further than that I should be glad to have

the Premier's assurance that, when it comes to a matter of fixing prices, the member who knows all about the subject shall fix them.

The PREMIER: I can hardly do that. I know what the hon. member desires. We all appreciate the fact that Mr. Sutton is a wheat expert and that he knows the relative values of the different classes of wheat. Any business man might be able to fix the price for f.a.q. milling wheat but the relative values can only be fixed by an expert. Mr. Sutton is a member of the Commission and there is nothing in the Bill to prevent him from being a member of the Board.

Mr. Thomson: You would have an appeal from Caesar to Caesar.

The PREMIER: The board that will operate here will be merely a board that will be operating under a machinery measure. I want to avoid too much in the nature of appealing and I want someone on the board who will deal fairly with the seller as well as with the State. There is nothing to prevent Mr. Sutton being a member of the board as well as the Commission.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is not desirable.

The PREMIER: He is acting now as such. This Bill is to some extent merely legalising the action which has already been taken by Mr. Sutton and I have not heard any complaints. There have not been any appeals up to date. Someone said why appeal from Caesar to Caesar. We do that in all our Courts but there is always someone sitting with the justice who first heard the case.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is no appeal against Mr. Sutton's transactions; he is acting like any other buyer. Under this Bill there is compulsory purchase and the buyer first of all has to try to come to terms with the owner of the wheat, or it may be mutton or beef. The board has to try and arrange with the owner, and if they come to loggerheads, then there is an appeal to the Commission. It is hardly right for a gentleman who has been trying to strike a bargain to sit on the Commission to hear the appeal. I would prefer that Mr. Sutton

should hear the appeals and that someone else should do the bargaining.

The PREMIER: There will be fewer appeals if Mr. Sutton remains on the board.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There are bound to be a number of appeals especially at the beginning.

The PREMIER: There are not likely to be any at all.

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

*That the following be added to stand as paragraph (c) of Subclause 1:—
"The price so fixed shall be what the Commission consider to have been the market value of such grain or foodstuff at the place and at the time where and when it was acquired."*

The intention is to prevent the export of flour.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. Munsie: To prevent the increase in price.

Mr. THOMSON: That is just the reply I wanted. My intention is to see that the man who has produced the wheat gets the market value. The Premier rather ridiculed my remarks on the second reading that the question of supply and demand regulated the price of wheat. In a season such as we are having now, it is regulated by supply and demand. In a normal year the price in Western Australia is regulated by London parity. What has created the high prices which are being given for wheat in Western Australia to-day? Simply that there is a demand and a possible shortage. I want to quote the figures which were used in the House last Thursday. At Adelaide the quote for wheat was from 5s. 7½d. to 5s. 10d. To bring that wheat to Fremantle would cost 9d. per bushel, raising the price to 6s. 4½d. Even on the Sydney basis of 4s. 6d., which was the price for old wheat, with a cost of 11¼d. for bringing it to Fremantle we reach 5s. 5d. In Melbourne the quote was 6s. 9d. It would cost 9½d. to bring it here, or a total of 7s. 6½d. I am quoting these figures to show that the price of wheat

in this State is governed by the law of supply and demand.

Mr. Heitmann: Absolute rubbish.

Mr. THOMSON: Thank you. A certain farmer in our district has not had a crop for three years. This year he has 270 acres of wheat from which he expects a five-bushel yield at 5s. 6d. That will represent £371 5s. But putting in that wheat cost him £54 for seed, £33 10s. for fertiliser, £40 for horse-feed, £15 15s. for bags, £4 11s. for freight on manures, £8 2s. for insurance, £18 for a man helping at harvesting, and £9 10s. for machinery breakages, or a total of £183 8s. That leaves him £187 17s., out of which he has to pay £30 for rent and £97 by way of instalments on machinery, or £127, leaving him £60 17s. on which to live and pay his other bills.

Mr. James Gardiner: And hundreds have not that much.

Mr. THOMSON: It is only too true. But a man who has struggled for years in the way this man has done should not be penalised by having the price fixed at below the market value. If the Commission fix the price at 5s. a bushel this unfortunate individual will have less than £30 with which to buy his stores and carry on.

Mr. James Gardiner: Why argue about what the Commission will fix?

