

pass this Appropriation Bill the fate of the Liquor Bill is sealed and it is for that reason I intend to support the continued hanging up of this Bill. If the Government have been acting illegally for several weeks in spending money they have my permission to do so for another few more days.

The CHAIRMAN: I must now ask hon. members to confine their discussion to the question before the Committee.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

*That progress be reported.*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	8

Majority for .. .. 4

#### AYES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. B. J. Lynn
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller).
Hon. J. J. Holmes	

#### NOES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. F. Connor	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. G. M. Sewell
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. A. Sanderson
	(Teller).

Motion thus passed.

[The President resumed the Chair.]  
Progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

*That the House at its rising adjourn until 3 p.m. to-morrow.*

Question passed.

House adjourned 11.10 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 25th November, 1915.

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

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Return showing position of audit of Government Trading Concerns as on 20th November.

By the Minister for Lands: Regulations under the Industries Assistance Act.

By the Minister for Works: By-laws of Midland Junction municipality relating to motor traffic.

#### QUESTION—ROTTNEST ISLAND AS A HOLIDAY RESORT.

Mr. SMITH asked the Attorney General: Now that the German prisoners are being removed from Rottnest, will the Government arrange to have the island thrown open to the public for the Christmas holidays?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: An endeavour will be made to have Rottnest Island available to the public by Christmas, at all events for campers providing their own requirements. The buildings require considerable renovations, and the camps are useless. What can be reasonably done in the short time available will be done as soon as the island is formally handed over by the Military Authorities, probably on Wednesday next.

# QUESTION—WYNDHAM FREEZING WORKS MACHINERY.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it correct that portions of the refrigerating machinery for Wyndham were imported from Switzerland? 2, As some of the cases bear German brands, will the Government take steps to ascertain where the machinery was manufactured? 3, In the event of the goods having come from Germany, what do the Government propose to do?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The Diesel engines for installation at Wyndham were purchased from Sulzer Bros. of London, and have been imported from their factory in Winterthur, Switzerland. 2, The whole of the cases are marked "Made in Switzerland"—there is no indication that any portion is of German manufacture. The brands mentioned are evidently the words "Brutto or Kilo," meaning in "Gross weight in Kilos." As the German language is general in this part of Switzerland, the use of German terms may be expected in the branding of machinery. 3, Answered by No. 2. 4, The goods referred to have not come from Germany.

*[The Speaker took the Chair.]*

## BILL—WAR COUNCIL.

### All Stages.

Introduced by the Premier, and read a first time.

### Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [3.9] in moving the second reading said: The Bill now before the Chamber was submitted this morning to a conference of members of both Houses of Parliament, because the War Council itself originated, through the request of the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, from a conference of members of both Chambers, and the appointments were made by members then assembled. Since their appointment the War Council have met on several occasions

and discussed questions submitted to them for consideration. Before we proceeded very far, however, we discovered that we had no status and no authority; that we were not responsible to anyone, and that no one was responsible to us; that, in fact, we were, as one member put it at the time, groping in the dark. We found there was a general desire on the part of the public that some body should be constituted which could guarantee to the public, in connection with appeals for funds towards objects arising out of the war, that the money was properly accounted for and expended on the objects for which it was raised. At the present time there are numerous funds in existence. Anyone can, without authority, start a new fund and set about collecting in the streets and elsewhere. The public, naturally being charitably inclined under present conditions, do not as a rule stop to reason whether any particular fund is required at all, or whether the fund, if required, is in need of further contributions. The result is that some funds have fair surpluses in hand, while others are almost at the point of having to close down. Again, in many cases a man contributes to a fund without concerning himself about the manner in which it is expended, but he at least likes to know that the money he contributes has reached responsible people and has been expended for the purpose for which he contributed it. As is well known, on "Western Australia Day" a fair sum of money was raised; and it has been stated to me from more than one quarter, by people who knew the persons of whom they spoke, that there were men collecting in the street who would never have obtained authority to collect if the proceedings had been under the control of a responsible committee. Further, we know that a number of people are making appeals on behalf of the Red Cross Society. The Red Cross Society is an international institution, recognised by international law; and so long as the society keeps its operations within the rules laid down by the international tribunal, it is protected. Immediately it goes outside its special objects,

however, it loses the protection of international law; and therefore we need to be very careful as to the manner in which funds are raised for the Red Cross Society and disposed of for that society. In the first place, we have the position that in some cases funds have been raised which were supposed to be entirely in aid of the Red Cross Society, and subsequently it has been found that the persons making the collections have, before paying over the funds, made deductions in the nature of salary. That was never intended. Therefore, we want to have some guiding body who can assure the public that appeals made are necessary, and further, who can furnish information to the public in connection with the establishment of funds and the expenditure of contributions. Over and above that, other powers have been conferred on the War Council by the Federal War Council. There is the organising of recruiting campaigns, for instance. Up to date we have not instituted a special recruiting campaign in Western Australia. From inquiries I have made on behalf of the War Council I learn that we are keeping up our proportion of the reinforcements; and I will go further and say that if it were not for the absurd action taken in some cases in rejecting applicants for enlistment, the number of men joining the colours here would be considerably larger. I saw yesterday a thoroughly able-bodied man, who, having worked all his life as a miner, could not straighten out his fingers in the same way as a boy can, and who was rejected on that account.

Mr. Thomson: The military authorities want miners, too.

The PREMIER: I am not going to elaborate on that except to say that we are asked to regulate a recruiting campaign. Again, we are asked to establish and control a medical committee. The medical committee are to examine all men passed out of our base hospital for the purpose of deciding what is necessary in the way of artificial limbs or other requirements prior to discharge. That means that the committee of medical men

will pass the discharged soldier over to the Red Cross Society, who equip the soldier with whatever is necessary, and see that he is properly and efficiently fitted, so that he can apply himself to something after he has been discharged from his military duties. The difficulty about the whole position, however, is that at present the War Council have no control. They are expected to take responsibility without having any power. The War Council consists of members of both Houses of Parliament, and they are busy men. I do not wonder, therefore, that a number of them have objected strenuously to attending meetings merely for the purpose of being told what to do—eventually being told, if they attempt to do it, to mind their own business. As the public are urging, and rightly urging, that there should be better control of the various funds, this Bill has been introduced. The objects, in this connection, are to ensure that a fund proposed to be started is really needed, that the purpose is a good and useful one and that the money is expended in the proper direction. We provide that no fund shall be established or collection made without the authority of the War Council. We thought that we might have power to prevent indiscriminate street collecting through the Police Act, but we find we have not, that if a man is begging for any but his own special benefit, we cannot interfere with him, and so he can collect for any fund. The Bill will prevent that. Certain exemptions are provided, and in Clause 4 provision is made for a penalty of £100. That is really the whole of the contents of the measure. I submitted it this morning to members of both Chambers and they agreed that the necessity existed for something of the kind. The last clause provides that the Governor may at the termination of the war dissolve the council, but in my opinion the need for such a council will be even greater after the termination of the war than it is to-day, for we will then have large numbers of able-bodied soldiers returning to the State and, of course, looking for work.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Does paragraph (h) of Clause 3 mean that you can forcibly take funds from any committee?

The PREMIER: No. The War Council have no intention of interfering with the control of funds already established, or which will be established, by authority. But the council wish to be able to keep in touch with all the various funds, and to have power to compel any committee controlling a fund to produce properly audited statements and give full particulars of the disposal of the fund to the council, who in turn can satisfy the public that everything is all right.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about existing funds?

The PREMIER: Under the Bill existing funds can be controlled. They will all come under the provision of the War Council, but we do not wish to make ourselves a superior body to, say, the Red Cross Society, in respect to the expenditure of their money. We only desire to secure by legislative enactment the right to act as an authority to assure the public who are contributing to these funds that the object is a good one and that the money is being expended in the desired direction. More than that we do not want.

Mr. Bolton: At South Fremantle there is £200 lying to the credit of the local Red Cross Society—

The PREMIER: Then you have no right to hold that money. There is no such society in Fremantle. There is a so-called Red Cross Society, but you have no right to hold any funds. No branch of the Red Cross Society can hold funds without the authority of the central association. The Red Cross Society is an international institution and no persons can properly form themselves into a branch of the Red Cross Society without the permission of the central authority, who will require that all the money collected be sent to the central fund.

Mr. Thomson: But it is done in hundreds of cases.

The PREMIER: Yes, and it indicates the necessity for this legislation.

Mr. Harrison: In country districts money collected is sometimes held until the lists are complete before being forwarded to the central authority. The money so held must be put in some safe keeping.

The PREMIER: But in many cases persons in small towns without any authority form themselves into committees and call themselves a branch of the Red Cross Society. There is only one body authorised to establish branches of the Red Cross Society in Western Australia, namely, the Western Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society. I know of cases where so-called branches have been formed and have declined to hand over the money to the controlling body. Under the Bill, however, unless they comply with the conditions set out they cannot appeal to the public for funds in the first place.

Mr. Harrison: I know of a branch that sends down 75 per cent. its collections and retains the rest in order to purchase material for the work.

The PREMIER: If the proper authorities approve of that there is nothing to prevent it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This discussion can take place at the proper time, when in Committee.

The PREMIER: I do not want any Committee discussion. However, if the House considers that a War Council, consisting of half a dozen or more men holding responsible positions and prepared to give their time and attention to the subject, can be appointed and have these powers given to them, I ask that it be done with a view to protecting the interests of the public. We cannot get men to give the time unless they have legal status. I move—

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

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [3.24]: As one of the committee appointed by the joint meeting of members of both Houses, I can endorse what the Premier has said. The committee certainly has found that it has no status, and it is idle for the members of that

committee to go on meeting without being able to transact any business. We require some power of this description conferred on us by legislation. Whether the Bill is full enough to cover what the Premier has outlined, I am not able to say at present. It seems to me we shall not have quite such full powers as the Premier thinks. However, we can discuss that in Committee.

The Attorney General: A great deal can be done by regulation.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, but the regulations can only be within the four corners of the Bill. The Red Cross funds that have been established are altogether too numerous. Private individuals, with a very worthy object, have in many cases banded themselves together into so-called branches of the Red Cross Society and have set to work to collect. They are essentially worthy people, working with the best intentions, but it is an undoubted fact to-day that one cannot walk the streets of Perth or even of the suburbs without being requested to subscribe to numerous funds. It is essential in the interests of the public that we should have some controlling power to deal with these funds.

The Premier: The latest fund established is "The Returned Soldiers Bugle Band Fund."

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have been nearly maddened by youngsters learning to play the bugle—I have one at home—and I would not be inclined to contribute to that fund. The matter of recruiting is a very important one in every sense, not only in respect to the question of regulating recruiting, as stated in the Bill, but also in respect to the encouraging of recruiting. It seems to me that unless some central body makes it its business to organise, we will get no organised result. We have had splendid results up to the present, but the time is at hand when we will have to make greater efforts. An organisation of this description will be of great assistance. We want to obviate any undue interference with the efforts of the citizens, but we do want also to direct their

efforts into proper channels. Within the last 24 hours I have heard of funds lying to the credit of so-called branches of the Red Cross Society. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) referred to a case in which a couple of hundred pounds is involved. In other instances considerable sums are lying in different banks throughout the State to the credit of those so-called branches. That money ought to come into some central fund and be utilised. Therefore, if by passing of this measure the War Council can be clothed with the necessary power to deal with such cases it will be of great benefit.

The Minister for Mines: It is far from certain that all the money being subscribed is finding its way into any fund.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course, with hundreds of people collecting, and that without any control, there must be some such cases. However, I think we should pass the measure, and if any desirable amendment occurs we can effect it in Committee. But we do not want to interfere with the destination of the Red Cross fund or any other legitimate fund. If one has already contributed to a fund he is entitled to know that the money will be utilised for the purpose for which it was subscribed. That ought to be the case right through. Every society that is formed by permission under this Act then the regulations ought to provide that the money will be utilised for the object for which it was originally donated.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [3.31]: If power were given to the central committee to look after this particular fund it would increase the national effort right throughout the State and stimulate it. In the country districts there are centres where people are meeting and efforts are made to stimulate and increase the fund, and at the termination of the war the fund will be needed for those who not only are maimed but who have come back from the front and who require to find work to do. I am sorry it is necessary that steps should be taken because every member must know that

subscription lists and cards are presented almost every day to them and one cannot get the authority as to who instructed the collections to be made. On several occasions I have had representations made to me to assist in some particular fund and I could not get at the basis as to what the particular fund was for. If that is the case with me, it is the case with many others. With regard to recruiting, the leader of the Opposition has directed attention to that and one of the particular efforts should be in that direction. I support the measure.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle) [3.33]: I agree with the Bill for the setting up of a council with the necessary powers. Some time ago I introduced to the House some provision in connection with wounded soldiers. It so happened that at that time a Federal war council had been started. Now we have a State war council who find themselves without legal powers. So far as the providing of employment and giving relief to returned soldiers is concerned, there are no two opinions amongst members as to the necessity for such work, and the work will take a considerable time after the war is concluded. I want to raise a word of warning against the provisions of the Bill as to the collection and distribution of the money. It is quite true the collection of money has been taken in hand by some more or less recognised authority. Sometimes the efforts are by persons residing in a local centre and these persons have to establish committees and spend some of the funds collected. The Red Cross Society has been referred to, but no effort has been made by the West Australian Branch of the Red Cross Society to interfere in any way with any local committees in any part of the State. I know Fremantle, faced as we are with a base hospital in our midst, was one of the first places to establish a Red Cross Society. This society was established by the mayor and councillors at a public meeting. Money has been collected and spent in providing comforts in connection with the hospital, and the various buildings connected with the hospital. Only

last week did we receive intimation from the Red Cross Society that there was a recognised constitution under which every red cross branch was supposed to exist, and operate. I very much fear that as soon as it becomes known that the various local committees have to submit to the control of some central body authorised by the Government, they will resent the intrusion of that body, but what I would like to know from the Premier is to what extent or in what manner will the control be exercised?

The Premier: Any manner in which the committee think is in the public interests.

Mr. CARPENTER: In Fremantle, we, under the authority of the mayor and councillors, established what we thought to be a Red Cross Branch Society and money was collected and good work was done. The committee has distributed some of that money. If in the outlying suburbs the subscribers refuse to belong to any one central body, how will they come under the direction and control of the Government? I do not want to see any action taken which will in any way hamper the good efforts and the bona fide efforts by any local body.

The Premier: It will be rather to encourage them.

Mr. CARPENTER: If that is the case, I am content. I hope the Premier will make it quite clear from the beginning that that is to be the case.

The Premier: I have already made it clear.

Mr. CARPENTER: May I put it in this way as an illustration. Now and again a small daughter of a house decides to have a bazaar in the home and circulates her friends and holds the bazaar on a Saturday afternoon and makes from £10 to £20, which is a very laudable thing.

The Premier: That will be encouraged.

Mr. CARPENTER: I want to make it clear from the beginning that nothing will be done to prevent such a laudable effort being made. Can the Premier say what will be necessary in a case like that to get the consent of the central body

to the holding of such a bazaar? I do not want it to go abroad that the Government are out to prevent everybody from doing what they can for the benefit of the returned soldiers.

The Premier: It is the reverse, we want to do more than we are doing.

Mr. CARPENTER: I accept that assurance. I do not want the carrying of the Bill to create a wrong impression. I do not want to prevent the efforts of many who are honestly doing what they can for returned soldiers. With that assurance I support the second reading.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [3.42]: I do not think this Bill will require much debating. There is a multiplicity of funds started and it is gratifying to see that these funds have been started in out-distanced places. In some cases too many funds have been started and there has been no control. In some cases a central committee has been formed and already a good deal of work has been done. There has been a good deal of wasted effort through wrong information given and I believe the central committee will remedy that wrong. I think the institution of some controlling body such as that foreshadowed in the Bill will stimulate rather than hamper operations.

Mr. Carpenter: I did not say it would not.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I think it will have a good effect. More than that it is not necessary for me to say at this juncture.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (Greenough) [3.43]: Some short time ago a war council was elected by the members of both Houses and it has been thought since that they cannot carry on operations without they have some authority and since the council has been formed it is essential to authorise their requirements. Without having funds at their disposal and some control of the funds they are powerless to act. I have heard people complain that they are met at almost every street corner by collectors for one fund or another. It is a laudable object, and I appreciate the patriotism of those who interest themselves in mak-

ing collections for such objects, but most people who subscribe like to know the authority on which the money is being collected, and how it is to be used. They are anxious that it should be used to the very best advantage, but this cannot be done unless there is some general control. There is one clause in the Bill to which I would like to refer, namely, Clause 4, which provides a penalty of £100. I think that this penalty will be rather high.

The Attorney General: That means the maximum. You could have a penalty of 5s.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: It might scare some of the people from taking the risk of collecting money at all. I am only giving this as a note of warning. We must recognise that most people who have been collecting in the past, even if they did have the authority to do so, were doing it with the best of motives, and I think that there is a possibility of people going on collecting for some little time until they have got a general knowledge of the effect of this measure. I therefore think that the high maximum penalty provided for here might be reduced.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Powers of Council:

Mr. FOLEY: I have for some time been a member of an advisory committee on hospitals and convalescent homes in the State. That body is representative of all the interests of the community. The powers given to the members of that committee are set forth in the following circular:—

It is recommended that in each State an Advisory Committee should be constituted, representative of various interests, and to include two members of the Federal Parliamentary War Committee, and if possible two ladies, out of a total of seven. 2, These commit-

tees, on behalf of the public, will be empowered to inspect in each State the military hospitals and convalescent homes; to report on matters connected with their business, management, and to inquire into any complaints that may arise in connection with the treatment of patients. The committee will also advise on matters relative to the reception in each State of wounded soldiers from overseas, their transport and distribution. 3, The committee shall act in an advisory capacity to the Minister, and shall not interfere with the military administration or medical work of the hospitals or homes. 4, It is considered that in each State the committee should be constituted to include—the two members representing the Federal War Committee for that State; Lord Mayor of capital city; two nominees of the Red Cross Society (ladies); one nominee of the Chamber of Commerce; one nominee of the Trades and Labour Council. The committee will elect a chairman. 5, It is further suggested that the committees have power to add to this number by themselves nominating two other members. 6, In all States, matters considered by the committee to require the attention of the Minister will be reported by the committee to the Minister, who will forward a copy to the Federal War Committee notifying action taken thereon.

Under this clause there is power given to visit hospitals and to visit boats as they arrive, and for all the purposes set out in this circular. As the Premier pointed out when speaking, a hospital committee cannot make regulations dealing with the conduct of the work without these being drawn up within the four corners of the Bill. I would like to see the war council, as I am one of the advisory committee, get into touch with the Prime Minister or the Minister for Defence. I believe the Premier has wired to the Minister for Defence on the matter, and that he has distinctly laid down that the hospital committees, representing the various bodies, shall report to him direct. We find this position. The Federal authori-

ties first nominate and then appoint members to the hospital committee, and then take the whole of the powers which the hospital committee went away from them. There will be a strange position arising. A member of a hospital committee may go down in the boat which is coming in on Friday morning, and see something which is wrong, but the committee is not allowed to interfere with the military or medical aspect of the position, and has only the care of the men so far as seeing them to a convalescent home or hospital is concerned. If we see something wrong instead of notifying the chairman of the committee and having the matter attended to, straightaway, word has first of all to be sent to Melbourne, the Minister for Defence in turn sends it on to the War Council, in Melbourne, and the War Council send it over to the State war committee, and by the time that the action can be taken on it, the men, who are injured and suffering, may be dead.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And yet you are a supporter of the referendums.

Mr. FOLEY: When the notification came back to this war council it would have first gone from the advisory committee to the Minister, then to the Federal War Council, then to the State War Council, then referred by the State War Council to the Military Department, who would in turn refer it back to the Minister, and goodness only knows what would happen to the men concerned in the meantime.

The Premier: You object to the report having to go to Melbourne before being dealt with?

Mr. FOLEY: I would like to see the War Council take this matter up. So long as I am a member of the hospital committee I am going, if I see anything wrong, to advise the war committee, or if I think the head of the Military Department can fix up the matter, deal with him direct. If we stick religiously to the present position we cannot do this. I want to see the State War Council work as well as it can in the direction of endeavouring to get absolute contro-



over all other committees. It is just as advisable to have control over the hospital committee as it is to have control over the collection of money in the city. I hope the Premier will take the matter up, and see that this anomaly is put right. I am not going to stay on any alleged advisory committee whilst this red tape exists, and be unable to do anything.

The PREMIER: We submitted these proposals to the Prime Minister and he in turn submitted them to the Federal Parliamentary War Committee. It appears that the Minister for Defence desires that all hospital advisory committees should make recommendations to him direct, but no objection is raised to the committee co-operating with the War Council. The hon. member desires that, in the event of a matter arising which requires immediate attention, it should be reported at once to the War Council or the military authorities, without going through Melbourne, and that the War Council, being properly constituted should receive that recognition which would enable it to take immediate action to rectify what was wrong. I think when this is brought under the notice of the Minister for Defence that in matters of urgency he will agree in the case of Western Australia, which is so far away from the centre of organisation, to allow this course to be pursued. Otherwise, the hospital committee is going to be a huge farce. That is a matter which we can only deal with by representation to the Minister, and cannot do it under the Bill.

Mr. ROBINSON: The Premier might explain the meaning of paragraph (b) which refers to "holding" such collections. The word holding has quite a number of meanings. Does it apply to making collections or retaining them?

The Attorney General: It will cover both.

Mr. ROBINSON: The difficulty is that when we use a word which applies in two ways, we might find one judge saying that it applies to one and another judge saying that it applies to

another. I think in this case it applies to the making of collections.

The PREMIER: Paragraph (a) of the clause deals with the question of regulating and controlling collections. It means that we can make regulations and control a collection and use our discretion to see that the money is expended in the direction for which it is raised, and then, for the purpose of doing that satisfactorily, we must have the control of the committee holding the collections.

Mr. ROBINSON: I would like the Premier to control all collections already made.

The PREMIER: We can control the committees.

Mr. HARRISON: Will paragraph (b) permit of a certain amount of a collection being retained in a district for the purpose of buying material and so forth? For instance, a society may have raised some money and deposited 75 per cent. of that money in a local bank and spent the balance in buying material so that the women might make garments at their weekly meetings. Would the Bill permit them to keep that percentage without the authority of the central committee?

The PREMIER: There is no desire on the part of the council to direct these committees as to how they shall spend the money, but they must get the authority of the council to raise the money for a specific object. If local committees raise money for a red cross purpose and the Red Cross Society agrees that 75 per cent. of it shall be sent to the central fund and the balance may be retained for local expenditure, the War Council will not interfere in the slightest degree, but the whole of the money must be accounted for.

Mr. Harrison: Will it be necessary for them to inform the central council as to what they intend to do?

The PREMIER: Absolutely.

Mr. HEITMANN: In Geraldton there is a fund already totalling many hundreds of pounds, which was collected in the early days of the war and which is being devoted to assisting dependants of soldiers and to help those in distress in

the town. Will that fund come under the operation of the war committee?

The PREMIER: It will. We had a "West Australia Day" a little while back and we raised money in every part of the State for a specific object. We do not want to have a number of other funds being raised in different parts of the State for a similar object. The money which is raised for patriotic purposes should go into the one fund. We do not want a fund in Geraldton doing what a fund down here might be doing. If we permit that to go on there will be difficulties. There has been no co-ordination of the work of the various organisations. Our desire is to help them and to assure the public there will not be any overlapping. I can assure hon. members that these funds are going to become depleted pretty suddenly and we want to say to the public that everyone will receive the same consideration, no matter from what part of the State the money or the people who are to benefit may have come.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Will this control the newspaper funds?

The PREMIER: If we could control the newspapers we would be doing something. There are quite a number of cases where funds have been established and where they do not know what to do with the money. We will show them what to do with it as soon as the Bill is passed.

Mr. THOMSON: In my district there is an A.N.A. fund, and they have approximately £400 in hand. The object in raising that fund was to provide for the wounded or disabled soldiers of the district. What will be their position? I am secretary of the Red Cross fund and we have a considerable amount of money in hand.

Mr. HEITMANN: I agree that instead of the present indiscriminate and more or less irresponsible collections going on, we should have some kind of system, in order that there might not be any waste, and that the people might know that what has been collected will be put to the best possible use. The moment we say that one of the local funds is to be controlled by a central

committee in Perth I am afraid some enthusiasm will be lacking, but I recognise all the same there should be some control. I hope the committee will avoid giving it the appearance of official control. If we say that there is one committee which is to control the requirements as well as the collections, I am afraid we will have the local people saying that those in Perth do not know the requirements of the local people, and the enthusiasm will die down.

The PREMIER: I am not in a position to say what action the War Council will take. We had it in mind that it should be composed of a body of reasonable men who would give a great amount of their time to help in all these matters and not retard anything, and to co-ordinate the work and to prevent overlapping and to give a guarantee to the public that the money is necessary and that the funds would be distributed in the direction which was suggested when the appeal was made to the public. I am thoroughly convinced that all these funds will find it is to their advantage to have this control, because it will give confidence to the public and they need not worry any further about the money being received and properly accounted for. There are cases where people have been approached by children, young persons and old persons, with an invitation to contribute.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And doubtful persons?

The PREMIER: Yes, and doubtful persons, and in many cases the members of the public have never questioned the object but have always been fearful of the genuineness of the collector. Instead of giving half a sovereign, which he would do if he had a guarantee that it would be devoted to the object set forth, he would give a shilling and pass on.

Mr. George: And be uncertain whether he had not been imposed upon.

The PREMIER: Quite so. We want the public to recognise that there is a body protecting them and encouraging the committees controlling such funds.

It will be to the advantage of the funds, as well as of the public.

Mr. GEORGE: I welcome the proposal. The central body would give some authorisation to the district bodies desirous of collecting funds. The bona fides of some of the collectors have certainly been open to doubt.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I approve of the Bill, but doubt whether it will be retrospective.

The Premier: We are not going to establish any funds.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, but the council should control existing funds.

The Premier: The control we propose is merely to see that the distribution is in accordance with the object set out when the appeal was made.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There should be power to control the collections already made.

The Premier: That is in the Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not in the Bill and it should be made clear.

Mr. GREEN: I approve of the measure. Would the council provide that the various accounts of the funds should be properly audited? The accumulation of funds ostensibly for charitable purposes is often used by the exploiter to rob the public. We on the goldfields have had bitter experience of people who have promoted charitable carnivals and never furnished balance sheets. A certain individual is secretary of a large fund in the metropolitan area to-day and no doubt thousands of pounds have reached his hands. If that gentleman organised any charitable carnival on the fields again, he would not be able to collect a shilling because the people know him too well.

Mr. ROBINSON: I suggest that in paragraph (b) the word "holding" be deleted and the words "making or holding or having made or having received" inserted in lieu.

The Premier: It will mean reprinting the Bill and I do not think the alteration is necessary.

Mr. ROBINSON: This would overcome the difficulty voiced by various

speakers. Further, would the War Council have power to regulate recruiting? Paragraph (d) should be altered to read "to regulate and encourage recruiting." The military authorities might authorise the War Council to take charge of recruiting.

The Premier: They have done so.

Mr. ROBINSON: The War Council is not a military body.

The Premier: There is a military man on the recruiting committee.

Mr. ROBINSON: The military would not be likely to hand over the whole of the recruiting to the War Council.

The PREMIER: The inclusion of the word "encourage" would be advisable, but the fact that we are appointing the War Council and giving them this power shows our desire to encourage recruiting.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Can we give them the power?

The PREMIER: I wired to the Prime Minister on this point, asking if he concurred. The wire was submitted to the Federal War Committee, who are consulted by the Federal Government on all questions arising out of the war, and they stated that the proposed duties of the War Council would meet with their views. Already the War Committee have appointed a military officer to render any assistance necessary during a recruiting campaign. Some of the necessary powers must come from the Federal authorities and if the Federal authorities took exception we could not operate. The Federal authorities, however, want the War Council to do this, but they cannot constitute a War Council, and we are doing that with their concurrence. We might make the paragraph read, "to regulate recruiting campaigns."

Mr. Robinson: That is vastly different.

The PREMIER: The War Council will probably take on the whole of the work in connection with the recruiting. The only power in the Bill worth anything is that power which we confer on the Federal Council. The balance, of course, might be withdrawn by the Federal authorities.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4, 5, 6—agreed to.

[*The Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Council's Amendments.*

Consideration resumed from the 18th November of schedule of six amendments made by the Council.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

No. 3—New clause; add the following clause to stand as Clause 4:—"In respect of any land held under Conditional Purchase lease, which is more than twelve miles from any station or siding on an existing railway, the Minister may exempt the lessee of such land from payment of rent for any period up to five years, and may extend the term of the lease, subject to the conditions set out in the last preceding section":

[The Minister for Lands had moved "That the amendment be not agreed to."]

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When this amendment was last before the Committee I pointed out that it could not be agreed to. I also said that the loss resulting from its adoption would be difficult to estimate. Since then the Lands Reclassification Board and the accountants of the Lands Department have gone into the matter. They admit that it is difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate of the loss involved, but they say it will certainly be between £20,000 and £30,000 per annum. It must be obvious to the Committee that we cannot write off revenue to that extent. The figures I have quoted are based on the assumption that payment of the rents will be only deferred, but the amendment actually asks for ex-

emption from payment, which means that the money will be absolutely lost to the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We can amend the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not intend to go to that extent. I believe the mover of the amendment intended merely that payment should be deferred, but evidently this proposed new clause has not been carefully thought out in another place. We are losing land revenue directly at the rate of £30,000 per annum, and the country cannot afford an additional annual loss of at least £20,000. It must be remembered that the board appointed by Mr. Bath did not recommend reduction in the price of land, but recommended that rents should be deferred for five years. The Government, while not adopting the board's recommendation, went further by reducing prices. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I consider that especially people far from a railway might well expect some relief of the kind proposed by this new clause. The report of the board certainly favoured the granting of exemption from rents for five years to everybody. However, the intention of the amendment is that rents shall merely be deferred. The Minister is wrong when he says that the Government are asked to give away the money represented by these rents.

The Minister for Lands: It is arguable.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The point could easily be made clear.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The relief otherwise afforded under the Bill is not material except in a few instances. I am sorry the measure does not provide that all leases shall be for the term of 30 years. The Lands Reclassification Board and the accountants of the Lands Department, in arriving at their estimate of a loss of over £20,000 a year, seem to have included land which has long been selected.

The Minister for Lands: There is no use arguing about it. No one can tell exactly what the new clause means.

It has not been sufficiently considered elsewhere. The Government are going to see that the community generally is not unduly penalised in this connection.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Council's proposal is reasonable, more especially as applying to land which should have been supplied with railway communication ere this.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Myself and three or four members of the Country party are vitally interested in this amendment. On the 21st October I submitted a new clause not so sweeping as the Council's new clause. My new clause dealt more particularly with lands on which people had been induced to settle by the promise of a railway. Though the Minister says that the wording of this new clause puts it outside the pale, we can easily amend it so as to bring it within reasonable bounds. On the question of finance it has to be remembered that a big loss is coming to the farmer this year. The Minister should have sympathy with the amendment. Money is dribbling out of the farmers' pockets in all directions. The cost of living has very greatly increased in the country districts, and railway freights have gone up considerably. In the other States, it has been realised that the first five years of settlement on the land is the crucial period, and that the settler must be given every consideration during that stage. All the States have recognised that exemption should be granted to the settler for the first few years. In Queensland, in South Australia, in New South Wales, and in New Zealand it is unanimously agreed that too much consideration cannot be given to the settler in the pioneering stages. The man on the land is working for posterity. Many of the people in my electorate, particularly those in the outside areas, are in a very serious position. Some of them are still from 20 to 28 miles from a railway. I have letters from some of the settlers, who say that if they cannot be brought within reasonable railway communication they are going to leave their crops standing. They can see no way out of the difficulty. Recently I met a settler who, when I

knew him at Broad Arrow a few years ago, was one of the finest athletes in the district. To-day he is a middle-aged, grey-haired man. He told me that if he could see any chance of getting a railway, he would be content to battle on. He asked me to see the Industries Assistance Board and explain to them that, although the amount allowed to him was barely sufficient for the purpose, he found that, by effecting economies and living closely, he could manage to spare a part of it if they would allow it to be devoted to the education of his two children in Fremantle. That was refused. It struck me as being a rotten position for a man to be reduced to. The settlers will starve themselves to get a little education for their children. The amendment will serve to assist them in a small way. In Victoria last year a lands Commission declared that rents should be very low for the first four years, provided that the lessee resided and improved. When, on a previous occasion, I brought my proposed new clause forward, the Minister said that, whilst agreeing with my views, he could not see his way clear to accept the clause. We should assist as much as possible those people who have been misled by the promise of a railway.

The Minister for Lands: Will you agree to an increase in the price of land to compensate that cost?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The settlers say that a reduction in the price of land is not of so much importance to them as the granting of relief during this trying period. Here is a letter sent on to me from a meeting of farmers, who passed the following resolution:—

That this gathering of farmers urge the member for the district to try to impress the Minister for Lands that the Bill now before Parliament as a means of affording relief to settlers in this district is futile, inasmuch as no provision is made for a five years' exemption, and we urge you to use your utmost endeavours to get the Minister to reconsider this. We would like particularly to point out that up to the present we have been unable to pay even 6d. per acre and we do not

see how we shall be able to pay 6 per cent. on the arrears.

They asked me to oppose the Bill if such a provision was not inserted. I promised that I would at least endeavour to induce the Minister to extend to those settlers on the outside areas special consideration until such time as a railway is provided. Our own commission arrived at the conclusion that five years' exemption was necessary. The settlers declare that although much is being done for them, their geographical position makes their proposition an impossible one. Settlers will have to pay anything up to 9d. per bushel to get their produce to the railway station and more than that in the extreme limits. It is useless to attempt to get a crop in otherwise. I hope the Minister, if he cannot accept the amendment, will agree to do something to reach the out-back settlers.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I understand the objection of the Minister to the amendment is because of the effect it will have on the revenue. The amendment may be far reaching in its effect; but it can be amended so that it will give an exemption to those who went to the out-back areas believing that railway communication would be extended to them. The implied promise has not been carried out. On account of the abnormal conditions prevailing it is impossible to say when railway communication will be extended to them. Another objection to the amendment is that the reclassification board, while recommending five years' exemption did not recommend any reduction of rent. That may be true; but the Minister pointed out that in places where a survey of a railway was made, the settlers were to be treated in the same way as if the railway was constructed. I move as an amendment—

*That the Council's amendment be amended by inserting after "land" in the first line the words "within declared agricultural areas."*

Mr. WANSBROUGH: The Minister stated that the State would be losing £20,000 to £30,000 if the Council's amendment was accepted, but he over-

looked the fact that £20,000 to £30,000 was being filched from the pockets of the people in the areas referred to. That fact should appeal to the Minister in affording the settlers the relief which the amendment suggests. If it is taken into consideration that the £20,000 to £30,000 which the State is supposed to lose is based on 15s. an acre, what are the settlers losing when the basis is 27s. 6d. an acre. I think the amendment of the member for Greenough will meet the objection inasmuch as it will be possible to specify certain areas to which the relief shall apply. Reference has been made to the increased cost of living in these out-back areas and I can bear that out, because I am in receipt of communications weekly from people applying for increased allowances from the Industries Assistance Board. Farmers keep only a limited number of stock and no beef and the whole of their means of living has to be obtained from the storekeeper. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment and give some relief to settlers which they will not get under the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR: The man on the land or in any industry who is struggling against adverse conditions has my sympathy and I believe he has had my support ever since I have been in this House, but when we find an amendment of this character to relieve the people who have already had relief, to the amount of £30,000 a year, I think I am safe in saying that this State will be making a present to the farmers of at least £50,000 a year, or we shall be receiving in the Treasury less revenue to that extent. These people have been on the land for some years and have had a deal of practical support from the Government. There is no body of men who have set out to carve homes for themselves in any part of Western Australia and have received the same amount of financial support and spoon-feeding as have the farmers from this Government. But there is a breaking point and we are reaching the limit now. The farming community and its representatives in this House and another place should

at least have some consideration for the taxpayers of Western Australia, and should not be so anxious to force a proposition of this kind upon the Government. I hope the Government will have sufficient backbone to resent an unreasonable proposition of this character, and that the Minister will stand to his guns and oppose it, even if it means the loss of the Bill.

Mr. HEITMANN: I have found myself in somewhat of a difficulty in considering these amendments. I have had in mind from the beginning that a mistake has been made in reducing the price of land in some cases so as to bring it down to considerably less than the land is worth, and in other cases in not sufficiently reducing the price of land which was of less value owing to the fact that, under the unwise policy of different Governments of this State we had settled farmers in parts where it was impossible for them to make a decent living. I do not think it is possible for any men to work under worse conditions for the time being than the man who is struggling in the early stages to make a living on the land. There are, of course, other men who are struggling to make a living in other industries. Take the man who is engaged in mining. There was my own unfortunate brother, who told me that if he could look forward to a run of four good seasons he would have a reasonable prospect of doing better for himself than if he worked until he was grey-headed in a mine. I am of opinion, therefore, that there is not one industry in the State in which simple manual labour will give such a return to an individual as the farming industry.

Mr. Griffiths: When it is within reach of a railway.

Mr. HEITMANN: There are hundreds of farmers in the State who are on the high road to independence to-day, and who practically started from nothing. This makes me think of the policy of various Governments in inducing people with little capital to go on the land and booming the land to a great extent in areas where success, or otherwise, rested solely on the facilities that

we could give them to take their produce to market. Without these facilities it is impossible for these men to get into a position of independence or into a position which will enable them to live decently. There are hundreds of people who have been provided with these facilities. With the sale of every block of land there is an obligation on the part of the Government of the day to provide facilities to take the produce derived from it to market.

The Minister for Works: Not in every instance.

Mr. HEITMANN: This obligation exists when the selector takes up a block for the purpose of getting produce off it. There is very little land now which has been taken up which is not provided with railway facilities. The absence of such facilities is generally to be found in those areas which were taken up in the early days before survey. It is a ridiculous proposition on the part of any Government to invite the poorest people of the country to go on the land without the remotest possibility of their being able to make a success, and then immediately turn round and say "we want so much rent per year from you." It puzzles me to know how these people who are not producing successfully, and have not arrived at the stage when they can get any return for their labour, are able to get the money with which to pay their rent.

The Minister for Lands: Very often it is Agricultural Bank money which they are using.

Mr. HEITMANN: Many of them have now arrived at the stage when they cannot rely on the Agricultural Bank any longer, having borrowed to their full extent. Instead of reducing the price of land I honestly believe that it would be worth a lot more to farmers if we said to them, "We will not expect you to pay rent for a certain period." I really believe that this would have been a far preferable method to have adopted to that of reducing the price of land.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That is one of the recommendations of the board.

Mr. HEITMANN: Yes. This matter has been discussed in politics for quite a number of years. The Minister must know that these people who have not facilities for taking their produce to market cannot fairly be asked to pay rent. If it can be shown that these people can pay rent by some means, I am prepared to support the Government and say that we are not entitled on the one hand to reduce the price of land, and on the other hand to give them further concessions in regard to the payment of rent.

Mr. George: If a man puts his money into land honestly, he should not be turned out with nothing, simply because he cannot pay his rent.

Mr. HEITMANN: I do not think there is any danger of men being turned off the land because of the non-payment of rent. I am sure no Government in the State would advocate this, nor allow one of their Ministers to adopt a policy which would mean turning a man off the land if he had done a considerable amount of work. I am of opinion that the game of politics has to a great extent spoilt our farmers, as it has spoilt a great many people working in industries in Western Australia. On the one hand the Ministerial party are prepared to give £250 from the Agricultural Bank, and along comes the other party, which is getting into that position when it is likely to become a power at the ballot box—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the amendment.

Mr. HEITMANN: I am going to show how the various parties were assisted.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must realise that I cannot allow such a discussion on the amendment.

Mr. HEITMANN: It is one of the results of playing the game of politics, no matter what the cost is to the people. We have led the farmer to expect from the State help for all time, and the sooner this section of the community realises that they must become a little more independent and must lean less

on the State, the better it will be for everyone generally.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: I find that my amendment will not give the relief that I desired should be given. With the permission of the House, therefore, I will withdraw it.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. TAYLOR: I made some remarks in connection with the assistance farmers have been receiving during the past 15 years. The Public Accounts for the financial year ended 30th June last, show the amounts received by farmers and the revenue outstanding, the statement having been compiled from returns supplied by the various departments. We find that there is outstanding no less a sum than £325,724.

Mr. Thomson: What for?

Mr. TAYLOR: One item is £153,158 on lands. We find that the assistance rendered to settlers totals £602,109.

Mr. Thomson: For which they pay six per cent.

Mr. TAYLOR: They have not paid anything yet, and are not likely to. Let us now see how this amount is made up.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed on those lines. He must confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have made a statement that this House has been more than generous to the settlers, and that we have reached the breaking point, and that something like £70,000 has been paid to the storekeepers by the Government on behalf of the settlers. How can the Government pay if the settlers are to be relieved of their obligations?

Mr. PIESSE: There is much in the amendment that should commend itself to the House, and I regret that the Minister has not taken a more kindly view of it, seeing that it distinctly states "The Minister may at his discretion." That, I submit, sufficiently protects the State. The amendment has my sympathy. It is intended to apply to a section of the people situated in certain parts of the agricultural areas of the State. Those who are more than 12 miles from



a railway. Undoubtedly, justice is due to those people who are entitled to that consideration. I would like the Minister to give special consideration to them, particularly when it has been stated by the Board appointed by the present Government that exemption should be granted to those people. It is true, as the member for York pointed out, that many people are in a deplorable condition, that is, those who are settled more than 12 miles from a railway, and there are many who are settled 17 and 18 miles away from a line, particularly in the eastern end of my district, while many have left their holdings, having found it impossible to carry on the development of the land. The member for Mt. Margaret referred to the assistance which was given to the settlers, but he forgot to say that last year the lands returned a revenue to the State of £372,876, whereas mining, to which the hon. member also referred, only returned £23,607.

The Minister for Lands: Take the indirect return from both.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss that matter.