The PREMIER: The hon. member has endeavoured to explain how to fix the market value. He forgets that the Bill deals with more than wheat. I do not want endless litigation over such a measure. I want to be fair to the man who has a lot of wheat to buy, as well as to the man who has a little to sell. We are not likely to appoint a board who will deal unfairly with the producers. The hon. member is not clear on the question of fixing a market value. His idea would not hold good in any court of law, nor would it be entertained by a business man. If we were going to fix the market value of wheat here it would be necessary to look around the world for wheat. I have a quotation of 6s. 3d. for wheat landed at Fremantle.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I have been telling you that all along.

The PREMIER: In the Federal Parliament it was recently asserted that wheat could be landed in Australia for 5s. 9d. a bushel. That is a difference of 6d., and if we looked around a little more we might be able to get it for 5s. 6d. The Government do not intend to purchase wheat for their own use, or to make a profit out of it. We will be acting as a middleman with money, purchasing wheat for the farmer to enable him to put in a crop. The hon. member detailed the cost of putting in a crop last year. He should take into account the cost of putting in a crop next year, by men who are up to their ears in debt, and who, if thrown on their own resources, would be bankrupt. If we are to save these men we cannot make them pay such a price that even with a good harvest they will only be able to pay their way. We want them to recover. I will agree to the amendment subject to there being no further appeal. Let the Commission fix a price on the market value at the time, and at the place where the grain is taken, but make their decision final. No one desires litigation. We want a measure which will give a direction to the Commission, and the matter should be left to the Commission.

Mr. Robinson: The Bill does not suggest any further appeal.

The PREMIER: The clause would enable any person to move the courts to make the Commission show that they fixed the price on the market value.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Premier can land wheat here at 6s. 4d. there is no need at all for the Bill. The proposal of the member for Katanning is absolutely necessary; a man should have a right to protect himself in the courts. The price of wheat was fixed at 4s. 6d. to the farmer, but the miller was not troubled. The miller has been selling flour at a price which would enable him very easily to pay 6s. a bushel for wheat.

The Premier: But he also entered into contracts long since when wheat was purchasable at 3s. 6d.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The price of flour to-day is £12 Perth and £11 17s. 6d. Northam, and the price of offal is £5 15s., making a total of £17 12s. 6d. Wheat

bought at 6s. is equal to £15, and an additional £2 for milling makes a total of £17. Millers who have sold flour at a cheap rate would surely cover themselves by purchases as soon as they had sold. Whilst the farmers are compelled to take 4s. 6d. for the wheat the miller has been allowed to get 6s. for it. Is that fair?

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Commission appointed under the Control of Trade in War time Act have acted most illegally in many cases. Here is an advertisement which says that where persons holding stocks are refraining from selling in case the new season's wheat is not of such good quality for seed purposes as the old wheat, the Commission are prepared to consider applications to retain the old wheat and substitute an equivalent quantity of new wheat in a period to be agreed upon. If the farmer keeps his wheat he must put on the market from his new wheat an equivalent quantity at 4s. 6d. Is that fair? The Commission had no power at all under the Act to publish this advertisement. They have written to people calling attention to the fact that the seed has not been sold, and advising them to sell. I have a letter dated 26th November, and the last paragraph of the letter reads—"Unless the surplus over your personal requirements for seed is made available for sale the Commission must enforce the penalties under the Control of Trade in War Time Act." The Commission have no power to do anything of the sort. The Act provides that one person may claim from another. There is no offence committed under refusal to deliver to the person claimed. It provides further that if a claim is made a person has to be convicted before the Commission can take any action at all. It is iniquitous and scandalous that such a thing can happen and that the Government, knowing that it has happened, should be willing to allow it to be continued. I would like to have an amendment inserted as proposed by the member for Katanning, because I think we ought to have the power to move the board if we are unjustly and unfairly treated. The Premier says he wants seed

wheat chiefly for the farmer, and I entirely agree with that. There is nothing to stop the Premier buying at 6s. 4d. and selling it to the farmers at 4s. 6d. The general taxpayer should bear the burden and not those who have only a small quantity of wheat. In the district represented by Mr. James Gardiner and myself, and indeed in most other districts, the price should at least be sufficient to cover the cost of cropping. When the Premier says to the farmer that he ought to give something to the man who is less fortunate, he is asking the man who has already lost on his cropping costs to give.

The Premier: I do not suggest that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Premier's contention is right that he can get wheat at 6s. 4d., then let him drop the Act.