Mr. PIESSE: There is everything to justify the extension of the exemption to a certain section of the settlers on certain areas in the State. If the land were the Minister's own property, and he had sold on terms to those people, he surely would readily grant exemption from payment until they had established themselves. We are convinced it is almost impossible for a man to establish himself on what is practically a waterless area situated such a distance from a railway.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: My mind goes back to the end of last session when one of the crimes urged against my leadership was that I did not use the power of the party to force the Government to bring down this re-pricing Bill. It was rather a strange thing on that occasion that the Minister had given the member for Northam and myself an outline of what the Bill was to be, and in sending out to the branches of our association the reason for certain actions, I told them exactly what the

Minister had told us, and that was that the land should be reduced to practically 15s. an acre; that there should be no suspension of payments, that payments should be 6d. per acre per annum, and that if a man had been paying more than that it would be credited to him by bringing him closer to his fee simple. I understood that the Bill was to be a re-pricing measure. The Government did not carry out their promise to reduce all land to 15s. per acre, but in some areas it was reduced to considerably below 15s. and I expect it would average less than 15s. for first-class land. The amendment will not materially affect my constituency; the re-pricing will affect it to a far greater extent, for in many instances land has come down from 25s. and 30s. and even 34s. to 12s. 6d. Consequently some of my constituents are very anxious that the Bill should pass. I have written and told them why I voted against the amendment, with which I was in sympathy, namely, because we have the assurance of the Minister for Lands and the Premier that no amendment would be agreed to. My constituents replied that this was bluff. However, I do not think Ministers would bluff on a vital question like this. We also had the assurance from the rank and file of the Ministerial party that they were not going to agree to any amendments, that the Bill was a re-pricing measure and not an amendment of the Land Act. So I am in the position that if any action of mine jeopardises the Bill, I will be doing an unkind thing to my constituents. I have the strongest sympathy for the small settler. It is for him and not for the well-to-do farmer that I have been battling.

The Minister for Mines: That is the grievance against you.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I have the greatest sympathy with the man 12 miles or more from a railway, because I am certain that under existing circumstances, such a man cannot make farming pay. On the other hand I do not feel justified in doing anything to jeopardise the Bill. This concession will mean to the farmers £37,000 a year extending over 15 years. Assuming

that hitherto a man whose land was costing 25s. per acre had to pay 1s. 3d., he will under the Bill find his land reduced to 12s. 6d. and will have to pay only 6d. per acre per annum; thus he will be receiving that reduction in rent. On the other hand, assuming the Government carry on with these people and say, "We are not going to press you for the first five years, but you will have to pay six per cent. interest on your rent"; and taking the individual area at £60, and assuming that the lessee is charged six per cent., if we capitalise that for the five years it amounts to £54. That is the interest he will have to pay for this consideration; and the question arises whether it is worth while jeopardising a reduction in the capital value of his rent of something like 50 per cent., bringing it practically from £3,000 to £1,500, as against the £54 I have referred to. The Committee can hardly be expected to reduce the capital value and not charge him rent. In any case "rent" is an absolute misnomer. Rents are a part of that man's purchase. There is no rent about it. He buys a block of land and gets 20 years in which to pay for it, and the 6d. per acre per annum is not rent, but goes in the reduction of his purchase money. We have to do what is best for our constituents, although we may clash with the interests of the constituents of other members. If the Minister can see his way to giving these men the consideration they are asking for, nobody will be more pleased than I; but if I were to jeopardise the Bill by any action of mine, if I jeopardised the interests of my constituents to help the constituents of my friends, what position would I hold with the people who have trusted me? The people along the Wongan Hills railway line are probably the greatest sufferers, and the Bill will give them the greatest relief; but very few of my constituents would be affected by the amendment. I do not want to jeopardise the Bill, so I am placed in a most awkward position. When the Bill was introduced, I accepted the assurance that it was a repricing of land Bill and not an amendment of the Land Act.

The Premier: And it will remain a repricing Bill or none at all.

Mr. THOMSON: We were told distinctly last session that we were to have an amendment of the Land Act; now we have a definite statement that it is simply a repricing Bill.

The Minister for Mines: You never got that promise at all.

Mr. THOMSON: When the Government went to the country they had a reclassification of Lands Bill as one of the planks of their platform.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will deal with the amendment.

Mr. THOMSON: As a modification of the Council's amendment, I move—

*That after the word "land" in line 1, the words "selected after 1st January, 1910 and" be inserted.*

Like the member for Irwin, I feel the responsibility of casting a vote which may mean the losing of the Bill, but I have a duty to perform to those settlers far from a railway who are looking for the relief which would be afforded by the amendment. If the Bill is lost the responsibility will be with the Government.

The Minister for Lands: We will take that responsibility.

Mr. THOMSON: It makes one doubt whether the Government were sincere in bringing the Bill down.

The Premier: You do not understand what sincerity means.

Mr. THOMSON: This is a matter particularly affecting the settler.

The Premier: And the other taxpayers of the State as well.

Mr. THOMSON: But the settlers far from a railway are absolutely unable to profitably carry on farming. Some of the Ministers will bear me out in that statement.

The Premier: We have admitted that.

Mr. THOMSON: Unfortunately it is the men who have least capital who have gone out to the most distant areas, and £25 is worth far more to them during the first few years on the land than at any later period.

The Premier : What about a man who goes on to a mining lease ? He might get no return.

Mr. THOMSON : Such a man would have my sympathy.

The Premier : Your sympathy means you are going to ask them to contribute five years payments for the men on the land.

Mr. THOMSON : The Premier should bear in mind the difference between the amounts received from lands and from mining.

The Minister for Mines : Per acre of occupation, mines produce more.

Mr. THOMSON : I have never decried the value of the mining industry. There are many settlers more than 12 miles from railways, and the Minister should consider whether he is going to keep them on the land or not.

The Minister for Lands : If we have to keep on spoon-feeding in this direction, we must let them go off the land, because we cannot carry them.

Mr. THOMSON : That statement about spoon-feeding has been made more than once and I deprecate it.

The Minister for Lands : They got a million of money last year.

Mr. THOMSON : And the Minister has very good security.

The Minister for Lands : We do not know yet.

Mr. THOMSON : To what industry are the Government looking to pull us through ?

The Minister for Mines : What has pulled us through this year ?

Mr. THOMSON : My amendment to the Council's new clause will combat the arguments of the Minister for Lands that the new clause applies to all lands. I am not crying poverty for these people.

The Premier : You are a stinking fish farmer, and are doing more harm to settlement than half a dozen droughts would do.

Mr. THOMSON : I resent that remark. I am as great an optimist as the Premier. The future of the State depends materially on the prosperity of the agricultural areas, and if we are going to keep the people on the land we must give them this assistance. If the amend-

ment is accepted, the Government will not lose the enormous amount they think they will.

The Premier : I promise you they will not because they will not agree to the amendment.

Mr. THOMSON : Then the responsibility will rest on the Government.

Mr. George : They want to throw the Bill out.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON : I support the Council's new clause and oppose the amendment, which would limit its operations. The only amendment I would support would be to delete the words—"which is more than 12 miles from any station or siding on an existing railway," so that all existing selections would be rent free for the first five years in accordance with the recommendations of the re-classification board. The board spent several months in the dry areas before they framed their carefully prepared report. Their recommendations stated :—

a. That save in very exceptional cases, and exclusive of the cost of survey and improvements, 20s. per acre should be the maximum price within five miles of a railway ; 15s. per acre for land over ten miles, the intermediate prices to be rearranged on these lines by departmental officers.

b. That land selected under residence conditions in the "wheat areas" subsequent to 31st December, 1909, may be exempted from rent for any period not exceeding five years during the currency of the lease, and the term of the lease proportionately extended, the payment of the purchase money being extended (free of interest) over 20 years exclusive of the period of exemption ; provided the selector proves to the satisfaction of the Minister that he is unable to pay his rent, has complied with all the statutory conditions of his lease (except payment of rent) and is prepared to pay interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum during the period of exemption on the rents overdue. If this suggestion is adopted, we would recommend that no transfer should be allowed during the period of exemption

unless all rents, and interest thereon due, are paid, and the other statutory provisions fulfilled.

c. That all land selected under residence conditions within an area subdivided before selection in the wheat belt, irrespective of date selected, may have exemption on the above lines either for five years, or until three years after a railway is built and open for traffic with a siding within 15 miles, whichever is the longer period, the total exemption not to exceed ten years.

The Minister should note the words "irrespective of date selected." We are not getting the reduction in price promised by the Government on the hustings and we are not getting the exemption recommended by the re-classification board.

The Minister for Works: But the price there was 20s. an acre.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: And the Minister has put it up to 25s. and refused the exemption. The definite promise of the Government was that the land would be reduced to a price not exceeding 15s. an acre, and almost the whole of the land in my electorate that comes within a zone—and this applies practically to all the Great Southern districts—is in Zone A at a maximum price of 25s. an acre.

The Minister for Works: It is the best land.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It is good land, but until the classification of the Midland Railway land was removed, this land was in Zone B at 20s. an acre. The classification shown on the map can be described only as an administrative freak.

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

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In recommending the five-years exemption to all settlers who have shown their bona fides the Lands Reclassification Board said—

We consider that the adoption of these recommendations—

Those recommendations include five years exemption.

will benefit both the selectors and the State. If rent is demanded under present conditions, it cannot be paid, and the selector must go. It is not a case of one or two, but of hundreds and that the State should turn these people off their holdings is of course impossible. If they stay on with exemption, the majority at the end of the period should have their holdings in a sufficiently improved condition to afford reasonable prospect of meeting their obligations to the State. If not, it will at any rate prove that either the man or the land is a failure.

Since the Government are not prepared to accept the recommendation of five years exemption for all settlers, I would at least urge that that exemption should be granted to settlers who are situated more than 12 miles from a railway, as proposed in the Council's amendment. In my electorate there are numbers of settlers situated more than 12 miles east of the Yillimining-Kondinin railway who are fairly, justly, and honestly entitled to the measure of consideration proposed by the amendment. At the time of the election, in company with a Minister of the Crown, one of the most able men in the Labour movement, I addressed a meeting at Wogolin on this particular subject. About 300 settlers were present, and the undertaking was given by me, with the Minister's acquiescence and in his presence, that although the board had recommended five years exemption and a reduction to a maximum price of 20s. per acre, the Government would not carry out that recommendation but would give the settlers reduced prices with a maximum of 15s. per acre.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Who was the Minister?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Minister for Mines, Mr. Collier. So far as those settlers are concerned, a large number of them have their land in Zone A, the price of which is 25s. per acre. So an absolute breach of faith has been committed as regards these Ministerial announcements. Again, there are num-

bers of settlers distant more than 12 miles from a railway who are in an awkward position between the Yillimining-Kondinin railway and the Kukerin-Lake Grace railway. There is a big area of land between those two railways which, in the present financial position of the State, cannot be served by a railway, although such a course will be justified later on. The very least that can be done for those settlers, who are not getting the reduction of price promised by the Government, is to give them five years exemption from payment as proposed by the Legislative Council's amendment. Again, east of the Wickepin-Marredin railway there are numbers of settlers more than 12 miles from a railway who must be ultimately served by an extension of the Yillimining-Kondinin railway to Merredin. Those settlers who have been deceived and misled as regards rainfall and as regards the provision of railway facilities should at least have relief from payment of rent. The member for Mt. Margaret contended that these people were trying to evade their just obligations to the State; but that is totally incorrect. The member for Irwin seemed to me to contend that this amendment will affect the well-to-do settlers. If that was the hon. members' idea, I wish to say that such is not the case. The well-to-do settler is the man within easy distance of a railway, and under the Bill, apart from this amendment, he is the man who will get by far the largest measure of relief. The man absolutely in danger of being driven off his holding is the man more than  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles from an existing railway, and he is absolutely unable to meet rental payments to the State at the present time. That has been pointed out by the Lands Reclassification Board. The Bill itself I regard as more a deficit relief Bill, than a Bill to give relief to the people on the land. I do not think the small holders more than  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles from a railway should be asked to go to the Industries Assistance Board to borrow money to pay rents. So far as I can see, the man who came late in my electorate and got the poorer land is going to get no relief. From the

Great Southern Railway to the rabbit-proof fence the man who got the pick of the land got it at 10s. per acre.

The Premier: You do not want this Bill?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I want it, but I also want it to embody the promises made to the people at the election.

The Premier: This is the best Bill we can give you.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In its present form the Bill does not carry out the promises which have been made.

The Minister for Lands: It may not carry out your promises, but it carries out the Government's promises.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: It does not carry out the promises in the Government's policy speech. The people who got the poorer land in my district have been charged from 18s. to 22s. per acre. Since the minimum price of zone A has been fixed at 25s., those people are not going to get the relief which I anticipated they would get and which the Premier promised them they would get. I urge the Government to accept the amendment because the effect will be to give relief to the poorest class of our settlers—and nothing kills more than cartage does. Further, the relief will be given to the class of settler whom the present Government are out to assist.

Mr. HICKMOTT: I regard this as the most important amendment proposed to be made in the Bill. The Government have relieved the people considerably by reducing the price of land. But the people now affected are those who are the bona-fide strugglers, and it is only by the amendment that they will secure a measure of relief.

The Premier: Will you take that and drop the re-pricing?

Mr. HICKMOTT: Yes, I would prefer it. I must support the amendment. In my election campaign I promised that I would oppose the eviction of any bona-fide settler on the score of non-payment of rent.

The Premier: Has anybody been put off?

Mr. HICKMOTT: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: When the re-pricing board was appointed by

Mr. Bath, then Minister for Lands, the board reviewed the land that Mr. Bath intended should be re-priced. The board did not deal with that land which the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) says they did. The land the board reviewed is the 15s. per acre land, as promised to the people. The land in zones A and B, was not included, and was never intended to be priced at 15s. When that board submitted its report, Mr. Bath made his recommendation to Cabinet, and Cabinet took up the position that we were dealing with public estate, and that the writing off of the value of the public estate could only be done with the consent of the people. Consequently, we outlined our policy in regard to the writing off of the value of the public estate, and submitted it to the people. The people endorsed that policy. Hon. members did not submit this later alternative at the elections, but all agreed with the Government policy and the re-pricing proposal. At the elections the policy was unanimously endorsed. Having got the mandate from the people to do this thing, we did it, and we made it clear when we introduced the Bill that it was a re-pricing Bill and that we were not prepared to recognise it as a Land Act Amendment Bill, or to accept any amendments irrelevant to re-pricing. Hon. members opposite did not then submit this five years' exemption as an alternative to re-pricing.

Mr. Thomson: I mentioned it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but not as an alternative to re-pricing. The re-pricing was unanimously endorsed by the House. The re-pricing having been submitted to another place, hon. members now say "We will go a little further." But before we can go further in writing off the value of the public estate, the people will have to be consulted, and the Government will never agree to discount the public revenue to the extent proposed, without a mandate from the people. This is not the stage at which to submit an alternative, when it is known that we cannot adopt that alternative. We have

introduced the Bill in accordance with our policy as endorsed by the people, and if the Committee want this alternative they can only get it by burdening the people in addition to what we propose. If the Chamber carry the amendment the Government will have to consider the situation.

Mr. THOMSON: There never was any alternative. The Minister said in effect when introducing the Bill "This is what we will give you, and nothing more. You can take it or leave it." Those in another place have now introduced the amendment, and I think we are justified in supporting it. On the second reading I said I was in favour of the five years' exemption, and I quoted figures which I have not with me now.

The Premier: Thank God!

Mr. THOMSON: The Premier expects us to be quiet and not voice our opinions. We are here to voice the requirements of our constituents, and I am justified in making a fight for this. The Minister states now that we are asking for an alternative. It is not an alternative; it is an addition.

The Premier: Is there anything else you would like?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, and we are entitled to fight for what we want. I regret very much the attitude the Government have adopted. The Minister for Lands can twist as he likes, but there was no doubt in the minds of the people of the agricultural districts that we were to have a reclassification Bill. Ministers say now that it was only intended to be a re-pricing measure. All I can say is they misled the electors when putting their policy before the people.

The Premier: Question! Bill or no Bill.

Modification of the amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	21
				—
Majority against	..			2
				—

## AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Male	(Teller)

## NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).

Modification of the amendment thus negatived.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I urge the Government to accept the Council's amendment as it stands.

The Premier: The Government will not accept it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is for the Committee to decide. The arguments already adduced in respect to the modification of the amendment apply with equal force to the general principle. If the amendment is carried, it will mean that all settlers situated 12 miles or more from a railway will be entitled to this measure of relief. I urge the Government to accept the amendment. If they will not accept it, I hope the Committee will carry it.

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Government accept an amendment to the effect that this shall apply to all new lands taken up from this date? That would be at least a little relief, and a great many of the settlers would willingly throw up the land and take the risk of applying for it again.

The Premier: That is the end of it. I was thinking of agreeing.

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister accept this amendment?

The PREMIER: We will consider the question of bringing down a comprehensive Land Bill next session.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You will not be there next session.

Mr. THOMSON: After our experience with this Bill, we are chary of trusting Ministers. I came to the House pledged to a maximum of 15s.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not dealing with the amendment.

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Government accept an amendment to this effect, that they will grant this exemption subject to the settlers paying, say, 6 per cent. and giving them an exemption of five years?

Mr. Heitmann: They get that now. None of them have been turned off their land yet.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope the Government will see the error of their ways and allow this amendment to be passed.

Question put and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	21
Noes	..	..	..	20
Majority for	..	..	..	1

## AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. McDowall	(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Male	(Teller).
Mr. Mitchell	

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 4.—New clause: Add the following clause to stand as No. 10:—The land shall be divided into six different grades

as shown in the schedule hereto, marked respectively A, B, C, D, E, F. The selling price for the land shall not be more than that shown in the schedule under the respective grades, according to its distance from a railway station or siding, as indicated therein:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It may be perfectly obvious to the Committee that we cannot put the proposed clause into this Bill. Apart from the fixing of the minimum on which lands should be graded, the clause is not a practical one and could not apply. It says that the land shall be divided into six different grades. But where are these grades situated? Are the grades to be found in the Kimberleys or in Esperance. There is no indication as to where the grade is to apply. One could not gather from the amendment what is desired. I move—

*That the Council's amendment be not agreed to.*

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This may not mean a great deal for the reason that the Minister can make the grades exactly where he pleases.

The Minister for Lands: I have outlined to Parliament what I intend to do.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I agree that it means nothing, because the Minister will control the division. I am not going to insist upon the amendment being agreed to, but I am surprised at the Minister objecting to its appearing in the Bill. He evidently does not want to be bound to do what he has told the House he intended to do.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister states that it is absolutely useless to put this schedule in the Bill. As a modification of the Council's amendment I move—

*That the Council's amendment be amended by striking out all the words after "land" in the first line and inserting the following in lieu:—"The land delineated in a plan deposited in the Department of the Lands and Surveys and numbered and thereon coloured shall be divided into six grades, viz., A, B, C, D, E, and F respectively, and three classes, viz., 1st, 2nd, and*

*3rd class, and the maximum selling price of the land in each class and grade shall not exceed the price stated in the schedule to this Act according to the distance of the land from the nearest line of railway as shown in the said schedule.*

Modification of amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	20
Noes	..	21

Majority against .. 1

#### AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Male	(Teller).
Mr. Mitchell	

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullan
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Bolton
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).

Modification of the amendment thus negatived.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I move an amendment—

*That the following proviso be added to the amendment:—"Provided that in case of land infested with indigenous poison plants, situate in any part of the State, the maximum price for such lands selected since the first day of January, 1905, shall not exceed the price of third-class land for grade or zone A; that is to say, six shillings per acre if within five miles of an existing railway, or four shillings and ninepence per acre if beyond five miles but within ten miles of an existing*



*railway, or three shillings and ninepence per acre if beyond ten miles of an existing railway."*

To me this is the most vital part of the Bill.

The Premier: They have all been vital parts of the Bill to you.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At the time when the demand in the wheat areas could not be satisfied and when the land could not be surveyed and thrown open, it was recognised throughout the State that relief should be given to the people who had taken up poison lands. That was as far back as 1911. The then Government, on the eve of a general election, appointed a commission, and the present Government on the eve of the 1914 election also appointed a commission to investigate these poison lands. I have pointed out to the House repeatedly that the people in the poison areas are tired of being fooled and humbugged by the two Governments, both of which have admitted and recognised that the people needed relief.

Mr. Taylor: You will lose support from both sides if you are not careful.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The people who have taken up the poison lands are tired of both sides and their political promises. In 1914 the poison commission travelled through the poison area of the State and presented a report to the Government. They stated amongst other things—

In travelling through this portion of the State, especially amongst the more recently settled parts it is at once apparent that there is something very seriously wrong here with settlement generally, and the fact was forcibly impressed upon us that: (a.) There are already many abandoned holdings; (b.) That a large proportion of the men still there are not making a living on their holdings; (c.) There is very little fresh selection going on at the present time, although a considerable amount of land is still available. We have no hesitation in ascribing this state of affairs to (1) the existence of poison plants, (2) the inexperience of new settlers, and (3) small holdings, often of poor average

quality. As a means of giving the necessary immediate relief, we beg to recommend: (a.) That an adjustment be made of survey fees, i.e., where a man selected a number of surveyed blocks at the same time, he should only be charged the schedule survey fee on the whole area, as if it were one block. (b.) That where the cost of poison eradication has not been taken into consideration in pricing the land, and can be ascertained, it shall (in cases where the land in the opinion of the Minister is suitable for grazing only) be deducted from the price of the land, or where the land, in the opinion of the Minister can be profitably cultivated, half the cost of eradication shall be deducted from the price of the land. That is to say, if it is estimated that it has, or will, cost a settler say 5s. per acre to eradicate poison, he shall be entitled to have his rent account credited with this amount, or half this amount, as the case may be; such credit to take effect from and during the time he satisfies the Minister that he is making a bona fide attempt to carry out the work.