Mr. MUNSIE: The whole of the discussion, particularly on the amendment, has been as to whether the Government have the right to give the full market value at the place at which the wheat is purchased for the sake of giving seed wheat to the man who is unfortunate enough to have no crop. I hope the Commission will take into consideration, not only the man who has not got seed, but the hundreds and thousands of individuals in this State who are not interested in agriculture or the farming industry at all, and who have just as much right to be considered. The community that I represent is the goldfields community, that does not grow wheat whether the season is good or bad.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: But they put a lot of money into wheat farms.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is so. I contend that the Commission should take into consideration the fixing of a price that would be a fair price for the flour to be gristed from the wheat in order that the people may have a reasonable chance of getting bread at a reasonable price.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is your idea of a fair price?

Mr. MUNSIE: About 5s. 9d. is a fair price.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then why are you asking 4s. 6d.?

The PREMIER: I have no objection to the Commission being directed to give

the market value for the wheat they require, but I do object to putting it in such a way that we may afterwards have a fair amount of litigation because of some dispute as to how they arrived at such a basis, and to prove to the court that the value fixed is not the market value. The South Australian Act is very definite on the point. I propose that the Commission in fixing the price shall have regard to the market value at the time the commodity is acquired. But that is not compulsory or mandatory to the extent of compelling the Commission to fix the price on the basis of the market value. The direction to the Commissioners is that they shall have regard to the market value at the time they acquire the commodity. That will effect exactly what the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) desires, and I think it should meet the wishes of all members.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope the Premier will accept my amendment. The hon. gentleman has repeatedly stated that he has no intention of injuring any section of the community, and therefore he should raise no objection to the insertion of the clause I propose. It is entirely unfair to injure one section of the community in order to benefit another, more particularly when the section which is to suffer injury has had for years an uphill fight against odds that are almost insuperable. The hardships of agricultural settlers cannot be known to goldfields members, but I know from observation what those hardships are. My desire is that the Bill shall provide that producers shall get the market value of their products. Last week I attended a hurriedly convened meeting of settlers in my district to consider this Bill, and the settlers unanimously expressed an opinion that the price should not be fixed.

The Premier: If it is necessary in the interests of the consumer as well, the price will be fixed, no matter what the farmers in your district may say.

The Minister for Works: If it is to be a party matter let us have it a party matter.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government are making this a party Bill. If the proposal

is good enough for South Australia, surely it is good enough for us. The Premier in introducing the Bill assured us that it was an exact copy of the South Australian measure.

The Premier: I did not say so.

Mr. THOMSON: I may have misunderstood the hon. gentleman, and I accept the correction. I trust the Committee will carry my amendment.

Mr. ROBINSON: I offered a suggestion with a view to meeting what I believe to be the wishes of both sides of the House. The Premier suggested that there should be no appeal. I suggested to him that we might add to the words which the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) proposed to insert, the following: "And the decision of the Committee shall be final." The Premier wishes it to read that the Commission shall have regard to the market value; but they need not take any notice of the market value. These circumstances will lead to endless litigation. I am with hon. members every time in attempting to prevent litigation. What I propose is common sense, which must appeal to anyone who has brains.

The PREMIER: I asked the Parliamentary Draftsman to draft a clause which would be in the nature of a direction from Parliament to the Commission to fix the price on the market value of the commodity taken, and which would at the same time prevent the moving of the courts to compel the Commission to show cause why they had fixed a certain price, in the endeavour to upset the decision at which the Commission had arrived. The Parliamentary Draftsman said the plainest, simplest, and best way of getting over the difficulty was to add the words "The Commission shall have regard to the market value."

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why object to the South Australian section?

The PREMIER: Because that section makes it possible to appeal against a decision of the Commission on the ground that they did not have regard to the market value.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I consider that the Premier ought to accept the first suggestion, namely, to take the South

Australian section with words added making the decision final so far as the price is concerned. Even without those added words I do not think the courts would upset the finding of the Commission as to what was the market value. However, to make it doubly sure, we may add the words "The decision of the Commission shall be final."

The PREMIER: I am not a lawyer, but I am prepared to cross swords with the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) and to say that he is wrong in law when he maintains that the words which he proposes to add will prevent the courts being moved. The court, I believe, will say that the decision of the Commission is to be final, but that such final decision was arrived at on a wrong basis. Members opposite are fighting for something which they must know will either give the right of appeal or else be absolutely useless.

Mr. Robinson:—Suppose the Commission pay no regard to the market value.

The PREMIER: They must do so. We as a Ministry will not permit any Commission to exist or to sit if they disobey Acts of Parliament. I move a further amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause 3:—"The Commission in fixing the prices shall have regard to the market value of such grain or food-stuff at the place and at the time where and when it was acquired."

Amendment passed.

12 o'clock midnight.

Hon. JAMES MITCHELL: I had intended to move a proviso to the effect that in the event of payment being deferred for more than thirty days after the fixing of the price, the rate of interest payable by the board should be eight per cent. per annum.

The PREMIER: We have paid cash up to date.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Eight per cent. is extravagant. We say that the probabilities are that the Government will be charging the farmer six per cent. for his accommodation, and my suggestion

is that the amount be made six per cent. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause 4 the word "five" be struck out and "six" inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Government can afford to let the farmer have it at six per cent., seeing that they pay only four. However, this is an advance on five per cent., and it is evident that I shall be voted against if I persist in my proposed amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Ought we not to have a new subclause providing that the board shall give to the person from whom they purchase a certificate showing the quantity purchased, the price and the total amount paid?

The PREMIER: It can be done by regulation.

Clause as amended put and passed.

Clause 14—Terms and conditions of storage pending delivery to the board:

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: We should make plain whose is the risk by definitely providing that such storage shall be at the risk of the board.

The PREMIER: It is our risk all right.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 15, 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Power to search for grain or fodder:

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: Assuming that a man who is honest in his assertion says, "I have not on my property any of the materials for which you are searching," notwithstanding which they break in and search—is it not fair that the board shall pay for any damage done under such circumstances? I want only a reasonable thing.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They would not break in unless he refused them entrance.

The PREMIER: If he refuses permission to inspect he ought to be held responsible for the consequences.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Taking by or delivery to the board to discharge obligation to deliver to other persons:

Mr. ROBINSON: This is a very difficult clause to understand. I took it from

the Premier's explanation on the second reading that the man whom the clause should protect is he whose wheat is seized against any contract he has entered into, and that in respect to people in this State if there was any difference in price it would be adjusted. Where the clause will not fulfil its intention is in a case where, say, a Melbourne man has made a contract with a Western Australian farmer. Already the Premier and the Attorney General have said that that could not be sued upon in Victoria or, if it were, it could not be brought across here. The leader of the Opposition said the judgment of the court in Victoria would automatically become the judgment of the court here, but the Premier and the Attorney General declared that that could not be. As a matter of fact the action could be brought there and judgment recovered, and if this were done, there are two means of bringing the action here, namely, under the Execution of Process Act of the Commonwealth, and also under a very old law, the Inter-colonial Judgments Act of Western Australia. Consequently a Victorian man, who would not be bound in the Victorian court by this statute, might get a judgment against one of our farmers, whereas a Western Australian could not. I have an amendment which I think will protect us against the Victorian man. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the clause:—"The board shall indemnify the person from whom the grain or foodstuff is acquired in respect of contracts already entered into."

The Premier: Do you think I will accept that?

Mr. ROBINSON: Yes.

The Premier: I am not so simple as I look.

Mr. ROBINSON: The latter part of Clause 19 means to a man in Victoria what the amendment provides for a man in Western Australia.

The Premier: There is no obligation between a Melbourne merchant and a Western Australian farmer.

Mr. ROBINSON: The case covered by Clause 19 is purely Western Australian.

The very reason given by the Premier for the Bill was that he had been told on the highest authority that some Western Australians had sold 1,000 tons of flour or wheat to a man in the Eastern States, and if the Bill were not passed the cereal would go out of the country. That man would have a right of action against the seller here who could not deliver the wheat. My amendment would prevent the Western Australian man from suffering.

The Minister for Works: But the State would suffer.

Mr. ROBINSON: The State would have the wheat.

The Premier: We would not know whether a man had entered into a contract until he knew this Bill was coming along.

Mr. ROBINSON: This would apply only to genuine contracts.

The Premier: Who asks for this amendment?

Mr. ROBINSON: I do.

The Premier: On whose behalf?

Mr. ROBINSON: It appeals to my commonsense.

The Premier: We are not here to protect your commonsense.