This commission conclude by pointing out that the minimum price, after deducting the cost of eradication should not be reduced below 1s. per acre exclusive of poison fees. It is quite clear if the minimum of 1s. per acre were not put in, in many cases the cost of eradicating the poison would be more than the value of the land, and to prevent the land being given away, the Government put in that minimum of 1s. per acre. On top of the report of that commission we have the Premier's policy speech at Kalgoorlie, in which he promised that a measure of relief should be given to the settlers in the poison areas. The member for Northam went round the various centres and said that the price of poison lands should be and would be reduced, and four years have passed and nothing has been done. I went to more than a dozen centres and read that extract from the Premier's speech in Kalgoorlie relating to these poison lands and left printed copies

of it with the electors, and yet this Bill comes down, and whilst hon. members from some of the districts can go to their electorates and say that the maximum price is 15s. or 12s. 6d. per acre, as the case may be, I have been unable to get from the Minister any idea as to what is proposed as a maximum price for the land in the poison areas. If this Bill is to be of any value at all, if it is not an empty political dodge, then it is a fair thing that my amendment should be accepted.

The Premier: If you think the Government have been guilty of a political dodge you should not be sitting behind them. For four years you have done nothing else but play off to the farmers.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Premier has done nothing whatever to redeem his promises to the people in the poison areas.

The Premier: We have never played off to any particular electorate.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: So far as those people are concerned, they are entitled to and have demanded relief, but the Bill gives them nothing definite at all.

The Minister for Mines: Your electorate has had more than all the other districts put together.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Nothing of the kind.

The Premier: It has.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: This re- pricing, although it promises something to the people in the drier areas does nothing for those on the poison lands. It gives nothing at all to the people who have taken up poison lands west of the Great Southern. In the amendment I have moved I propose to ask the Government to say definitely that they will give the people in the poison areas the same measure of relief which is proposed for the people in the dry districts. The amendment is merely to recognise the poison lands as of about the same maximum value as third class land in the best districts. In view of the fact that many farms in the poison areas to-day can be purchased for the value of the improvements on them, the Government should accept the amendment and say

definitely the measure of relief they will afford these people. It would have been fairer to introduce a Bill to afford definite relief in the poison districts even if no reduction had been made in the price of the best wheat lands. These poor struggling people who have suffered so much are evidently to get no relief at all.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Liberal Government had no time to do anything after the board's report came in. The report was received on the 10th October, 1911. The present Government ignored it because the board were appointed by their predecessors and they appointed another board.

The Premier: Yours was a political board.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier has no right to say that. The report was made by capable men and should be given effect to. The board reported that the blocks should be up to 3,000 acres in area and added—

The price charged should be very moderate, say 3s. 6d. to 6s. per acre, as we consider that the work which will have to be put in to eradicate the poison and in general development will amount to a very considerable sum. . . . The evidence tends to show that the cost of eradication would vary from 3s. to 6s. per acre on an average block. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

This report agrees almost entirely with the report of the board in 1914. Ever since 1911 I have desired to help these people. The fault lies with present Ministers and, having discovered the fault, they should rectify it. The present Government bought support with many promises to people on the land and have forgotten their promises. We cannot trust Ministers further, and must have this provision in the Bill. These people have had the hardest time of any of the settlers in the State and for the longest period, not because the land is incapable of carrying stock but because the areas were small and because of the want of knowledge on the part of the selectors. Many of them were brought out from the Old Country and they

are in the same position to-day as when they went on to those areas 10 years or more ago. The eradication of poison represents waste work and because of that the selectors have a claim to consideration.

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister say whether he will agree to the amendment? The member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs) by letter, impressed on me that the Bill should make provision to ease the disabilities these settlers are suffering. There is an enormous area of poison land in his constituency and there is a considerable area in my own electorate. I have had letters on the subject from various parts of my constituency and also of Mr. Sydney Stubbs' constituency. Seeing that the Government made a definite pronouncement in the Premier's policy speech at Kalgoorlie on this subject, they should, if they are sincere, accept the amendment moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin. I can quite understand the heat with which that hon. member spoke, he having been placed in a false position by his party. The hon. member is especially justified in demanding from the Government fulfilment of their promise, but I as one who supported that part of the Government platform have also a right to demand fulfilment of the promise. The board who inquired into the poison lands of this State say in their report:—

From evidence gathered in our present inspection we feel satisfied that this land should be surveyed into areas of 3,000 acres and dealt with under grazing lease conditions. The price charged should be very moderate, say 3s. 6d. to 6s. per acre; and we consider that the work which will have to be put in to eradicate the poison and general development will amount to a very considerable sum. The evidence tends to show that the cost of eradication would vary from 3s. to 6s. per acre on an average block. I think the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin is reasonable, and cannot for the life of me understand the objection of the Minister for Lands to it. I have had letters on this subject

from my constituents at Nyabing and Ongerup, who are also on poison land, and who come under the provisions of the Bill. If this amendment is carried, it will benefit them. I hope the Government will accept the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Is the Minister going to reply?

The Minister for Lands: I have no reply other than I have already made.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Then I say that I have received no reply, and that the position is absolutely intolerable to me, and that I am not going to stand it much longer. Here is an important matter affecting the major portion of my constituency.

The Minister for Lands: I have dealt with it already, and I am not going to repeat myself. What I have said is in *Hansard*.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I think the Minister is treating me with very scant courtesy. In an important matter which represents the very kernel of the Bill he refuses, as he refused the last time the Bill was before the House, to give any reply or indication as to the intentions of the Government with regard to poison lands.

The Minister for Lands: Read *Hansard* and you will see the intentions there.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: In *Hansard* there is an airy reference to the effect that the relief to be given over a certain area of poison land would involve a loss to the State of £7,000 a year, whilst the relief to be given to a practically equivalent area of wheat land would involve a loss of £30,000 a year. That reference of the Minister's made it quite clear to me that the settlers in the poison districts were going to get, under the Government proposal, only one quarter of the relief to be given to the settlers who got the richer and better land in the wheat belt. I do not know what further protest it is in my power to make. I have barked a good deal, and the Government seem determined to make me bite. I feel that in this matter I have to appeal to the Government to keep the definite promise outlined in the Premier's policy speech. I have exhausted every means

in my power to get information on the subject from the Government. I have even seen the Premier on it. Apparently no relief is to be given. My position in regard to the promises I made to the settlers with the authority of the Government has become absolutely intolerable.

Modification of the Council's amendment put, and a division called for.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I challenge the vote of the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison).

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: On a point of order: I was with the leader of the Country party when a division came on in the House a few days ago, and the leader of the Country party at that time said that Mr. Harrison had paired on everything or nothing.

The CHAIRMAN: There is a pair book here, and the hon. member can take the responsibility of his own actions. There is no point of order and no right of challenge. No member has the right to challenge the vote of another member unless he has some point which occurred at the time the division was called.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	22
				—

Majority against .. 2

#### AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Piesse
Mr. George	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Smith
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Veryard
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Gilchrist

(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Bolton

(Teller).

Modification of the Council's amendment thus negatived.

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

No. 5.—New clause: Add the following clause to stand as No. 11:—Regulations and By-laws:

1. Any regulation or by-law made or purporting to be made under or by virtue of this Act shall—

- (a.) be published in the *Gazette*;
- (b.) take effect from the date of publication or from a later date to be specified therein; and
- (c.) be judicially noticed, and unless and until disallowed as hereinafter provided, or except in so far as in conflict with any express provision of this or any other Act, be conclusively deemed to be valid.

2. Such regulations and by-laws shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within fourteen days after publication if Parliament is in session, and if not, then within fourteen days after the commencement of the next session.

3. If either House of Parliament pass a resolution at any time within one month after any such regulation or by-law has been laid before it disallowing such regulation or by-law, then the same shall cease thereupon to have effect subject, however, to such and the like savings as apply in the case of the repeal of a statute:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Power to make regulations is already provided in the principal Act. Therefore, there is no need for this. I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Mr. GEORGE: I cannot understand what reason the Minister has for disagreeing with the amendment; except that it will be a check upon Ministers keeping them in the straight path. We are getting emasculated Bills, leaving everything to the free will of the Minister. To object to this is to say that Ministers are above all laws, and promises, and pledges, and intend to do what they jolly well please. The real objection of the Minister is that he does not desire that either House of Parliament shall have the power to disagree with regulations. He wants to keep the whole thing in his own hands. It is another

endeavour on the part of the Government to throw the shadow of their displeasure on the Chamber which they cannot coerce. There has been proof enough this session that some check should be kept on the Minister.

The CHAIRMAN: Section 161 of the Land Act, of 1898, provides for the making of regulations. If the members of another place desired to deal with the question of regulations, the proper course would have been to amend Section 61 of the principal Act. I do not think it would be proper to have two sections in the one Act dealing with regulations. The parent Act deals more fully than the amendment with the whole question of regulations. There is a close analogy between the proposed amendment and the section of the Act, and in some parts they are identical. In my opinion, therefore, the amendment is not in order. I rule it out of order.

Mr. GEORGE: In order to get this into proper shape, can we not move to repeal Section 161 with the object of substituting the Legislative Council's amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already ruled that the Council's amendment is out of order.

No. 6.—Add a schedule as follows:—

	5m.	10m.	15m.	5m.	10m.	15m.
1st	25/0	20/0	16/0	20/0	17/6	15/0
2nd	9/0	7/3	6/9	8/3	6/9	6/0
3rd	6/0	4/0	3/9	5/3	4/6	3/9
1st	15/0	13/0	11/0	13/6	12/0	10/6
2nd	8/0	6/6	6/0	7/0	6/3	5/0
3rd	5/0	4/3	3/9	4/9	4/0	3/9
1st	12/0	10/0	9/0	11/0	9/0	7/0
2nd	7/0	6/0	5/0	6/6	5/9	5/0
3rd	4/6	4/0	3/9	4/3	4/0	3/9

The CHAIRMAN: This is consequential on No. 4, which was not agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Resolutions reported.

Mr. GEORGE: Is there any procedure by which this matter can be brought before the Chair?

Mr. SPEAKER: The time to raise this question is not now because the motion has been carried and the Chairman has reported to the House. I cannot consider the question now. The hon. member should have raised it before the Chairman reported to the House.

Mr. GEORGE: I accept your ruling, Sir, and do not wish to get away from it. I appeal to you as Speaker, however, to see if there is any way by which we can get this matter put right. I am not disagreeing with the Chairman's ruling except to say that we had no opportunity of taking up this objection by means of a comparison with the Land Act. This is an important question.

Mr. SPEAKER: The time has passed. I have told the hon. member.

The report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Hon. H. B. Lefroy, Mr. A. A. Wilson, and Hon. W. D. Johnson drew up reasons for not agreeing to certain of the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

## BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION (No. 2).

### Council's amendments.

Bill returned from the Council with a schedule of six amendments, which were now considered.

### In Committee.

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

No. 1—Strike out Clauses 2 to 14, inclusive:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Every hon. member present knows that the first liquor referendum Bill was introduced

at the request of, I may say, the whole of the citizens represented in various bodies of the metropolitan area. That measure went to another place, and was kept there until the very last days of this session, and now amendments are made which completely defeat the whole principle of the Bill.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: This Bill was only sent to the Council a day or two ago.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was sent up months ago. This measure, as originally proposed, was sent up months ago.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: That is not what you said just now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The measure for local option was sent up months ago, and has been before the Council all that time. Owing to the conduct of the Council we had to reintroduce the Bill and send it up again, and now it is returned to us completely mutilated. It is no longer a referendum Bill. I know there is much to be said in favour of the House taking the bit between its teeth, so to speak, and fixing the hours as it thinks fit. But I say the question is too large and too important in its social aspects to be settled without reference to the people. The matter is clearly one upon which the people should have a say—upon which, indeed, they should have not only a voice but a decision. This measure was for no other purpose than to enable the people to decide for themselves in the various districts, as we had them marked out in the measure, so that the people could vary their decisions according to the requirements of the places in which they live. All that is completely ignored, and we have a Bill sent back to us which is in no sense the same Bill but is an undoubtedly new Bill—one which this Chamber did not father, one which was not called for by the people, one upon which we have had no commands from the people; a measure entirely conceived as a new and, I may say, an extraordinary measure to be based upon a local option Bill. I for one cannot admit

the principle now adopted or proposed by another Chamber. I stand by reference to the people of a question of this kind. It is the only time when we can reach the people direct and give them a decisive voice, when they can indeed govern themselves in this respect. The whole measure having been altered, cannot for a moment accept the Council's amendments. As hon. members will see the Council first of all propose to stricken out the whole Bill—that is what I may say—as sent to them. They call this amendment—a complete obliteration of the measure we submitted to them. They have substituted an entirely new measure. I question very much whether, if this point were taken, the Chairman of Committees would permit these amendments to stand. I am not going to take this point. I have always held that on this question there should be no party strife. The measure is not a party measure in any sense of the word, and I for one would under other circumstances welcome any reform of the liquor law, any effort in the direction of temperance. But we cannot accept an amendment to a Bill which completely kills the Bill, destroys all its vitality, all its essential principle, and substitutes an entirely different set of principles, an entirely different body of principles, an entirely different body. Therefore, I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I was not in the House when the original Bill was passed—I think I was ill at the time—and therefore I have not up to the present time had an opportunity of saying anything on this legislation. Contrary to the view expressed by the Attorney General, I cannot quite understand why it is necessary to pass legislation of this description, to submit a question of this sort to a referendum during war time. I was glad to hear from the Attorney General that he does not look upon this measure as a party one. So far as we on this side are concerned we have always attempted to deal with the liquor question in a non-party way and have always left our members abs-

lutely free to vote on the liquor question as they thought fit. I presume, therefore, that hon. members will view the question we have now to consider from the individual standpoint and not from the party standpoint. I feel that the Government have ample power, and always have had ample power, to regulate the liquor trade of Western Australia during war time and for war purposes. When the war broke out, we gave very drastic powers to the Government, enabling them to take any action they thought fit—to close public-houses or to regulate the hours during which they should be kept open for purposes of trade. I feel that the pressure which has been brought to bear upon the Government by a certain section of the community has been rather unfairly brought to bear in order to secure the introduction of a measure of this description at the present time under the guise of war legislation. No matter how one's sympathies may go out to the temperance movement, no matter how much one may wish to see trading hours restricted, one cannot help feeling that those extremists in the cause of temperance—worthy extremists, possibly—have considered this an opportunity to bring to bear pressure upon the Government so that legislation of this description may be carried. If it was necessary to regulate the hours, the Government already had the power. The Government had the Bill, but were nervous about exercising it. They were backing and filling, and doing anything to avoid decisive action.

The Attorney General: That is not so, and you know it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Why, the Attorney General's demeanour never conveys the determination to carry a thing through. He always conveys the impression of insincerity.

The Attorney General: I shall never be the hypocrite or the humbug that you are.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Do not lose your temper.

The Attorney General: Do not tell any more of your lies.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Is the Attorney General using Parliamentary language?

The CHAIRMAN: The leader of the Opposition is not altogether in order either. I must ask him not to use language calculated to incense the Minister, as, for instance, accusing the Minister of being insincere.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But the Minister looks as if he would eat me, boots and all.

The Attorney General: I would not have you on my stomach.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Am I to submit to this sort of indignity? I do not want to take up my residence in the Minister's stomach.

The CHAIRMAN: The question has nothing to do with the Bill.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not wish to hurt the Minister's feelings or those of his colleagues, but I hold that the Government have not dealt with the matter with that earnestness one would expect from them. The people have learned to distrust them. We sent another Bill, the continuation Bill, to the Council. The Council amended it, fixing the hours of opening and closing of hotels at nine to nine. That was ruled out by the Speaker, and then this Bill, which provides for the opening and closing hours being referred to the electors, was also amended and sent back to us. We considered it, and now it comes with a further amendment to replace the proposed referendum, and to substitute fixed hours in lieu thereof. The absurdity in war time, under the term "war emergency," of asking the people to vote on a referendum six months hence!

The Attorney General: I will undertake to have the referendum held in less than two months.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But you fixed your time.

The Attorney General: No, we did not.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: You said in May.

The Attorney General: That was the proposal.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the Attorney General has withdrawn from that

statement, why did not he say so when he was moving the rejection of this amendment? He now proposes to take the referendum in two months, and it will cost £5,000 or £6,000. If there is emergency for legislation of this description, why cannot Parliament take the responsibility of passing it? If the Government have not the courage to take the responsibility under the exhaustive powers we have given them to regulate this traffic during war time—

Mr. Thomas: Make it nine to six and I will support you.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There must be fewer interjections.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government have power to do whatever may be necessary.

The Attorney General: Then you do not want this Bill?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We do not want any Bill, because you have the power already, and you know it, and you will not exercise it. The Attorney General says they have not the power.

The Attorney General: I say we have, if occasion warrants it. In an emergency we can exercise it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The emergency arose in the City a few weeks ago. I saw it in the terrace. No action was taken.

The Attorney General: Did you report it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There was no occasion, for thousands of other people saw it. The police were there.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: I asked a question on the subject in the House.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Some of the police were roughly handled on that occasion. Similar conduct was indulged in at Fremantle, and the other day the publicans took the law into their own hands and closed their hotels at four o'clock, showing that if the Government wished to exercise the drastic powers we gave them they could have done so at a moment's notice. There is the other purpose of the Bill, namely, to fall in with the agitation of the extremists who have seized the opportunity to get something

from the Government which the Government are very reluctantly attempting to give them. Why put the country to the cost of a referendum? I believe that is the view the Legislative Council have taken in suggesting the deletion of these clauses and the introduction of a provision fixing the hours at from nine to nine. I concur, although I do not believe in legislating under a misapprehension, which it is, because it is said that it is caused by the war. If we are to have a referendum on the question let us amend the original Act and make it a permanent thing. Let us take the responsibility of saying what is the proper time at which to close hotels during the continuance of the war. I shall not quarrel with anyone who moves an amendment of this sort. I do not propose even to appeal to members on this side of the House. Each one will take his own course. I intend to vote for the amendment.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If there is any great national question, I say that this is one, and I would like it dealt with on dignified lines. Whenever the hon. member rises in his place he must insinuate that there is dishonesty and dishonour or hypocrisy on the part of the members of the Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: A lack of earnestness.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: What does that mean? It is said that we do not desire to have this legislation passed. May I point out that the hon. member himself consented not to raise any objection to it if I introduced a measure of this kind. He was one of those who agreed that there should be no objection, that this should be a non-party question, and that it should have his assistance to go through the House. This measure was brought in not under any false pretences, not under any hypocrisy because it is war time, but because some of the most respectable and influential citizens of the metropolis approached me and the Government asking that the measure should be introduced. We have kept faith, and we have so far kept faith that the measure has twice been through this Chamber. Where does the hypocrisy



come in? As soon as it was defeated by another place we introduced it again without a day's delay. Where does the lack of earnestness come in? The Bill is here before us again and we have stuck to our promises faithfully made and faithfully carried out up to date. Where then is there any hypocrisy or any lack of earnestness? If there be any hypocrisy in dealing with the measure, it is in those who sought to make amendments which absolutely destroyed the Bill and threw to the winds the promises made. If there is any hypocrisy it is on the part of those who make it impossible to carry the measure. These are they who are not in earnest and who believe that the whole liquor reform will be lost if they can only put impediments like this in the way of the passage of the measure.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Whom are you referring to?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am referring to every one of those who is endorsing this kind of thing. We promised to introduce a liquor option poll for the regulation of the hours of opening and closing of hotels. That promise we made and that promise we have carried out. We are anxious now that it should be carried out to the utmost and that the public should have the right to a say upon the question. What are the arguments adduced against this? They are that we should wait six months before we take the vote. Even then it would give the people a chance of speaking, and give the people the right to keep their homes free from the evils of intoxication at a time like this. I said the other day that there was nothing to compel us to take the poll at the Legislative Council elections. We can make a proclamation at any time and if the Bill is carried—as I sent it to the other Chamber—not later than February next I will arrange that the local option poll shall be taken in the districts provided.

Mr. Robinson: That is three months hence.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not exceeding three months. That argument, therefore, vanishes.

Mr. George: We did not understand it like this before.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I said so the other day, nevertheless. My first desire was to have the referendum taken at the time of the Federal referendums, which would be before the year closed, and then for the purpose only of saving expense I suggested that it might be taken at the time of the Council's elections. I fully admit that it will be a long time to wait, and I am anxious that the people should be able to speak on the question as soon as possible. Therefore, if the Council's amendments are rejected and if my Bill becomes law I pledge the Government to have a local option poll taken within the next ensuing three months. Nothing could be fairer. There is no lack of earnestness about that. The leader of the Opposition is always trying to cover this side of the House with dirt. He is always insinuating dishonourable actions on our part, and insincere motives. He is always trying to make it appear that we are playing false with the public and with our principles. He knows that he is stating what is not true, what is dishonourable, when he makes these insinuations.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Attorney General is accusing me of lying. I must ask him to withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: The Attorney General said that the statement of the leader of the Opposition was not true.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I ought to have chosen other words. I ought to have said "incorrect."

Hon. Frank Wilson: I ask for a withdrawal.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I withdraw a thousand times if the hon. member wishes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And apologise.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has withdrawn.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The hon. gentleman has been very offensive. He ought to apologise. I ask you to call upon him to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: I think his withdrawal is quite sufficient. That is what we usually ask for.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have said that he has stated what he knows to be untrue. I should have said according to the rules of the House, that he has stated something that he knows to be incorrect, and I say that is so.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The hon. gentleman is repeating the offence.

Mr. George: Exactly.

The CHAIRMAN: It would be better if this kind of language was not indulged in. I cannot command the language that hon. members use. I can only ask the Attorney General to withdraw the statements.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have withdrawn it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And he has repeated it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I would like to know what position we stand in in regard to the public and to our duties here. We are in charge of the measure. Are we to sit quiet and take unchallenged the ungentlemanly and unparliamentary insinuations of the leader of the Opposition?

Hon. Frank Wilson: I must appeal to you, Sir, for your protection. I cannot stand this sort of thing.

The CHAIRMAN: I would repeat that it would be well if this kind of language was not indulged in. I cannot stop hon. members from using any language they choose; I can only ask them to withdraw when exception is taken to it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I certainly take exception to this language.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have withdrawn all that is unparliamentary. The hon. gentleman is making insinuations which not only cover me but every member of the Government. We are accused of playing with a question of this importance, and of lack of earnestness, that we are humbugging the whole of the public in our dealing with the measure. I cannot rest under imputations of that kind. Hon. members know

the position which the leader of the Opposition occupies, and he ought to scorn to make these insinuations. They are not worthy of the dignity of his position or of any hon. member of this House, and they are degrading to our public life. It is by insinuations of this kind that he has maintained his post.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the Attorney General to deal with the amendment; this is lapsing into a general discussion.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am resenting the imputations made upon the honour of the Government.

Mr. George: Go on with your argument.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am in deadly earnest in having the measure, which was sent on to another place, carried in its entirety as it was sent from this Chamber to the Council, a measure which asks the people to exercise their rights and prerogatives, and not only exercise their rights here in Perth but in other districts of the State. This takes into consideration the different conditions which prevail throughout Western Australia, considers also that some parts of the State are more likely to perturbation, to influences that disturb the mental serenity and moral rectitude in times like this. Therefore, the people where these possibilities of disturbances exist should have the right of deciding whether the hotels should be closed at 6 o'clock in the afternoon instead of at 11 o'clock at night.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Should not the Government exercise their powers?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. Frank Wilson: If these possibilities exist.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. Frank Wilson: I am just asking a question.

The CHAIRMAN: The leader of the Opposition knows that interjections are disorderly at any time.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not when they are relevant.

The CHAIRMAN: This question is one which does not admit of interjec-

tions. I have had experience of these liquor Bills before and I know what they are. I know that the moment we allow interjections we are doomed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I thought I was doomed when I was trying to speak.

The CHAIRMAN: I stopped interjections on both sides of the House.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am asked why we do not put into force the Bill which has now passed into law, namely the power that we have in emergencies to close any hotel at any hour in any district throughout the State. I am of opinion that the purposes for which the Bill was introduced do not arise. When the Bill was introduced reference was made to the conditions existing particularly on the goldfields, where there were aliens working side by side with our own citizens and where riots and disturbances and racial enmities might lead to all kinds of troubles and breakages of the law, and it was necessary to have a measure of this kind to be exercised, not whimsically, not for the mere purpose of saying that we had the power, but because it was administratively necessary. It is true there have been instances where it would have been well had we known in advance of the disturbances, and where we should have closed the particular hotels in the neighbourhood of the disturbances on those days. Unfortunately until the disturbances occurred no one could have anticipated them. It was only after they occurred that we could have seen the wisdom of closing hotels upon those days, but we have that power still and I submit that it should not be used in this way. It should be used when it is necessary and particularly to prevent riots and disturbances, especially of a racial character, in trying times like these. It is a safeguard to us. It is a necessary weapon that we must not always be striking with, and which we must have in readiness for services to the general public whenever occasion arises. We want the public to say definitely whether they will have the hotels open from 6 in the morning until 11 o'clock at night, or between

any lesser hours that they may choose. We ask the people to decide that for us, not because we have done it as a mere political throw of the dice, so to speak, but because we have kept faith with those who asked it from us. The citizens not only of Perth, but of the whole State, are concerned in this. Organisations of a respectable national character throughout the length and breadth of the land approached us. We solemnly promised them to give them this measure, and we gave it to them, and those who are responsible for the defeat of it and those who accuse us of insincerity are those who are attempting to block this reform. If the leader of the Opposition is in earnest, if he means for temperance reform, let him give us the Bill as it has been twice passed by this Chamber. If he cannot trust the people, if he will defy the people, if he snubs and ignores them, we know where his sincerity is. I submit this amendment is nothing more nor less than an attempt to kill the measure and to stop temperance reform in a time when it is urgently needed.

Mr. GEORGE: The carrying of the amendment places some members, at any rate on this side of the House, in a rather peculiar predicament. The Bill for the referendum was thoroughly discussed in this House and every member has the right to express his opinion without being abused. It is a matter which affects every individual member of Parliament and each has the right to express his opinion here and his constituents have the right to expect him to do so. So far as the referendum is concerned, I would be sorry to see the proposal to hold it struck out, but I would much prefer to have the clause further on, which states that the hours on which liquor shall be sold shall be from 9 to 9, although it would be better if the closing hour were altered from 9 to 6. I would prefer that to the referendum. If that were done I am certain our constituents would not accuse us of having usurped their functions. If it is possible for the Attorney General to help us out of the difficulty he ought to do so.

The Attorney General: My way out of it is to reject this amendment.

Mr. GEORGE: I would like the House to fix the time and not put the country to the turmoil and expense of a referendum. The suggestion I have made I think would be received by the great bulk of the people as a fair way of dealing with a difficult problem in difficult times.

Mr. ALLEN: Boiled down, the suggestion is whether we, as a Parliament, shall fix the hours or leave it to a referendum of the people. I am practically pledged to leave the matter to the people. I have been on one or two deputations to the Attorney General. Before the war broke out the Attorney General was asked to submit several questions to the people and he promised the deputation that at the first opportunity he would introduce legislation to that effect. The war started and there was introduced a War Emergency Bill giving the Government power to close hotels during certain hours if the necessity arose. Then a movement was set on foot to close the hotels at 8 o'clock, and a deputation waited on the Attorney General asking him to exercise the power that Parliament had given him in the emergency legislation. I did not believe that the Government were entitled to use that legislation for the purpose for which the deputation asked. The idea was that the powers contained in it should be used where racial differences might occur and where it might be necessary to prevent riots occurring. My desire is that we shall have some reform in connection with the liquor traffic. If I were free to exercise my own will in the matter we might arrive at a conclusion by a very short cut, but I am not going back on the position I have taken up. I am going to support the Attorney General, but in the circumstances, if Parliament could fix the hours and save the turmoil of a referendum and the expense which would be involved, so as to get the matter settled quickly, that course might be followed.

Mr. George: And the people would be grateful.

Mr. ALLEN: I do not want to see the Bill lost entirely, but at the same time I do not want to make a fool of the public, and I would like the Attorney General to put me right. I desire to assist him in getting the legislation through. If by voting against these amendments from another place we are going to lose the Bill altogether, I shall not be a party to that. I want to be conscientious and carry out my promise and vote for the referendum, but we might arrive at a decision by a shorter cut. I am desirous of helping the Government to do something before the House goes into recess, and if the Attorney General will give me an assurance that after voting to reject these amendments, I shall have an opportunity of voting for the referendum, I am prepared to do that.

*[Mr. Carpenter took the Chair.]*

Mr. TAYLOR: The burden of the Attorney General's appeal was that the people should be allowed to decide. The Labour members are pledged to the referendum, but that plank of their platform should not be stretched to apply to a referendum for reducing hotel hours during war time. If the emergency has arisen, the Government should be courageous enough to take the responsibility for curtailing the hours, and not use the principle of the referendum for emergency purposes.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We are pledged to local option.

Mr. TAYLOR: Not in war time. Europe has been in turmoil for 14 or 15 months and now the Government talk of taking a referendum. The national Parliament of Australia has abandoned its referendum on higher and greater questions than this. The justification for the amendment is the urgency of abolishing any evil that exists. If the amendments are not agreed to, we shall lose the Bill.

The Premier: Another place must take the responsibility.

Mr. TAYLOR: That responsibility of which we hear so much is a myth. The

Attorney General would be wise to accept the amendment and shorten the hours before the Christmas holidays. If this Bill is to be used as the thin end of the wedge to bring about licensing reform, it is unfair. I am confident that if the principle of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. were put into force, the hours would not subsequently be extended but rather endeavours would be made to curtail them to 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Reformers should be proud of the opportunity to get a reduction of five hours a day, a measure of reform for which they have been fighting for years. If the Bill is lost and the battle has to be fought again next year, reformers will not have the excuse of emergency and they will then find out how many friends they have on the real merits of liquor reform.

Mr. VERYARD: When the first liquor referendum Bill was before the Assembly, I said I would support this class of legislation; and I will support it now, because I am anxious for reform. But I am also anxious that the Bill should not be lost. Consequently, I am somewhat doubtful as to what attitude I ought to take. Certainly the public are prepared for legislation on the lines of the amendment, and I think the Government would be wise to accept the amendment. Unquestionably the drink traffic is a disgrace to our State. If we wait to take a referendum, the advantage to be gained will be largely lost. Rather than sacrifice the Bill, however, I am prepared to support the referendum proposal of the Government.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not think a member should give a silent vote on such a question as this. When the Bill was first introduced, I endeavoured to move an amendment fixing the hours; in fact I did move such an amendment, but withdrew it; and when, later, I endeavoured to move in the same direction, I found the Standing Orders debarred me from doing so. Sooner than have the Bill wrecked, I will vote with the Government for the retention of the referendum. Having attended the meeting held recently in Perth to consider liquor legislation, I think the general desire is

that the matter should be referred to the people. If it is said that the average member of Parliament trims on such a question as this, I do not wish that to be said of me.

Mr. GILCHRIST: I listened attentively to the speech of the Attorney General, which I must say is quite out of harmony with the speech he delivered when similar amendments to these were sent down from the other House. On that occasion he was most conciliatory, and advised those behind him to exercise their judgment as to whether it would be better for the Assembly to take upon themselves to fix the hours for the sale of liquor or to refer the matter at an early date to the people. On this occasion he seeks to bully the Committee into rejecting the amendments. If the Council's amendments to this Bill have not been called for by the people, as the Attorney General says, no more was the measure sent from this House to the Council called for by the people.

The Attorney General: The Bill was introduced in response to the largest deputation that ever waited upon Ministers in this country. Your own leader supported it.

Mr. GILCHRIST: About three months before war broke out, a large and representative meeting of religious bodies was held in Perth, presided over by Archbishop Riley. At that meeting it was decided to request the Government to bring before Parliament a Bill relating to the abolition of barmaids and the restriction of the sale of liquor to minors, and also for the reference of the question of trading hours to the people at the next general election. Pursuant to that meeting, a deputation waited on the Premier and urged that effect should be given to the requests of the meeting. The Premier answered that deputation with his usual adroitness. In view of the fact that a general election was almost on top of him, he said he personally favoured national prohibition to be decided upon by a majority of the people, and he added that most of his party agreed with him in this matter. He said, however,

that he could give no promise regarding the Bill, as he would have to consult his colleagues. Meanwhile, he advised the deputation they should go on devoting their energies to education of the people on this important question; and he said they should insist that the question of local option be made an issue at the coming election. He went on to say that if it was made an issue and the Government were returned with a stronger party than before, the Legislative Council would see that the people were determined on local option. The Attorney General to-night has spoken about the sincerity of the leader of the Opposition on this question. In view of the Premier's advice to the deputation to make the question of liquor reform an issue at the general election, with a view to his party coming back stronger than ever, I do not think there was much sincerity on the hon gentleman's part. The temperance people apparently were not altogether gulled, and in September the *Reformer*, which may fairly be called the unofficial organ of the Labour party, published a leading article from which I quote the following—

The present Premier, Mr. Scaddan, is under a definite pledge to the forces of reform to make local option an election issue, and, if returned with a majority, to make an early and earnest endeavour to pass a measure of local option which will give the people complete control of the liquor traffic.

The article does not end there, but goes on to say—

This is right enough so far as it goes, but it does not go far with those who remember that the Premier pledged his party to the repeal of that masterpiece of political treachery—

And here we see the cloven hoof—

that masterpiece of political treachery, the Wilson Licensing Act, and that the pledge has not been kept.

The Attorney General: What has this got to do with the amendment?

Mr. GILCHRIST: Very much. The article continues—

A local option Bill superior in its vital principles to any attempted Australian licensing legislation was introduced twice, and twice practically defeated by the liquor agents in his own party. We would like to believe that a legitimate attempt was made to give the people a fair deal, but when we consider first that the Premier absented himself from the House on both occasions after giving his known liquor supporters full authority to do as they wished, it makes it rather difficult. It also makes it rather difficult for us to believe in the sincerity of the Premier, when we find that the Local Option Bill was not introduced until the 17th August, 1915, over 12 months after war broke out.

The Attorney General: This has nothing to do with the amendment.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It will read very well to-morrow morning.

The Attorney General: It is stone walling.

Mr. GILCHRIST: I am not a stone-waller. I have never been guilty of stone-walling and I hope I never will be. We find that early in March of this year a popular movement began in favour of the Government curtailing the hours for the sale of liquor. In that movement the Western Australia Alliance as an organisation had no part, and we find a very mild complaint in the *Reformer* to the effect that those responsible for the movement altogether overlooked the people who had been for so many years identified with the cause of temperance. Then they assert that the reason for these people being overlooked was the desire to impress on the Government that this was a movement not of extremists, but of leaders altogether unattached to extreme methods. We find amongst the number Archbishops Riley and Clune the mayors of leading municipalities and the chief representatives of the women's organisations. On the 13th March the *Reformer* said—

We feel certain that the temperate views expressed by the speakers engaged in presenting the above reason—

able proposition to the people will meet with general support.

So although these people were not connected with the temperance movement of the past they received the blessing of the official temperance organs. This paper goes on to say—

A small deputation went to the Attorney General—that was the genesis of the S to S movement—but the deputation being unused to the ways of politicians did not understand the reply given to them by the Attorney General, but understood him to say that if they could work up sufficient popular support for their movement the Government would be ready to do what they desired.

This deputation culminated in a great meeting in the Tivoli Theatre on 23rd March when 3,000 people were almost unanimous in regard to the resolutions submitted to them. It was not until the eve of that demonstration that the Premier, away on the goldfields, threw out the hint that the Government did not intend to carry out the wishes of the people as expressed at these demonstrations. Subsequently a deputation went to the Premier and received from him a reply on the lines of his Kalgoorlie speech. Very soon afterwards another demonstration was held in Perth, conducted this time by the Alliance. The Alliance had stated definitely that they did not originate and were not officially connected with the S to S movement; but after the Premier and the Attorney General had declared they were not going to act on the desires of the people expressed at this meeting, the Alliance proposed that the Government should proceed with the taking of a poll on the early closing of hotels. Instead of that, the meeting was held on the 18th May, presided over by the Rev. F. E. Harry, and two resolutions were carried. The first was—

That immediately the hotels should be closed at 6 o'clock every evening and provision should be made to refer the question of the closing hours to the people at the next general election. Which might not come on for another two years. Mr. Harry said they were

going to insist on the early closing vote being taken at the general elections. The second resolution was—

That the Premier should be asked to redeem his pledge to introduce legislation for the removal of the restrictions from the local option poll.

The Attorney General has no more right to say that the people have demanded that this referendum should be taken at this time than others have to say that the people have decided that Parliament should take upon itself to decide the closing hours. I stand by the S to S movement. The Attorney General is going to stand by the demonstration of last week. This is an emergency measure and therefore should be acted upon immediately. I trust that the Council's amendment will be agreed to.

Mr. ROBINSON: At the time of emergency the Government, with the powers they have at their disposal, should choose different districts, say Perth and Fremantle, where the troops are, and close the hotels in those districts at earlier hours. A Bill was brought before the House which was in effect a referendum Bill. I supported it, and I support it again. Members of another House have thought fit to strike out the provision for the referendum and insert in its place 9 to 9. In this time of stress I think it is a wiser provision than that we should spend £5,000 on a referendum. But the question we have to decide is whether we are going to run the risk of the Bill being dropped. I therefore propose to support the Bill in its original form, relying on the assurance of the Attorney General that the referendum will be taken not later than February, if the Bill is passed. Parliament is in an unfortunate position and the Government alone can save that position.

The Premier: The Government can save no position against intrigue.

Mr. ROBINSON: There is no intrigue as far as I am concerned. Rather than lose the reform I am willing to accept the suggestion of the Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And you will lose the Bill.

Mr. ROBINSON: I propose to place before any party issue what I deem to be my duty to the country in connection with this liquor law reform, and I am going to vote with the Government.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I supported the Bill because we had not an opportunity to deal with the question in any other way. We are morally bound to do anything we can to lessen the drink evil.

The Premier: ou know it has been lessened considerably in the last six months as compared with the same period of the previous year.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Simply because the people are not in the financial position to indulge as before. If the Government had judiciously exercised the powers granted under the Licensing Act Amendment, there would have been no necessity for this measure. That Act has never been put into operation.

The Premier: You have been representing the trade ever since you have been here.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I insist on the Premier withdrawing the remark that I represent any one except the electors of Perth.

The Premier: You do not represent them.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has asked the Premier to withdraw the remark.

The Premier: I withdraw.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The war has been in progress 16 months and this measure is only now brought before the House.

The Premier: That is incorrect.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: At first it was proposed that the referendum should be taken in May next, but the criticism of members has induced the Government to determine to take it within three months. The cost will be from £5,000 to £10,000 for a measure to operate for nine months. The referendum might result in hotels being closed two or three hours earlier than at present, but we shall have the anomaly of them opening at 6 a.m. If the Council's amendment is accepted, this anomaly will be removed and the

trading hours of hotels will be reduced by five per day. Further, the reduction might be brought into force almost immediately. These are good and sufficient reasons for accepting the Council's amendments.

The PREMIER: Since I have been in the Chamber I have never heard so much insincerity and so many attempts to mislead the public as on this question. The member for Perth has endeavoured to make the people believe he is desirous of taking a referendum on the liquor question. Every action he has taken since he has been a public man has been in the direction of preventing the people from having any control of the liquor trade. No other member has so used his position to retain the control in the hands of the trade. The hon. member does not suggest the hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the interests of temperance reform, but in the interests of those who suggested it to him, namely, the trade. What is the use of him attempting to lead the people to believe he is in favour of 9 to 9 in the interests of temperance reform? He wants 9 to 9 because he is afraid 6 o'clock will be fixed as the closing hour if a referendum is taken. The Government are prepared to abide by the decision of the people but the hon. member is not prepared to trust them. He is not prepared to say in this House what he has said outside. He does not desire temperance reform in the direction the people want it.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: You do not want 9 o'clock at Kalgoorlie.

The PREMIER: Whatever the people decide we shall accept, but have the people of Perth a right to decide the question for the people of Kalgoorlie? If the Government did not desire to give effect to the people's wishes in the metropolitan area, they could fix the closing hour at 6 o'clock.

Mr. George: Why do not you do it?

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member suggest that we should?

Mr. George: If you are satisfied that hotels should close at that hour, you should fix it.

[Mr. McDowall resumed the Chair.]



The PREMIER: I want an honest reply and not an attempt to gull the public. The question is whether Parliament shall drastically alter the licensing law without giving the people an opportunity to express an opinion. We have no right to do it. The whole agitation for the hours of 9 to 9 has come from the metropolitan area, where the conditions have materially changed since the declaration of war. I admit something should be done, but the people are the best judges of this matter. Why are members afraid to trust the people? If they wish the hotels at Kalgoorlie to remain open until 11 p.m. that will not worry me, but it is the right of the people to decide. Where are the changed conditions on the gold-fields except that we desire the people to economise? Have we a right to force our views on them? Did the members for Perth and Murray-Wellington urge the reduction of trading hours of hotels at the last election? No. One section of the community should not force its will upon another section.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: At a cost of £10,000.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has been acting during the last fortnight, and particularly during the last two or three days in such a way as to cause the State to spend thousands of pounds for his party purposes and for party purposes alone. Now the hon. member talks about avoiding the cost of a referendum. If the referendum costs £6,000 and saves the community £600,000, it will be £6,000 well invested. But the hon. member is afraid of the referendum. He wants to save not the £6,000 but his own face, first with the publicans, and secondly with the public, if he can. The hon. member cannot deny that this is his attitude. Did he take the platform in favour of the 8 to 8 movement?

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: He was afraid of it.

The PREMIER: He was opposed to it.

Mr. Thomson: I was not afraid.

The PREMIER: I want this position to be clearly understood by the public. I am not going to permit a big question

like this, which affects the interests of the State very materially, to be cast aside by a few who are only desirous of serving their own party ends by deliberately throwing dust in the eyes of the public, when the truth is known to me, as well as to other hon. members, that the reason why they want the 9 to 9 hours is that these will be in the interests of the publicans who ask for them.

Mr. George: Rubbish.