Mr. ROBINSON: The Premier himself recognised this stumbling block and the leader of the Opposition crossed swords with him in the matter. The Premier said a Victorian judgment could not be enforced here, and directed the attention of the Attorney General to it. There can be no difference of opinion where there is a statute law. I submit the amendment to prevent any loss to Western Australians.

The PREMIER: I cannot accept the amendment. I admit I stand corrected on the law in respect of an action taken in Victoria against a citizen of Western Australia, but the correction does not make my interpretation of the clause, as stated previously, wrong. The clause is very clear except that it contains superfluous words.

Mr. Hudson: Why not strike out the objectionable words?

The Premier: No exception has been taken to the South Australian Act, and I have adopted the identical words.

Mr. James Gardiner: In South Australia they took a large shipment of wheat under that section.

The PREMIER: Yes, and they have never given any indemnity to the exporter.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have not seen the result of the action.

The PREMIER: If this is good enough for South Australia where similar obligations are entered into, I do not see why we should be expected to provide anything more. The amendment asks us to indemnify someone who has entered into a contract in Melbourne. I do not think we should go so far. We are protecting the interests of our community so far as lies in our power, and there is no reason why we should extend the protection beyond our borders.

Mr. HUDSON: I will not go so far as to agree entirely with the amendment, but I think it is worthy of greater consideration than has been given to it by the Premier. A man might sell to a buyer at a certain price and the Commission then fix another price. The Government then seize the wheat and only give him a certain price, say 6s. He is bound to deliver at that price, whilst the other man is selling at say 8s., in Victoria. The point arises as to whether that man will not be called upon to pay the difference. Are we going to penalise him in that connection? If the Premier can assure me that the effect of the Bill will be that the man can avoid this responsibility, we might accept the proposition. I do not understand what the meaning of the latter portion of the clause is.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I contend that the measure is to prevent the export of foodstuffs from Western Australia. The justification for its being brought forward by the Premier was to prevent a large quantity of flour being sent away to Victoria. Whilst we all agree that power should be given to prevent this produce from leaving our shores, we do not want to see anyone unduly penalised or suffer loss through the

action which is thought to be necessary to protect the general public. If the Government step in and commandeer flour at the price fixed by the board or the Commission for the use of the Government and the people of the State, then, because of the difference in price which might arise there might lie a claim for damages. The individual who has purchased 1,000 tons of flour would probably have sold it again to somebody else, and he will be responsible for delivery. It might mean that the difference might run into thousands of pounds, or it might be nothing. Apparently it does not matter what it is if it is in the interests of the State.

The Minister for Works: Or if we have a large amount of money.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is not right to defraud the individual for the sake of the State. If it is in the interests of the State that the flour should be commandeered, the owner of the flour should not have to suffer owing to the action of the Government. It is a proper thing to indemnify in a case like this. If the farmer has sold all his wheat to an Eastern buyer and the Government then decided that the wheat was to remain here and be kept for the benefit of the people as a whole, would it be right that the man should suffer and probably be made bankrupt by the action?

The Minister for Works: They would quickly make up for their suffering if they could get anything out of the State.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We must deal fairly by these people, and honestly. We will not be dealing honestly with them if we do this. If it is right that we should take their stuff we should take it at the price fixed under the Act, but surely you are not going to take that stuff which has been sold elsewhere and going to let the individual suffer. The Government ought to accept the amendment.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: It is not likely that the people are going to export wheat. I feel inclined to say that we are conjuring up things that are unlikely to occur.

The PREMIER: The first action taken by the Government was on account

of the fact that it was brought under our notice by the Commission that certain commodities were likely to be exported under contract to Victoria, and by the Farmers' Assistance Board drawing our attention to the fact that they had some difficulty in procuring the necessary seed wheat. Flour which was proposed to be exported to the tune of 1,000 tons, we have not prevented from being exported up to date. They evidently have entered into contracts in this connection. I saw three representatives of the millers' association this morning, and they never raised the question as to what position they would be in, but they did meet all the other millers and voluntarily decided that they would not export any flour.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They had no contracts then?

The PREMIER: They had contracts. I have sighted them.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then their contracts are safeguarded.

The PREMIER: That may be so. I ask the hon. member to give us concrete instances where somebody has asked for protection.

Mr. Robinson: The Premier said that 1,000 tons of flour had been sold.

The PREMIER: What evidence is there that anyone is asking for protection?