The PREMIER: Let the hon. member go to the member for Perth and ask him whether he could honestly say that the trade itself has not suggested the nine to nine closing. I say they did. It is for fear of the people demanding something more than the trade was prepared to give that they now want this Bill set aside, and by throwing dust in the eyes of the people, assert that we are passing it because we want to save £6,000. I say the public will readily subscribe that for the purpose of getting a first grip on the trade which the hon. member is protecting so well, and that they will not complain about the expenditure either. We have never changed our views from the very moment when we touched the liquor trade. We came down last session with an emergency Bill. We told this House and the other Chamber that we required that Bill, that it should not interfere with the Licensing Act except when certain emergencies arose. We explained what the circumstances were. We had the courage to do this, and the temperance organisations, backed by some of our own supporters, commenced an agitation in the State to ask us to bring in a Bill introducing the eight to eight opening of hotels as against the six to eleven. We declined to do it because they could not show any emergency such as we thought should arise before taking this course. I say as soon as this can be shown that we are prepared to put that Act into operation. I said that we were prepared to allow the people to decide on this question as to whether the conditions are such that the hours of opening licensed premises shall be shortened, and that Parliament will then give them the

opportunity of submitting a Bill. The public are waiting eagerly for the opportunity of expressing themselves on the proposal. Hon. members who are opposing it here and in another place, always have prevented, and always will prevent, if possible, the public from ever expressing their opinion on the liquor question, because they are, while representing their constituents, more concerned about the publicans, who hold more influence in proportion to the number of electors in a constituency than any other organisation. Thus, they are desirous of protecting those who have been largely responsible for the election of some of these members. Then hon. members in the same breath tell the House and the public that we are pledged to a referendum on the question. There is no need for the hon. member to make any excuse. If the referendum can be taken and the public can give expression to their opinions, then the trade will be sure to suffer. He knows that, and he is thus trying to protect the trade.

Mr. GEORGE: I should have been obliged to the Premier if he had given us more argument and less abuse. We on our side are restrained from replying to the Premier by interjection during the time when he is ranting. We have had to sit down under his castigation, and we will now give him a little of his own back. If the Premier tells us anything at all, he says that he would prefer to lose the Bill.

The Premier: I never mentioned anything about losing the Bill.

Mr. GEORGE: He told us practically that he would prefer to lose the Bill than lose the principles upon which he has been ranting to-night.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that the use of the word "ranting" is scarcely Parliamentary.

Mr. GEORGE: It is found in *Webster*.

The CHAIRMAN: There are many words in *Webster* which are not Parliamentary. There are the words "untrue" and "lie."

Mr. GEORGE: I have not used either of those words.

The CHAIRMAN: They are in *Webster*, but are not Parliamentary. It would be better if the hon. member would refrain from the use of the word I have mentioned.

Mr. GEORGE: The words "ranting" and "ranter" are applied to people who are painfully in earnest. The Premier was painfully in earnest when he was addressing the House. Attempts have been made session after session to deal with what is recognised to be a great evil, that of intemperance. Temperance orators and enthusiasts have been trying all they can to get complete prohibition by one blow. There has been no great reform in the history of the world which has ever been completed at one time. Unionism, which is so vitally connected with the present Government, did not obtain its power by one stroke. It went along step by step until it obtained its present position. The same thing applies to the temperance question. Members who have had to do with elections will know that the extremists, whether on the one side or the other, is taken no notice of, and that it is the quiet man who will help to win an election. It is not the people who are absolute prohibitionists that are going to be of assistance at the polls, and who will be useful in bringing about temperance reform. There are many people in every community who are moderate drinkers. Those are the people that the temperance orators and Parliament have to refer to, if they are going to get a meed of alteration in the conditions which apply to-day. In regard to the hours of opening and closing of hotels, I think it would be far better for the House to take its own responsibility on the question to-day, and then let members go before their electors when the time comes and receive their approbation or disapprobation for their actions. We are in times of stress. The whole fate of the Empire is at stake, and the whole effort of every part of the Empire should be devoted to getting our house into order. We have no right to call upon the people to enter into turmoil and submit to interference with their ordinary avocations.

if by standing to our guns we can bring about a solution of the question. I would not like to see the Bill lost, but I am firmly convinced that if the Attorney General's motion is carried the measure will be lost. The fate of the Bill rests with this Chamber. I ask temperance men, both within and without this Chamber, whether they would rather lose the Bill for the sake of a shibboleth in this time of stress, or get that measure of reform which is represented by the hours nine to nine? When the original Bill dealing with the liquor referendum was introduced, we were led to understand that the referendum would be taken in May next. Now the Attorney General tells us it shall be taken before the end of February. But I want to ask the same question as was put by the member for Mount Margaret. If we believe that this restriction, or any restriction, of hours will be for the general good of the people, why not put it in force at once? Why wait until the end of February? It can be put in force within the next few weeks. Why wait, with a time close at hand during which people are disposed to spend money lavishly and foolishly? The saving of money is the chief excuse we have for this legislation. Delay means that the savings of the people will be wasted in hotels and—

Mr. O'Loughlen: You are the greatest ranter of all.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not care a tuppenny damn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GEORGE: I do not care a tuppenny hang if I am the greatest ranter. I am sorry if I have used a word which must offend.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like the hon. member to confine himself to the question, and I would like to say his speech is remarkably similar to a previous speech and savours of tedious repetition.

Mr. GEORGE: It is rather difficult, when one feels strongly on a subject, to avoid repetition. I fear the Bill may be cast out altogether, which would be a shame, as it means a loss to the State. The Premier—if within the Standing

Orders I may say so—would absolutely rejoice if the Bill were thrown into the waste-paper basket and if he could have the excuse to give to the country that the Legislative Council had blocked reform. The scathing language which he applied to the member for Perth applies, in my opinion, with tenfold force to the Premier himself. If there is any hypocrisy in the matter, it lies with the gentleman who adorns the position of Premier but lacks the courage to state his real opinions to the House and to the country. He wants the Bill thrown out, but is not man enough to say so.

Mr. FOLEY: I have listened with much patience to the member for Murray-Wellington, who, I think, might have "member for froth and fireworks" tacked on to his title. He alleges that we on this side desire the loss of the Bill, in order that we may use that loss as a lever against the Council when we go to the country. I put it to the good sense of this Chamber that if there were any need to use the matter of this Bill against the Council, it would be good-bye to the Upper House. The member for Murray-Wellington said that the Premier ranted. I have never known intemperate speakers on temperance to do anything, either inside or outside this Chamber, to advance temperance reform. At present they are trying to put a good face on the matter because they are being pushed in the metropolitan area. They say to those who push them, "We are doing our utmost to help you." But during my experience of this Chamber I have not known them to further the temperance cause, nor to use arguments of a temperate nature. The proposal to fix the hours from 9 to 9 emanated solely from the liquor trade in the metropolitan area, and that trade regulated the trade or endeavoured to do so, throughout the State. As far as the taking of the referendum is concerned, when the Bill was previously before us, I said that we were shirking our responsibilities in not setting out the hours during which liquor should be sold, but that if the hours were to be stated I would not vote in favour

of 9 to 9. The metropolitan members are not sincere over this matter. I know of no metropolitan member who has ever addressed a meeting on this question.

Mr. ROBINSON: On a point of order, I challenge the statement of the hon. member. I am a metropolitan member and I have repeatedly spoken on this question at public meetings. The hon. member must therefore withdraw the statement in regard to me.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Leonora did not make a statement about the member for Canning.

Mr. Robinson: I am a metropolitan member.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Canning considers that the statement reflects on him and therefore I must ask the member for Leonora to withdraw the statement.

Mr. FOLEY: I will withdraw it. The member for Murray-Wellington says that he is willing to trust the people, but when it comes to the dying hours of the session, when hon. members opposite can see something else ahead, when they are using all the powers they possess in the direction of changing their places to this side of the House, it is easy to see that they are using all those powers for that purpose alone. So far as I am concerned, I do not care on which side I am sitting. I would prefer to see the referendum proposal submitted in the form in which we had it in the first measure, that is, to give every member of the community the right to say what should obtain in their different districts taking into consideration the local conditions. Every portion of the State should have the right to say what the hours for the sale of liquor should be. When the Bill was previously before the House, the hon. member for Murray-Wellington did not express the same views as he expressed to-night. Perhaps that was because the eyes of the temperance people in the metropolitan area were centered on him and on all the members of the metropolitan area, but if there is to be an election

in the near future there will be questions of graver moment to answer than this one.

*[Hon. M. F. Troy took the Chair.]*

Mr. THOMAS: I feel that some measure of heat is justified on a matter of this kind. It is not a small question; it is probably one of the biggest questions Western Australia has to deal with to-day. I feel so strongly on the matter that I am prepared to take a definite stand upon the principles I have advocated, no matter what the results may be. I am of the opinion that the object sought to be served is to side-track the purpose of the temperance movement in Western Australia.

Mr. Smith: What evidence have you on that point?

*[12 o'clock midnight.]*

Mr. THOMAS: My own intelligence tells me that if we have the closing hours from 9 to 9 the reform effected will be of a very unsatisfactory character. I have been told that in Melbourne, where something similar is in operation, the hotel keepers, to get over the difficulty, have offered increased inducements to the people in the shape of providing the working men with a free and easy bar, so that, instead of going home before tea and returning later, the working men go straight to the hotel, where they remain until the closing hour, with the result that, instead of it being a legitimate reform, the conditions are little better to-day than they were before.

Mr. Allen: Suppose the people voted 9 to 9, the same thing would apply?

*[Mr. McDowall resumed the Chair.]*

Mr. THOMAS: Once the people have voted on a referendum the responsibility will rest with the people. It is only logical to assume that, having expressed their opinion, whatever the result, they will honourably abide by it. No matter what hour we may fix in Parliament

there will always be open the charge that this piece of legislation has been forced on the people. Where is the wrong in giving the people an opportunity of expressing their sovereign will upon a question of vital importance to every man, woman and child in the country? The one objection is the argument of abject fear of allowing the people to take a hand. That explains the opposition to the referendum. It has been suggested that the Premier is not in earnest. What evidence of insincerity has he shown? He has laid down the principle that every Labour man holds dear, namely the right of giving the people the supreme power to govern themselves.

Mr. Robinson: Then you think a great deal more of that than of the liquor question?

Mr. THOMAS: We are told that if we do not accept this sop the Bill will be lost altogether. If the Bill is thrown out by another place, upon their shoulders will rest the responsibility.

Mr. Bolton: It will not be thrown out.

Mr. THOMAS: I am prepared to do my duty, and will take the responsibility of my action. Those who are so disloyal to the people as to refuse them this opportunity will have to accept the responsibility of the course they adopt. If ever there was a time when the people were crying aloud for an opportunity to speak for themselves it is now. I appeal to hon. members to allow party politics to sink in the face of this great problem affecting the lives and happiness of every man and woman in the country. If we cannot rise above bickering on a question such as this, the sooner we are sent back whence we came, the better.

The Minister for Mines: The Committee to-night has been like a blackfellow's corroboree.

Mr. THOMAS: From Lord Kitchener and Mr. Lloyd George, down to the poorest citizen in Western Australia, the cry has gone forth throughout the Empire for some reform that will help us through our great struggle. While that appeal is being made we find members throwing insults across the Chamber and accusing

others of being insincere. Legislators have the power to say to the people "Take it in your own hands and declare what the reform shall be." We are asking for some paltry miserable portion of the great measure which will enable Western Australia to become the grand young country it ought to be.

Mr. Gilchrist: It has taken you four years to remember your principles.

Mr. THOMAS: Two great reforms I have advocated during the whole of my political career are free education and a sober people. I am no wowser. I believe in a reasonable participation in the good things of life but, if my moderate indulgence is going to deprive mothers and little children of decent food and clothing, any little thing I might have to give away is not to be considered in the balance against the good it will bring to others. I have seen much of what has been done by the liquor traffic. I bear no grudge against anyone in the trade. It has grown up under the sanction of the law, and the individual who obeys the law should not be blamed by anyone. If this Bill is lost, and the people do not get what they are fighting for, only one section of individuals will be to blame, and that is Parliament. It will be the greatest blot on the Parliamentary history of this State if, with our opportunity and with public opinion ripe, nay clamouring, for the opportunity to effect a reform, we turn that grand enthusiasm aside and render it nugatory. If we but let public opinion decide, I should be prepared to ask the people to vote honestly and squarely as conscience dictates. This is one of the big problems facing not only Western Australia but other countries. If the reform is denied, it will not be long before the clamour will become so loud that no member will dare to refuse to the people the voice and the opportunity they demand. My firm conviction is that the people would vote for the hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and this reform would lay the foundations of a great prosperity that no other one measure advocated could possibly bring about.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The member for Gascoyne interjected that it had taken the member for Bunbury four years to remember his principles. I would ask how long has it taken the member for Gascoyne to forget his principles. A few years ago, when he held the position of clergyman, he would not have given expression to the opinions he has voiced here. What right have members of the Legislature to fix the hours for hotel trading? Amongst the members of the community there are great differences of opinion as to what those hours should be, and how can we ascertain the view of the majority other than by a referendum? The proposed referendum has behind it everyone of those influential people who supported the 8 to 8 movement. The very men who to-day advocate stipulating the hours in the Bill at that time opposed the 8 to 8 movement. Now, when they realise that the referendum principle has grown and because they are fearful that even shorter hours might be carried they urge that Parliament should do its duty and stipulate the hours in the Bill. The movement for the referendum proposal is just as widely advocated and endorsed to-day as was the movement for the 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. question. The people of the State have expressed their opinion right from Cue to Albany. This motion which I will read has been carried by enormous concourses of people. The motion states that in view of the admitted necessity of conserving our national resources and also of the benefits which have accrued wherever sales of liquor have been restricted these people respectfully urge the Government not to close the present session of Parliament before an Act embodying the principles contained in the Sale of Liquor Regulation Bill is placed upon the Statute-book, giving the people of the State the right to determine for themselves on the day of the next Province elections the reduction of hours of liquor trading, which they are prepared to support and enforce in their respective denominations. That resolution supporting this referendum proposal has

been carried by the following bodies. There were 25 Methodist churches, 14 Congregational churches, eight Baptist churches, seven congregations of the Church of Christ, three Presbyterian, 13 Anglican, five I.O.G.T. lodges, five I.O.R. lodges, four branches of the W.C.T.U., four of the Women's Service Guild, three of the Sons of Temperance, and one branch of the L.O.L. This resolution had been submitted to the churches at their evening services, where fairly large congregations have been assembled, and has been carried by these congregations from Cue to Albany, showing clearly that the people of the State are behind the Government in their desire to give them the right to express their views upon this liquor question. There must be some ulterior motive behind many of the expressions of opinion we have heard this evening. Some attempt is being made to prevent the people from expressing themselves on this question. They are not likely to be gulled, however, by the opinions of people whose past actions they well remember, because they know full well that those members have never previously expressed themselves in favour of temperance reform. These members now try to place contumely upon this Government, because I believe they have knowledge that another place is attempting to wreck this measure.

Mr. George: You have no right to say that.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I do not endeavour to place a halo around my head like the hon. member does.

Mr. George: I do not think the hon. member is in order in referring to my halo. It is my own private property; he could not wear it if he tried.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member is out of order.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I want to assure members that people of the State and of the metropolitan area particularly, are watching the actions of the Legislature at the present time in this matter, and that all the sophistry members can bring to bear is not likely to gull the people, be-

cause the people know who are their friends on this question.

Question put and passed, the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 2.—Clause 15: Omit the first two paragraphs and insert the following:—  
 "If at the commencement of this Act any licensed premises are held under lease, the lessee shall be allowed by the lessor a proportionate reduction of the rent of the premises, in the same ratio to the full rent as the reduction in hours bears to the time during which the premises might have been lawfully open for the sale of liquor except for this Act, and a like proportionate return of a part of the premium (if any) paid by the lessee to the lessor, apportioned to the period during which this Act is in force: Provided that if any lessee or lessor considers himself unduly penalised by the incidence of this section he may require the question of adjustment of rent or rent and premium to be submitted to arbitration under the provisions of 'The Arbitration Act, 1895,' and by an award to be made thereunder the rent or rent and premium to be payable by the lessee or sub-lessee during and in respect of such period shall be at such reduced rate as in the circumstances of the case may be deemed reasonable, and the award shall be binding upon the parties and final." Amend the last paragraph of the clause by adding to the interpretation of "lessee" "and also a mortgagee of a lease or sub-lease," and by adding to the interpretation of "lessor" "and also a mortgagee of the lessor or of the land comprised in the lease":

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move—

*That the amendment be not agreed to.*

Mr. George called attention to the state of the House: bells rung and a quorum formed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	26
Noes	..	..	..	7
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	19
				—

#### AYER.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Angwin	Mr. E. B. Johnston
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Varyard
Mr. Hellmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. O'Loughlin

(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Connolly	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. George	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Gilchrist
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller.)

Question thus passed, the Council's amendment not agreed to.

On motions by the ATTORNEY GENERAL the following amendments were not agreed to:—

No. 3.—Strike out Clause 16.

No. 4.—New clause: Insert the following to stand as No. 2:—"For the purposes of this Act 'Licensed premises,' in section ninety-seven of the Licensing Act, 1911, means premises in respect of which a license under the Licensing Act, 1911, has been granted and is in force, and includes State hotels, refreshment rooms, and restaurant cars, a vessel for which a packet license is held, and registered clubs. 'Licensee' means any person holding or entitled to exercise a license under the Licensing Act, 1911, or granted by the Commissioner of Railways authorising the sale of liquor in any railway refreshment room or restaurant car, and the secretary of any registered club holding a certificate under the Licensing Act, 1911. 'Liquor' means intoxicating liquor within the meaning of the Licensing Act, 1911."

No. 5.—New clause: Insert the following to stand as No. 3:—"Section ninety-seven of the Licensing Act, 1911, is amended by striking out the word 'six,' in line six thereof, and inserting the word 'nine,' and by striking out the word 'eleven,' in line seven thereof, and inserting the word 'nine.'"

No. 6—The Title: After the word "to," in line one, insert the words "amend the Licensing Act, 1911, and to."

A committee consisting of the Attorney General, the member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) and the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) drew up reasons for not agreeing to the amendments made by the Legislative Council.

Reasons adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

#### BILL—PROHIBITION OF TREATING ON LICENSED PREMISES.

Received from the Council and, on motion by Hon. H. B. Lefroy, read a first time.

#### BILL — METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council, and on motion by Mr. George, read a first time.

##### *Second Reading.*

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [12.53] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is necessary as a check on the fleecing under the principal Act of the property owners of Perth and Fremantle. Hon. members are aware that the property owners have been fairly well fleeced by the department in the interests, I presume, of various trade unionists, who have had to do the work. The Minister for Works says this will not stop the fleecing. I am aware that it may not. However, we have there an admission by the Minister for Works that the fleecing by the department has occurred, and I trust to the sense of members to see that the system is stopped. The Bill will ensure the owner or occupier receiving from the department a bill of charges.

The Premier: They do not get it from any private tradesmen.

Mr. GEORGE: But they do. At any rate, if the property owners cannot get it from the private tradesmen, are the Government so afraid of the work of

their own department that they will refuse to the person who has to pay an opportunity of seeing the items on which the demand is made? I thought the Government stood for honesty, to see that the people of the State were not fleeced. The Bill merely provides that when the Government do the work the owner shall have the right to scrutinise the items for which he is charged. A case was recently brought before us in which £50 had been charged for work of the value of about £40. I myself know an instance in which £260 was charged by the department for work for which £145 would have been perhaps a fair thing. And there was the utmost difficulty in getting details from the department. It required continued applications, backed by some influence, to enable the owner in question to see what he was being charged for. The Minister for Mines, if he chose, could give some instances of the extraordinary number of persons who have been unnecessarily engaged in the department. Up to within the last month or so, there were 50 or 60 officials taking the time of some 600 employees. If the department has gone to that extent in regard to timekeepers, goodness knows how far it has gone in respect to clerical assistance. It is all very well for Ministers to say that if a bill of particulars is given it will lead to trouble. Would not that be better than cheating the property-owner for whom the work has been done? Seeing that the Government are authorised by special Act of Parliament to do the work, they ought to take pride in seeing that the people for whom the work is done are not overcharged. In fact, the Government ought to do the work more cheaply than can private tradesmen; because the Government are not, or should not be, out to make profits in connection with the sewerage scheme, the object of which is to provide improved sanitary arrangements so that there may be better health conditions, and less disease in the community. While this is praiseworthy and desirable, there should be no necessity for it to be turned into a means for extortion without giving the people an opportunity to check the charges by in-



sisting on the men recording the times they have worked on the various jobs.

The Minister for Works: Why do not you talk reasonably?

Mr. GEORGE: If the Government will pass the Bill, I shall have nothing further to say. I take it from the intimation of the Minister for Works that the Government are favourable.

Mr. Foley: The Minister can speak for himself only.

Mr. GEORGE: I move—

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

On motion by the Minister for Mines debate adjourned.

1 o'clock, a.m.

## BILL—WAR COUNCIL.

### *Council's amendment.*

Returned from the Council with an amendment which was now considered.

### *In Committee.*

Hon. M. F. Troy in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4.—After the word "council" at the end of Subclause 1 add "or its agent":

The PREMIER: I move—

*That the amendment be agreed to.*

It will enable us to appoint the mayors of municipalities and chairmen of roads boards to grant authority as agents for the council to persons to hold functions for raising funds.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I do not think that gives any authority.

The PREMIER: I think it does.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If we have power to appoint an agent, is it advisable to give such agent authority to grant permission to any person? The idea is that the War Council should issue the permits.

Mr. Thomas: Representatives would be needed in every country town.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But the authority should be sought from the War Council. The amendment would give the power of the council to an agent.

The Minister for Mines: It could be withdrawn if it was abused.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is beside the question.

The Premier: The brains of your party in another place thought it necessary.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is always insulting. We do not want agents to grant these permits.

The Minister for Works: They will be in a fix if they do not have agents.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The War Council should grant the permits. The amendment is a mistake.