Mr. Robinson: The evidence of the Premier of Western Australia.

The PREMIER: There is no evidence of anything of the kind. If these flour millers, without any pressure of any kind, volunteered, as they have done, not to export any flour, there cannot be very much in the contention put forward by some hon. members or we should have heard about it. Millers, just like other people, will refuse to suffer the loss of money by reason of this measure, without drawing attention to their position. I ask the Committee to consider what has been done elsewhere without, so far as we are aware, any difficulty arising. There is not likely to be any trouble in this connection because, had there been such a probability, attention would have been drawn to it by those concerned.

Mr. ROBINSON: In introducing this Bill the Premier said that 1,000 tons of flour was about to be exported from this State, and that unless all other business were stopped and the Address-in-reply debate dropped and this Bill put through straight away Western Australia would lose that flour. If that statement is not correct, I will withdraw my amendment. What does the Premier say?

The PREMIER: I have already said that I have sighted contracts which have been entered into for the supply of flour on the Melbourne market from Western Australia, the price being £11 10s. per ton f.o.b. Fremantle.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Why not protect those men?

The PREMIER: Because those men have not asked for protection.

Mr. S. Stubbs: A contract is a contract all the world over.

The PREMIER: There are contracts and contracts. There are contracts with such a condition as "Subject to being able to supply." When entering into those contracts, the people who contracted to supply knew that they might not be able to supply.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They protected themselves.

The PREMIER: That is the point. Those contracts were entered into after we had passed an Act which provides that the permission of the Colonial Secretary must be obtained before a single bushel can be exported. I presume the contract stated "Subject to being able to supply." Notwithstanding that, however, the millers who saw me to-day said nothing on this point.

Mr. ROBINSON: That section does not prevent exports. It says "Shall not buy up and store with intent to raise the price."

The Premier: The hon. member is talking about an Act we have passed, not about this Bill.

Mr. ROBINSON: Yes; I am reading from the Act.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What was the Premier's interview with the millers about?

The PREMIER: The interview was of a nature that I do not think I should be justified in disclosing.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why did they give that undertaking.

The PREMIER: I do not know. I did not ask them for it at all. They simply came to see me this morning, and said that the millers were willing and anxious to carry their share of the burden with the rest of the people of this State in order to conserve the food supplies of the State. As soon as they become aware that it is not desirable to export more flour, they are prepared to fall into line.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That goes to show, then, that this Bill is not required.

The PREMIER: No. The hon. member will persist in viewing the Bill as intended merely to prevent the export of flour.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is the main feature of the Bill.

The PREMIER: The main feature of the Bill is to enable the Government to obtain the necessary supplies and to distribute them as required. Possibly its main feature may be said to be to enable us to obtain the necessary seed wheat for farmers who are without seed wheat to put in next year's crop. We have not got that seed wheat and we can get it under this Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Having looked over this amendment, and considered it in conjunction with the Message received from His Excellency the Governor, I find that the amendment would represent an impost on the people for a purpose altogether different from what is stated in the Message. The carrying of the amendment may involve expenditure of money, and therefore it is not an amendment which can be moved by a private member. In fact, this amendment would necessitate a further Message from His Excellency the Governor. In any case, as the amendment involves an impost on the people of the State, I must disallow it.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I move an amendment—

That after the word "board" in line 7 the following be inserted:—"Pro-

vided that the board is satisfied that the sale is a legitimate one to other farmers for the purpose of this Act, such sale shall be allowed to stand."

In introducing a similar measure in the South Australian Parliament, the Minister said that he did not wish to interfere with sales between farmers. I mentioned that fact in my second reading speech, and the Premier practically concurred with my view. Sales between farmers would save the Government from the necessity of purchasing; and therefore legitimate sales which serve the purposes of this measure should be allowed to stand. The object is not to interfere between one farmer delivering or selling to another farmer. This would help the Government in that it would relieve them of the obligation to purchase.

The PREMIER: I would like the hon. member not to press the amendment. I am not nervous that the meaning does not conform to the object of the clause, but I will promise that I will see if I can get an amendment drafted to meet the hon. members wishes. I know what he desires; we do not want to unduly interfere with a sale made between one farmer and another.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The Premier should see that some provision is made which will carry out the intention of the proposal made by the hon. member for Irwin.