Mr. CARPENTER: The amendment is a very useful addition to the Bill. When the second reading was before the House, I had an amendment of the kind in mind. It would be impossible for the central council to fairly judge whether a person should be entitled to take up a collection, but if the mayor of the corporation or chairman of the roads board or other responsible person were charged with the duty of making inquiry and had power to grant or withhold the permit, it would remove an obstacle which might otherwise prevent many people from carrying on very useful work. Without the amendment it might be difficult for anyone who wanted to do so to raise money for war purposes.

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

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

## BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE

(No. 2).

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

## BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Council's Message.*

Message received from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 1, 3, 5, and 6, but that in respect to amendment No. 4 it proposed an alternative amendment.

## BILL—PRICE OF GOODS.

*All Stages.*

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

*Second Reading.*

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [1.12 a.m.] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is to provide for the appointment of a Royal Commission for the purpose of fixing, if necessary, the maximum or minimum prices of the necessaries of life. The provisions of this Bill are almost on all fours with the provisions contained in the Control of trade in War Time Act.

Mr. Smith: How many members do you propose to appoint as a Royal Commission?

The PREMIER: We have not decided that yet. Would the hon. member like to know who they would be?

Mr. Smith: Yes.

The PREMIER: The hon. member's attitude on the Bill is likely to be decided by the question as to who will form the personnel of that commission.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why do you suggest this?

The PREMIER: Because the other Bill was lost on personal grounds and not on its merits. Some of the additional provisions as compared with the old Bill are to be found in Subclause 2 of Clause 3 which provides as follows:—

In the exercise of the powers conferred by this section the Governor may—(a) fix and declare different maximum prices, or maximum and minimum prices, according to differences in quality or description of the necessaries of life, or in the quantity sold.

The Governor may, of course, on the recommendation of the Commission only fix both the maximum and the minimum prices. That I think is essential. This is where a weakness was found previously. These prices can only be fixed according to the difference in the quality of the goods concerned and not as previously, one price being fixed which

would apply to any quality or definition of the necessaries of life or the quantity sold. Previously, a difficulty was found in fixing the price of goods which were sold in huge quantities, and of settling the difference between these goods and goods which were sold in small quantities. We now under this Bill will have power to fix the maximum and minimum price according to the quantity as well as the quality of the goods.

Mr. Smith: You would stop a man from reducing his price?

The PREMIER: Yes, does the hon. member disagree with that?

Mr. Smith: Yes. I might be stopped from reducing the price of the *Sunday Times* to one penny.

The PREMIER: I think I did admit to-night that this newspaper was a necessary of life. I do not think that it is likely the price will be fixed merely from the point of view of the consumer, the public, but also from the point of view of leaving a fair margin of profit to the producer, otherwise there would be no trade at all. There are occasions when it is necessary to fix both prices for the purpose of protecting the man who is producing in this State against the middle man, and at the same time thus giving proper and fair consideration to the consumer. We do not want to fix the price merely for the purpose of protecting the interests of the consumer but also for the purpose of protecting the interests of the producer. After all the producer and the consumer do not come directly into contact with each other. Unless we have the control we are asking for we shall probably be handing over the producer to the tender mercies of the middle man in our desire to protect the consumer. This would, of course not be desirable. We do not want to do any injury to anyone in the community. Both the producer and the consumer must receive consideration at the hands of any Government. We propose to fix and declare different prices for different parts of the State, and vary any prices previously fixed but so as to apply

only to future transactions, and that in fixing any price to do so relatively to such standards of measurement, weight, capacity or otherwise as the Governor, on the recommendation of the Commission may think proper. That is an alteration of the powers previously granted under the Control of Trade in War Time Act. In Clauses 4, which is practically a penal clause, it is provided that—

No person having in his possession or power any necessities of life in excess of personal requirements shall refuse to sell and deliver the same to any person on demand, and on payment or tender of the maximum price so fixed. Penalty: One thousand pounds or imprisonment for not exceeding 12 months. (2) If any person sells or offers for sale any necessary of life at a price higher than the maximum price, or at a lower price than the minimum price fixed under this Act, he shall be guilty of an offence, and liable on conviction to a penalty not exceeding £100, and in case of sale shall be liable to refund to the purchaser the difference between the fixed maximum price and the higher price at which the necessary of life was sold.

The only other alteration is in Clause 9 "Seizure of necessary commodities withheld from sale." That clause gives the Commission power to seize any necessities of life which are being stored or withheld from sale, after report to the Governor and by approval of the Governor-in-Council, that is, after allowing for minimum quantities for the use of the holder.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is that new?

The PREMIER: Yes. It is also provided in Clause 6—

That no person shall buy up or store the necessities of life with intent to raise the prices thereof or to prevent the free circulation thereof.

At the same time we want to have provision not merely to be able to enforce a penalty in the event of their doing that but the right to seize, which will be of

more value than providing a penalty if they store up necessities of life.

Mr. Smith: The penalty is £1,000.

The PREMIER: Not under that clause.

Mr. Smith: Do you want to make it the death penalty?

The PREMIER: The alternative, 12 months' imprisonment, might mean death. After all, though, that is the maximum. The hon. member will recognise that the penalty should be sufficient to cause the law to be respected. In my opinion, no penalty short of deportation meets the case of a man who in times like the present deliberately and wilfully corners necessities or restricts trade. I do not think the hon. member will meet with support in his objection to the penalties provided. I have mentioned all the departures from previous legislation on this subject, except one as regards the duration of the measure. It is to remain in force until the 31st December, 1916, subject to a proviso that—

if a resolution is passed by both Houses of Parliament to the effect that the Act shall continue for a further period expressed in such resolution, this Act shall continue in force accordingly.

The object of the proviso is to do away with the necessity for the introduction of a Bill in the event of Parliament deeming it advisable to continue this measure for a further period. I move—

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

Mr. JAMES GARDINER (Irwin) [1.22 a.m.]: This Bill is the outcome of a conference held here to-day. As personally I had rather a large share in inducing all concerned to put the measure through, it is due from me to offer thanks to the Government for its introduction. The great difference between this measure and previous legislation on the subject is that it provides for the fixing of minimum prices. That was suggested by Mr. Colebatch, who convinced me on the point.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Mr. Colebatch, in conversation with me, said that he had not approved of this Bill at all.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: All I can say is that I have no doubt what Mr. Colebatch told the leader of the Opposition is perfectly correct. Mr. Colebatch had not seen the Bill, so the statement quoted by the leader of the Opposition is technically correct. On the question of the minimum, Mr. Colebatch converted me. He said he wanted to see the farmer protected, and added, "If you fix only the maximum you do not protect the farmer, because nobody would be prevented from selling to a miller under the maximum." I may mention that we were referring to the wheat problem more particularly. If a minimum is fixed, the miller will not be able to purchase under that minimum.

Mr. Smith: What nonsense! A discount could be allowed.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I will not enter into all the intricacies which may be resorted to by men who want to evade the law. I am sorry the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) was not present at the conference. Had he been there, he would have sensed the desire of everyone present to see this legislation reintroduced. The position is that the farmer is getting here 3s. 8d. for his wheat, while the Commonwealth sold the first shipment at something like 4s. 10½d. The miller is charging a big price for his flour, and the consumer is paying an infinitely higher price for his bread than he would otherwise pay. If the Commission proposed by this Bill fixed the price of wheat at 5s. and then fixed a reasonable selling price for flour, the price of bread would still come down, and the producer and the consumer would be reaping material benefits. It is a thing that has been forced on this community. We see the lion in the path. I think it was generally understood this morning, though not explicitly stated, that the Commission under this Bill would consist of one man. However, the Premier did not make any definite announcement to that effect.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Commissioner would have enormous power.

The Premier: Only power to recommend.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: This is a Bill of vital importance at the present juncture to the farmers of this State. I say without the slightest fear of contradiction that we would sacrifice a good number of things to see the measure become law. Therefore I have great pleasure in supporting the second reading, and as regards another place I feel sure, from remarks made here this morning, that the Bill will be endorsed almost unanimously.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [1.27 a.m.]: I have no desire to pass offhand a Bill of this drastic nature. I want some time to consider it.

The Premier: It is the same as the expired Act, practically.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is very much altered. I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	26
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	16
				—

#### Ayes.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Smith
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Thomson
Mr. George	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Robinson	Mr. Gilchrist

(Teller)

#### Noes.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. E. B. Johnston
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Mullaney
Mr. Collier	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Foley	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Jas. Gardiner	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Green	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hellmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Hudson	
Mr. Johnson	

(Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [1.33 a.m.]: I must emphasise my disapproval of legislation of this description being introduced to a fagged House at this hour of the morning. I cannot understand why we should rush import-

ant legislation like this through merely because the Premier wants to go to Albany to-morrow.

The Premier: No, we are going to sit to-morrow.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We need not sit to-morrow; we can sit on the next day and next week, but for Heaven's sake do not work members to death. We have not had time to read this Bill yet and there are vital alterations in it, and because the member for Irwin says it is the suggestion made this morning at the conference held in this Chamber, we are to swallow it holus bolus. When we first started the innovation of attempting to regulate the prices of the necessities of life when war broke out we took on an experiment, but at the same time, under the extraordinary circumstances and not knowing what might eventuate we agreed to give those extraordinary powers on the advice of a commission. Everyone knows what was the result of the passing of that legislation. We appointed a commission. I was asked to nominate one gentleman, and I exercised that power at the invitation of the Premier. We know what the result was. Grave exception was taken to my nominee.

The Premier: By whom?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: By the public.

The Premier: Not by the public.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: By a small section of the public. We all agree that that Commission did good work. It did some good by reason of the moral influence it exercised over traders who held stocks. When we had had experience of fifteen or sixteen months of war, we would have been chary about passing the original legislation: we could have gone through very well under ordinary conditions. There was no crying need for that legislation. Experience of fourteen months of war showed me that we could have done without such legislation, but having the legislation there on the statute book, I was prepared to let it continue on. It was not doing harm inasmuch as the Commission had not exercised the drastic powers they possessed. I doubt very

much whether this Bill gives those powers.

The Premier: I thought you had not read the Bill?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have only glanced through it.

The Premier: Is it not a fact that you have compared it with the old measure?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have not done so. The member for Murray-Wellington compared it and drew my attention to one or two matters, for instance the minimum price, and he showed me an alteration in the title. I maintain, and it must be held if it is challenged, that this Bill is essentially legislation which we have already attempted to continue. I think we are wasting time in discussing it because the Upper House will throw it out.

Mr. James Gardiner: Is that what you are going to do? Are you going to raise that point?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not think the hon. member has any right to bully me. He can clearly understand what I have said.

Mr. James Gardiner: Are you going to raise that point?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I will not answer the hon. member's question. I have had the Premier on to me and now the member for Irwin is starting to bully me. If I answer "Yes," what will the hon. member say? If I answer "No" what will he say?

Mr. James Gardiner: So long as I know.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member can find out. If he wants to ask me a question he must do so in a respectful tone of voice.

Mr. James Gardiner: You have never known me to be discourteous in this House.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member was discourteous to me a few minutes ago.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member must not try to bully me. I will not be bullied. The Government brought down this Bill and asked us at five minutes' notice to consider it. I am not going

to raise the question as to whether this is legally before us or not, but I am afraid the question will be raised in another House and I feel, justly, too, so far as they are concerned. I am not going to raise the point because I supported the continuation of similar legislation. Therefore I am quite prepared to let this Bill go through. But I am not prepared to accept a Bill which is going to appoint or empower the Governor in Council to appoint a commission of one as the Government have stated here.

The Premier: No, I did not.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The member for Irwin did and he is the mouthpiece of the Government at present.

Mr. James Gardiner: That is high-class criticism.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is very effective criticism. I am not prepared to agree to a commission of one being appointed to recommend the Governor-in-Council to exercise such drastic powers as we have here in the Bill.

Mr. James Gardiner: That was the objection of the Upper House.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I will go further and say I will not agree to a commission of even three to fix the maximum and minimum prices on anything. I pointed out the danger before.

The Premier: Danger to whom?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: To the public generally.

The Premier: To the exploiters.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, to the citizens of Western Australia. No man can satisfactorily fix the maximum and minimum prices. You are going to hang up the farmers with their wheat on their hands. You are going to force them into the shipping scheme of the Commonwealth and the deferred payments which constitute a portion of that scheme. Why this everlasting wish to interfere with the ordinary trend of trade? Have not the farmers and everyone else connected with the commercial life of the State been able to protect their own interests up to the present? Why this cry that we must have this fixing of maximum and minimum prices? Because, forsooth, a committee that sat here this morning, on the recom-

mendation of the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner) said it was necessary. And he has now dragged Mr. Colebatch into it. Mr. Colebatch told me this in conversation: "I have not agreed at all to the Bill. We discussed it. I did not bind myself to anything." Why, then, should Mr. Colebatch's name be dragged in?

The Premier: I suppose he has come to some arrangement with you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am free to come to some arrangement with any hon. member, am I not? I have seen the Premier rushing backwards and forwards to confer with his supporters on many occasions. I have been as free from that sort of thing as any one in the Chamber. Just the same, I reserve to myself the right to take any action I think fit, without asking the permission of the Premier. I will confer, if necessary, but I seldom do so with any member of another place. Especially on a measure of this class would I be justified in conferring. It is not a party measure, yet I am bullied by the member for Irwin because I show the slightest hesitation in passing it out of hand. We thought we had gone to a great extent when we granted power to fix the maximum price of the necessities of life shortly after war broke out. I say that the danger is increased tenfold by inserting the provision for the fixing of minimum prices. The complaints made against Mr. George Rae—

The Premier: By the exploiters.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Who are the exploiters? There is nothing in the country to exploit. The Premier has exploited everybody and everything, and there is now nothing left. The section of the community that took exception to Mr. Rae's actions was a small one, admittedly. Some hon. members took exception. I am convinced that some of them have since discovered they were wrong. But the exceptions taken to Mr. Rae's actions under that Act were nothing as compared to the exceptions which will be taken to the actions of the proposed single commissioner if he has to fix the minimum price, as well as the maximum. His

task will be an impossible one. Once we begin to interfere with the natural channels of commerce and build up fictitious obstacles, as proposed in the Bill, we are courting trouble. The reason we did not have more trouble with the old commission was because of their exceeding moderation. If the Bill is to pass at all I want this provision for fixing the minimum struck out. Why should I be prevented from selling anything I have as cheaply as I like? If it is necessary to have a restriction on maximum prices in war time, let us have it, but do not let us prevent anybody from selling cheaply to the consumer. Why should the consumer be penalised? The member for Irwin said the millers are going to exploit the farmer, that they will not give him value for his wheat. But the farmer has no need to sell to the miller. He can ship under the Government's scheme if he cannot get a reasonable price as compared with London parity. And, at any rate, not all millers are trying to exploit the farmer. I have heard of prices being offered which are very fair considering the price which can be obtained on the London market to-day.

Mr. George: Some of the millers exploited the Government in connection with the gristing.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, the Government have entered into all sorts of arrangements and we do not know what the results will be: yet we are asked to push through this legislation and take on a serious risk. There should be time to consider such a measure. We should not be asked to rush it through because two or three members at a meeting advocated it or suggested it. I think Mr. Colebatch suggested it as a matter for inquiry and did not advocate it. I do not know whether he is going to support the Bill.

The Premier: Yes, you do.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know what attitude he is going to adopt towards the Bill. Why should we be asked to put through this drastic legislation and fix minimum as well as maximum prices for everything—because anything can be declared a

necessary of life subject to a penalty of £1,000 or imprisonment for 12 months—merely because one or two hon. members have said farmers are likely to be exploited? We are all exploited at different times.

The Premier: Some all the time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have been connected with a flour mill to my sorrow and loss on more than one occasion, and I have been exploited by the farmer. I have had to pay too much for the wheat and I have received too little for the flour, and there has been a loss. I daresay if we could examine the transactions of the flour millers in this State, most of them would be found to have had the same experience.

Mr. George: Those who gristed under the Government agreement did not; they got £7,000 or £8,000.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Ministers seem to think that any private individual engaged in trade in this State is bound to be exploiting his customers and making a huge fortune. Surely their own experience of the enterprises they have launched on behalf of the people of this State and the disastrous results of those enterprises should be sufficient to convince them that all those statements about the enormous amount of profit people make in their commercial transactions are more or less a bogey and cannot be substantiated by facts. To appoint this Royal Commission would be to put terrible responsibilities on the shoulders of one man to have to recommend to the Governor to exercise the powers conferred under the measure. I would not take the billet on for £5,000 a year; no money would pay me for it, because I should be sure to raise up a host of enemies and cause extreme dissatisfaction with some section, if not a very large section of the public. There are certain new portions in the Bill, but the main one is that to which I have referred. The penalty strikes me as being very excessive. I do not know whether it is the same amount as was provided in the previous legislation, but it seems excessive, especially when the Royal Commissioner is to be empowered to

prescribe the minimum price of goods. This Bill will take away from the farmer his privilege of realising on his crop. If wheat is declared under the measure—and evidently the Bill has been suggested on the score of wheat—and say the maximum price is 6s. 6d. and the minimum price 4s. 6d., in what position will the unfortunate farmer be who wants the cash? The miller will say "I cannot pay that price because I shall be unable to sell the flour at a profit," and who is the expert who shall be able to say what profit the miller should get on his wheat? Is the Royal Commissioner to decide what the middle man shall receive, what the baker shall receive for his bread and what the retail man shall have? Who could get sufficient information to enable him to decide between all these different interests?

Mr. George: A valuable member of our party.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government, backed up by the member for Irwin, are asking too much and this Bill should not be hurried through. It should not be thrust upon us and, rather than that it should be thrust upon us, I shall vote against it. If we cannot have time to consider a measure of such importance and to enable those interested to see what we propose to legislate, so that they can bring their more matured views and accurate opinions to bear for our enlightenment and guidance, I shall vote against the second reading. It is distinctly unfair to put members in such a position that they must accept a Bill of this description willy-nilly. I hope members will not tolerate this sort of thing.

*Speaker's Ruling.*

Mr. SPEAKER [1.57]: The question as to whether this Bill is in order has not been raised in this House, but it has been hinted at rather freely. It is not my desire to court the question being raised, but it may be taken in another place and the Bill may be rejected there on the ground that it is the same in substance as a Bill which has previously been

rejected this session. In the time at my disposal, I have gone into the Bill and undoubtedly the subject is the same as the Control of Trade in War Time Continuance Bill but the substance of the Bill is not the same; this Bill is a new method of dealing with the same subject.

Mr. George: The same wording.

Mr. SPEAKER: We may approach a subject in a dozen different ways by a dozen different Bills which, though dealing with the same subject, may not be the same in substance. I had occasion to give a ruling on this point when the Esperance Northwards Railway Bill was before the House. I admitted that Bill and ruled it in order. The Bill was rejected by another place on the ground that it was the same in substance as a measure which had already been defeated that session, but when a few days later a second Land and Income Tax Bill was introduced, the earlier one having been rejected in the same session, the Upper House admitted it. The course I am following on this occasion is consistent so far as this House is concerned. What may happen in another place I do not know because, whereas the Esperance Northwards Railway Bill was rejected, the Land and Income Tax Bill, to which in my opinion there were greater objections, was admitted.

Mr. George: This is exactly the same wording.

Mr. SPEAKER: When my attention was directed to the matter on the first occasion I quoted several authorities and it might be of advantage to repeat them at this stage—

When it becomes necessary to institute a comparison between the different provisions of two Bills, which are already drawn, it may appear that, although intended for the same purpose, and consequently "of the same substance," and "of the same argument and matter," in one sense, they nevertheless differ so essentially in the mode and means by which that purpose is to be effected, as to be in substance different Bills. In such a case the judgment of the House



against one of the Bills, that is, against effecting a particular object in a particular manner, ought not to preclude it from entertaining the other, which proposed to effect the same object in a different manner.

These are the words of authorities I gave as supporting my decision on that occasion, and after the lapse of time I see no reason to depart from that decision which, in my opinion, was a sound one. The question was again raised by Mr. Nanson on the Land and Income Tax Bill which had been rejected by the Upper House during the same session. I gave there a precedent which I had discerned in the Votes and Proceedings of the British House of Commons. I said—

I find that every recognised authority supports the decision I have arrived at. I have looked up the Votes and Proceedings of the British House of Commons, and I find actual incidents where there has not been that distinction which can be found in this Bill, and yet the British House of Commons has ratified an Act where a difference has constituted little or no distinction. In the House of Commons a Bill to impose a duty on leather was proposed. It was rejected by a majority, and so by the usual order of the House of Commons should not be offered again during that session, but after a brief time the same duty was proposed with this variation, that instead of a duty on leather it was proposed that a duty should be imposed on tanned hides and skins. This measure was passed by the House of Commons even in defiance of that objection which has been referred to this evening.

I am guided by our Standing Orders, though in the interpretation of them recourse is had to the application of similar rules in the Parliaments of the British Empire. I find instances there in which a question of this kind can have so little a difference as to make it difficult to determine the distinction.

Mr. George: There is absolutely no distinction at all here.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is there any difference?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am enabled to make use of the words of the hon. leader of the Opposition when he said, speaking to the Bill, "There are important and vital alterations." There is a most important principle embodied in this Bill, that of fixing the minimum as well as the maximum price. I shall be consistent in this matter and admit the Bill. The time may arrive, however, when a Bill may be introduced where the distinction is not so clear as it is in this case, and then the Speaker's position will be a most difficult one. Every question must, however, be considered on its merits.

Mr. George: I have taken the trouble to compare both the 1914 and 1915 measures with this, and I find that the only difference is the insertion of the word "minimum."