Mr. James Gardiner: The Premier has just stated that he would do so.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: If a man has actually sold his wheat to some other farmer, under this clause the Board is given distinct power to acquire it even though it may have been disposed of for seed purposes. It should be made clear that the board cannot do that. Where a bona fide sale has been made it should be allowed to stand. I had drafted an amendment the object of which would have been to provide that where grain had been sold by any person and was in his custody for the time

being, the board should not acquire it if it could be shown that the wheat had been obtained for seed purposes.

The Attorney General: That is already provided for in the measure.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Farmers should be relieved of any anxiety in regard to this matter.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 20, 21, 22—agreed to.

Clause 23—Summary proceedings for offences:

Mr. ROBINSON: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause 2 the following words be added:—"And shall be subject to appeal as provided in the said Acts."

This will make it perfectly clear that there shall be an appeal. The clause as it stands will leave room for the argument that there was no appeal; I am not saying that that is the meaning, but so long as I am here I want to see that Bills express what they intend. Half the living of lawyers is obtained by reason of the stupid words which are placed in measures by people who do not understand them.

1 o'clock a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not reflect on the actions of this Parliament.

Mr. ROBINSON: It was the work of previous Parliaments. However, my object is merely to make it clear that an appeal is provided for. If the Committee do not accept the amendment, so much the better for the lawyers.

The PREMIER: The Bill was drafted by a duly qualified legal practitioner.

Mr. Robinson: No, he merely used scissors and paste, and in doing so exercised a clause.

The PREMIER: He had the South Australian Act as a guide. The subclause proposed by the hon. member is taken from that Act, and I am assured there is no need for it. The clause prescribes that the proceedings shall be regulated by the Justices Act 1902, which provides for appeals.

Mr. Hudson: What is the objection to making it still clearer?

The PREMIER: We do not wish to add unnecessary words.

Mr. Hudson: Can you tell us why it was left out?

The PREMIER: Because it was unnecessary. The Parliamentary draftsman took all necessary provisions from the South Australian Act.

Mr. Hudson: Did he say this was unnecessary?

The PREMIER: He said he had given us all that was necessary.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You really wish to provide an appeal?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then why not say so?

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

Ayes	10
Noes	29

Majority against .. 19

AYES.

Mr. Connolly	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Thomeon
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller)
Mr. Nairn	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Collier	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. J. P. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Green	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Johnson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Heltmann
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 24—agreed to.

Clause 25—Duration of Act:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That "thirty-first day of December" be struck out, and "thirtieth day of September" inserted in lieu.

Hay cutting will commence at the end of September or early in October, and it should be possible for holders next season to deal with their produce as they please. If the later date is retained, hardship may result. As we approach the next harvest, people may require advances on their crops, and such a provision as this would prevent them from being obtained. It might be advisable to make the date even earlier than the 30th September.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I support the amendment. We should keep the two harvests distinct. The South Australian Act stipulates the 30th September for the same reason.

The PREMIER: I have no objection to the amendment, but the measure can be put out of operation at any time by merely dissolving the board. Further, we shall meet before the 30th September and it will then be possible to deal with the measure as desired.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Report Stage.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the consideration of the Committee's report be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did you keep us here?

The PREMIER: The Standing Orders have not been suspended for this sitting.

Hon. Frank Wilson: This measure can be passed through now.

The PREMIER: No, the Standing Orders were suspended only for Thursday last. I did propose to move the suspension to-day, but on reflection I considered it would be undesirable because in view of the amendments tabled it might have been necessary to recommit

the Bill. To-morrow I propose to move the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable the Bill to be passed through its report stage and third reading.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION—FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I would like to ask the Premier if he can inform the House when he will deliver his Budget Speech. Will he deliver it on Thursday, or, if not, when?

The PREMIER: I am afraid I will not be able to deliver it on Thursday, and if we have to sit such long hours over measures like the Grain and Food-stuff Bill, it will not be ready for some time. I will do my best in connection with it, but I cannot work day and night.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We are doing that.

The PREMIER: The compact on Thursday was to get this Bill through at one sitting.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Well you have got it through. Cannot you say when you will bring your Budget down? Will we get it before Easter?

The PREMIER: I had hoped to bring it down on Thursday.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will we get it before the Christmas holidays?

The PREMIER: Yes, before we adjourn for the holidays.

House adjourned at 1.17 a.m. (Wednesday).