The Premier: What is the matter with your leader? He says there is a vital alteration in this Bill.

Mr. George: If Mr. Speaker will take these measures and compare them he will find that they are practically identical with the exception that in Clause 3 of this measure the words "maximum or minimum" are made use of, whereas the other Bills simply mentioned the maximum price. When we look into the second section of Clause 3, Subsection (a) we find that the same thing occurs there. In Clause 4 the maximum price is inserted where it is not inserted in the other Bill. This alteration may be justified from the point of view of the Government saying that the other Bill has been thrown out and they may, by a subterfuge, get this Bill passed through. I do not care very much as to whether the Bill is passed or not, but I do care about there being consistency in regard to the rules which should govern this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. George: I do not intend to find fault with your ruling, Sir. I am merely pointing out certain phases of the matter for your information. I do not intend to discuss the Bill at all. I merely enter my protest against the bringing forward

by the Government of a Bill which is so palpably a subterfuge.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is discussing my ruling. When I said I was not too clear about it, I desired to warn the House that the time may arrive when the distinction may be more doubtful than it is in this case and when this ruling may be quoted. There is a distinction, and a vital one, in this Bill, and the ruling which I am giving now is borne out by the authorities which I resorted to on a former occasion. There is another reference I desire to make. It is a passage from *May*, and is as follows:--

It is also possible, in other ways, so far to vary the character of a motion, as to withdraw it from the operation of the rule. Thus, in the session of 1845, no less than five distinct motions were made upon the subject of opening letters at the post office, under warrants from the Secretary of State. They all varied in form and matter, so far as to place them beyond the restriction; but in purpose they were the same, and the debates raised upon them embraced the same matters.

In the New Zealand Constitution I find there are instances of the operation of the same principle.

[*Debate resumed.*]

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) [1.8 a.m.]: I understand you, Sir, to rule that the Bill is admissible so far as this House is concerned. I intend so support the Bill on these grounds. We passed a continuance of this Bill only a short time ago through this Chamber. Hon. Frank Wilson: But without the minimum prices in it.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: And the Bill was rejected in another place. If it is admissible that we should bring this Bill forward again in its present form I am prepared to support it. I regret that the continuance Bill for the control of Trade in War Time Act was thrown out in another place, because I consider that if there was any justification for it 12 months ago, there is equal justification for it at the present time. If 12

months ago there were reasons why this House should unanimously pass a measure of this description, I fail to see why those reasons should not continue to exist to-day. The member for Murray-Wellington is perfectly right when he says that this Bill is on all fours with two measures on our statute-book--the Control of Trade in War Time Act, and the Amendment Act; the only real difference being that this Bill, instead of giving power to fix maximum prices only, gives power to fix minimum prices as well. Further, there is a final clause dealing merely with the duration of this Bill.

The Premier: And the method of continuing its operation.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Personally, I maintain, that if there is justification for fixing the maximum price there is also justification for fixing the minimum price of a commodity; and I think the latter is necessary in the interests of the producer more particularly. The unfortunate farmer of this State has been faced with the fact that the law fixes a maximum price, but no minimum, for the commodity he raises. The time may arrive when it will be essential to fix minimum prices for the commodities raised by the producers of this State. I do not say that the time has arrived, but that it may arrive; and if there is justification for fixing maximum prices in the interests of the consumer, there is just as much logical reason for fixing minimum prices in the interests of the producer.

Mr. Smith: Will the fixing of a minimum price compel the consumer to buy the commodity?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: It was argued this evening, "What is the use of fixing a minimum price for wheat if the miller will not buy?" But the miller must buy. The people must have food, and the miller must have the wheat to grind into the flour that is needed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How is he going to export the flour?

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: He will export just the same.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How can he? He must export flour at the world's market rate, the same as wheat.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I cannot understand why we should object to this Bill. If there was any justification for the Bill 12 months ago there is equal justification for the measure at the present time. Further, I consider that if power is given to fix the maximum price there ought at any rate to be power to fix a minimum price as well. It has been said that the Royal Commission under this Bill is going to consist of one man.

The Premier: That point has never been considered by Cabinet.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The member for Irwin said so.

The Premier: Somebody suggested that one man could do the work.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: We have in this Bill the same provision as there is in the expiring Act, for the appointment of a Royal Commission. Under the Act the Governor had power to appoint a Royal Commission. The Bill for the continuance of that Act was thrown out by another place. The present measure does not provide how many members the Royal Commission shall consist of. I think it would be better not to place so much power in the hands of one man. In my opinion, if there is to be a Royal Commission, it should at any rate consist of more than one individual. For the reasons I have given—I do not wish to labour the question at this late hour—I intend to support the second reading of this Bill in the interests of the producers of this State and in the interests of the consumers of this State.

Mr. NAIRN (Swan) [2.14 a.m.]: I support this measure, because I was one of those who exceedingly regretted the loss of the continuance Bill. If I am not out of order, I should like to correct the Premier with regard to a statement he made last night as to the loss of the continuance Bill. The Premier laid the blame on another place. The hon. gentleman, I believe, was not in the House at the time the matter was discussed, but I remember well being most emphatic in my statement that, how-

ever much one approved of the Bill, one could only come to the conclusion that the cost of administering the Act during the last twelve months had been out of all proportion, and quite unreasonable. Of that warning the Minister in charge of the continuance Bill took no notice. So far as I could gather, the Minister was determined to force the Bill through at any cost, and he recklessly took the risk of losing the Bill because he would not give an undertaking with regard to the cost of administration. It was pointed out to him that in New South Wales a similar Royal Commission dealing with similar work for the whole of the State of New South Wales, which has a population of 1½ millions, cost only about £1,500 per year to administer, while the cost here was well over £2,500 for 12 months.

The Premier: For some time two members of the Royal Commission were public servants, and their salaries were being paid by the Royal Commission, whereas otherwise those salaries would have been paid out of ordinary votes.

Mr. NAIRN: Giving that in, the difference is still great. If the Premier is successful in getting this measure through—as I hope he will be—I trust he will take note of the cost of administration. A good deal has been said about the amount of expert knowledge required in order to fix prices. In point of fact, there is not much expert knowledge required. Pricing is a matter fairly easy to learn, and I am convinced that the members of the Royal Commission must have had a fairly intelligent grasp of the ordinary cost of conducting business in this State. A man of average intelligence could gain in the retail trade all the knowledge needed for the intelligent administration of such a measure as this. I believe—in fact I have reason to know—that while the Control of Trade in War Time Act was in operation it did good work for the people of this State. I am quite prepared to believe—in fact, I may again state that I know—there are individuals in this State who have used the opportunity created by the expiry of the Control of Trade in War Time Act to

increase the prices of commodities quite unnecessarily and unreasonably. If ever there was a time when some power to check unscrupulous traders was required, this is the time. I hope this Bill will meet with greater success than did the continuance Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [2.18 a.m.]: This Bill was certainly mentioned at the meeting here this morning, which meeting was held to consider the wheat question, as stated by the member for Irwin (Mr. James Gardiner). I thought that at that meeting Mr. Colebatch rather objected to the remarks of the member for Irwin, and stated that what the member for Irwin said would have happened had the continuance Bill not been rejected by the Upper House could not have happened. However, I believe Mr. Colebatch and the member for Irwin had some conversation afterwards and arrived at some sort of understanding. At this morning's meeting there was certainly no understanding about the matter. We cannot fix the price of butter, for instance. The late Royal Commission, which cost the country a lot of money, could not and did not affect or influence the price of butter to the extent of even one farthing. Neither did the Commission influence the price of bread at all. In fact, the Commission fixed the price of flour at £18 10s. per ton for this State, while the Government were selling flour for export from this State at £15 5s. per ton. The Commission certainly advantaged the Government, inasmuch as they kept up prices to suit Cabinet. The Commission fixed the price of flour at £18 10s. because, in view of the manner in which the Government bought, that was the lowest price at which the Government could sell that commodity to the people of this State, though at the same time the Government were selling flour to South Australia at £15 5s. In that instance, therefore, the existence of the Royal Commission was a positive disadvantage to the consumers of this State. To-day we have an abundance of wheat.

The Minister for Mines: You would not think so by the price of flour.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The usefulness of this measure is limited to the control of prices of stuff we produce in the State and its usefulness ends there.

The Minister for Mines: Is it not possible for a person to still charge an excessive price for a commodity?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: How can we ascertain that it is an excessive price?

The Minister for Mines: Of course you can. The Commission brought down the price of kerosene which was imported.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They did not save the people of this country the cost the country was put to. Last year we were short of meat, flour and potatoes. This year there is an abundance of those commodities. Last year the argument was that the farmer wanted to get too much. They argued that the price of wheat should not be high because the few who had it wanted it. When we gave the Commission power to fix the price of wheat they went into the country and got into trouble because the price of wheat was fixed at 4s. 9d. when the Government themselves were offering to buy it at 5s. 6d. Do hon. members think that the people of the country are going to allow us to spend a lot of money on a commission to keep up the price beyond export values? When we talk about wheat what is the use of fixing two prices, a maximum and a minimum. We certainly cannot have two prices for wheat; that would be unreasonable and stupid. Take potatoes. We might say that the price for first class potatoes is £10 a ton, but if we said to a grower, "You must not sell under £5" and the potatoes were a little damaged what would he say then, especially if it was an offence punishable by a heavy fine? What advantage is it to the consumer to fix the minimum; we do not help him in that way. How can we fix the minimum and the maximum. If we are seeking to benefit the whole of the people and to fill the people's mouths cheaply we do not do it by saying "You must sell below a certain price." We say "You must not sell above a certain price." Then it is possible to benefit

the parties to the transaction. I do not think it will be a bad thing to have this Bill on the statute-book.

Mr. Hickmott: We could have a minimum price for wheat and a maximum price for bread.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then the minimum would become the maximum with a vengeance.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think we might arrange to fix the price at London parity. But do not make it 4s. 6d. and 3s. 6d.

Mr. Hickmott: Mr. Colebatch advised that the minimum price should be fixed.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But he did not want both minimum and maximum. We should have only one price. We have had experience of a similar commission, and we suffered by it. Mr. Rae went around the country threatening farmers, to make them disgorge their wheat. It was not Mr. Rae's fault, because the Government sent him. It was not just to take at 4s. 9d. wheat that was worth 6s. Do Ministers want that condition of affairs to continue? It has been suggested by a newspaper correspondent that London parity should be discarded. Mr. Stanistreet, I think, was responsible for that. I do not suggest it; I do not want more than London parity for the price of wheat, but I want full London parity.

The Minister for Mines: What is London parity to-day?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: About 4s. 11d.

The Minister for Mines: Are the farmers getting it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We are not likely to get 4s. 11d. all the year round.

The Minister for Mines: But you say they ought to get London parity all the time?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They have had more than London parity to date. I understand 4s. 3d. was given to-day for wheat. They are not getting London parity to-day, but they did get it before the Government interfered. The farmer would rather take 4s. than suffer the delay involved by the Government scheme. I want the Bill to be shaped in such a way that the farmer will get something like London parity. The

millers are not going to pay London price for wheat to be gristed three months hence, for he has to take the risk, and that is worth something.

The Minister for Mines: When is the price of flour going to come down?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As soon as there is a sufficient quantity of new wheat in the mills and the mills have had time to grist it. It cannot be gristed immediately on arrival. I do not think the Bill will do much to reduce the cost of living. The Government might well be given the power asked in the Bill, but I want this question of minimum and maximum settled to the satisfaction of the producers.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [2.39 a.m.]: The Bill represents an attempt to prevent the farmers being taken advantage of in consequence of their not having the trained knowledge of the buyers, who are out to secure every advantage they can. The object of the Bill is to protect the farmers from the agents who travel round the country districts trying to scare the farmers into selling at a disadvantage. They will trade on that as far as they possibly can and, on the other hand, the miller will trade on the same indefinite knowledge and will endeavour to keep up his price to the consumer. Why should the farmers be the fulcrum on which the millers use their lever to work the market as they please? We need the protection provided by this measure. During the last few seasons the farmers have been up against most difficult times and the increased yield this season is going to result in greater benefit to people in different walks of life rather than to the producer himself because, with the extra cost of production and of marketing, the balance left over for the producer will be very little more than sufficient to enable him to put in the next season's crop. Many farmers have been assisted by the Government to put in an increased acreage but, in spite of the abundant yield, their position will be very little better after the harvest is over. This being so, is not it in the interests of the State that the primary producer should receive a fair living

wage, just as provision is made for a fair living wage in other walks of life? Will not it be an advantage if the farmer obtains a greater amount per bushel for his wheat, consequent on the existence of such a commission, and thus have some funds to devote to reproductive work? The increased acreage under crop this season will mean a heavier yield and that in turn will mean an additional revenue to the railways, extra employment in the country and increased quantities of grain for export, and the benefit will be felt in all other walks of life, while the farmer will get the least advantage from it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There will be no export at all with a minimum price.

Mr. HARRISON: The leader of the Opposition said when the miller comes to export his flour, he will find himself on a bad wicket. In my opinion the miller will be on an excellent wicket this season. The miller is out, if he can, to make through the combination—the Flour Millers' Association, and if he can succeed in avoiding the fixed rates for buying and selling he will make a very good thing.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Do not you wish to give the people cheap bread?

Mr. HARRISON: The idea is to give both sections fair play.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Dear wheat and cheap bread?

Mr. HARRISON: We cannot tell what might transpire during the continuance of the war, in consequence of the submarine menace and the high shipping freights, but this Bill will prevent the man in the middle from using his trading ability to exploit the producer and the consumer and I trust the measure will be carried.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. McDowall in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Power to fix prices of necessities:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Will the Premier state his intentions in regard to

the Royal Commission proposed to be appointed under the measure?

The PREMIER: I have nothing definite in mind with regard to the personnel of the commission. Whether Cabinet approves of one two, or three members will depend largely on what we consider will be the duties devolving on the commission. I am not sure that the same need will arise for three commissioners to apply themselves continually to the work as was the case last year. At the moment I should say there is not the same need and, if one commissioner can do the work, one only shall be appointed. It might appear that if we appoint only one commissioner we shall be giving him great powers, but it is not a difficult matter to secure the services of a man who can thoroughly grasp these matters and, if necessary, recommend prices which will be satisfactory to the producer and the consumer. The experience we had with the last Commission was that after conferring with the merchants and others they were able to arrange that they would voluntarily accept the price which they agreed upon as satisfactory. Generally speaking, they were quite satisfied that the Commission had determined to interfere as little as possible with the ordinary methods of carrying on trade and commerce in Western Australia.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is what the staff did.

The PREMIER: There is no doubt about that. We were so successful in regard to the appointment of the Commission that this ought to be a reason for the leader of the Opposition allowing us to appoint another Commission with the same powers. We have not discussed the question as to who shall be the members of the proposed new Commission. When we do so we shall discuss it with the object of getting someone with sufficient knowledge of business methods to be able to meet all those who are trading in the State, and interfere as little as possible with all who are carrying on trade and commerce in the State, while at the same time protecting the interests of the consumer.

Mr. James Gardiner: I presume a vast amount of information has been collected as the result of the operations of the previous Commission.

The PREMIER: That is so. It is not merely the Commission who have done this, but the staff as well. As this staff has had nearly 12 months experience of the work of the Commission it should prove of great value to any new Commission.

Mr. TAYLOR: I took strong exception to the three-Commissioner system under the old Act. The Premier has not indicated to the Committee whether this Bill enables the Governor to appoint either one, two, or three men as Commissioners. In face of the information which the last Commission gathered and the staff which has been got together one Commissioner should in my opinion suffice in this case. The mere fact of a Commissioner being appointed would act as a deterrent as between seller and buyer. As the Premier has not satisfied himself that he is going to have one Commissioner or three the Committee should express an opinion on the matter.

The Premier: It is nearly certain the Government will first of all appoint one Commissioner.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have no desire to prevent the passage of this Bill through the Chamber, and I am satisfied with the assurance of the Premier. In my opinion one Commissioner is quite sufficient.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think we are placing too much responsibility on the shoulders of one man. No one who took the trouble to inquire into the working of the Commission under the previous Act could help coming to the conclusion that these gentlemen, rightly or wrongly, were fully occupied and had an enormous amount of work to do. And although that work will be of assistance to a single Commissioner appointed under this Bill, it must be kept up to date. Statistics will have to be taken afresh.

The Premier: Not to the same extent. The last Commission had to handle the exportation of wheat and the

gristing into flour. This had to be done in every State.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is not an easy matter. We cannot fix a minimum price at which goods shall be imported into Western Australia. Take galvanised iron, for instance. What is the good of putting a minimum price upon that? No one would derive any benefit from it.

The Premier: It does not say that we must do this.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Government want to fix the selling price. How can they fix the selling prices, maximum and minimum, of meat or wheat? It cannot be done. It is absurd to say that they are going to make the maximum 5s. for wheat and the minimum 4s. One price must be fixed. Of course different prices can be fixed for different qualities. I would suggest striking out the words "maximum and minimum" and so providing for fixing the prices which may be lawfully charged. Or perhaps the word "maximum" may be left in. Last year many of the farmers had no wheat to sell, and were buyers; therefore, they wanted a maximum price fixed. This year the farmers are sellers, and therefore they want a minimum price fixed. If a minimum price at which wheat is to be sold is fixed above London parity, the export of flour must necessarily be stopped. Under such conditions we shall not be able to export flour, which is a trade we have been trying to build up for years past. The flour-millers will be thrown out of employment; and the wheat will be driven away, to be sent Home on the account sales and pooling system, the very thing the farmers have been trying to get clear of. The Premier has not the common sense to grasp intricate commercial questions. Let us not make an exhibition of ourselves by passing an absurd clause like this. I move at amendment—

*That in Subclause 1, lines 3 and 4, the words "or the maximum and minimum prices" be struck out.*

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We have been told to-night that it is possible to benefit both parties, buyer and seller, by th

same process. The farmer is to be paid more for his wheat, and he is to sell it at a cheaper price to the consumer. That is obviously fallacious.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Dear wheat and cheap bread is the idea.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If we merely fix a maximum price, it will suit the consumer but not the purchaser. It would meet the case if some such words as these were inserted in the Clause, "in the case of wheat to fix a minimum price for fair average quality."

The CHAIRMAN: We had better first discuss the striking out of the other words.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We shall affect the usefulness of the measure if we strike out those words without inserting other words. If we are to protect the producer and the consumer we must amend the clause. I think we ought to report progress, or the Premier should give us his assistance.

The Premier: I brought down a perfect measure and you cannot improve on it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is a rotten measure. I move—

*That progress be reported.*

Motion negatived.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4, 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Corners and restrictions prohibited:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This clause provides that no man shall buy up or store the necessities of life with intent to raise the prices thereof, or to prevent free circulation thereof, or without the consent in writing of the Colonial Treasurer export the necessities of life to any place beyond the limits of the Commonwealth. The Premier knows well he has no power over exports.

The Premier: We have.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier has not. The Commonwealth law provides that we cannot export without the permission of the Commonwealth Minister.

The Premier: We have control over trade within our own borders.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier knows that the Commonwealth Government are controlling exports to-day and

that if anyone wants to export, a bond must be put up. This clause will prove a dead letter because it proposes to override the Commonwealth law.

Mr. Bolton: It can leave this State for another State without interference.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Produce can leave this State for England with the permission of the Commonwealth Minister. I suppose it is useless to ask the Premier to strike out this clause. I think it should be struck out. If the Premier wants the clause retained, he should deign to explain the necessity for it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 12—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

# BILL—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

*All Stages.*

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

*Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [3.27 a.m.] in moving the second reading said: Since the last electric lighting Bill was passed through both Houses, negotiations have been in progress for the Fremantle board to take their electricity from the Government scheme. This has been recommended by an outside engineer, Mr. Curle Smith, of Kalgoorlie, and unanimously adopted by the Fremantle board. But the Act under which the board works does not give the board power to purchase electricity from the Government. In other words, while they have full control and management of their own scheme, the board are not authorised to spend money, as will be necessary to make provision for taking electricity from the Government. Hon. members can see that the Bill merely empowers



the board, if they so desire, to take electricity from the Government. It will be beneficial not only to the Government scheme, but also to the municipality. I move—

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

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etcetera.*

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [3.32]: I move—

*That the House at its rising adjourn till Friday, 26th November, at 3 p.m.*

Question passed.

*House adjourned at 3.32 a.m. (Friday).*

### Legislative Council,

*Friday, 26th November, 1915.*

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#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Regulations passed by the Executive Council under Section 29 of the Industries Assistance Act. 2, Midland Junction municipality by-law. 3, Perth Public Hospital, Annual Report.

#### BILL—WAR COUNCIL.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that the Council's amendment had been agreed to.

#### BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION (No. 2).

##### *Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had disagreed to the amendments made by the Council.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.5]: It is my intention to ask the House to agree to a conference.

*That the following Message be sent to the Legislative Assembly:—"In reply to Message No. 46 from the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council requests a conference to consider the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Sale of Liquor Regulation Bill, to which the Legislative Assembly has disagreed; the conference to consist of three managers, namely, the Hon. J. M. Drew, Hon. J. J. Holmes, and Hon. A. J. H. Saw.*

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) [3.15]: Have we reached the proper stage for a conference? The Bill was sent to us, we made amendments to it, and sent it to another place which disagreed with the amendments. We have had no opportunity of considering their reasons for the disagreement and we have had no opportunity of saying whether we are determined to press our amendments or not. I would like to know whether we have reached the stage for a conference.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think we have. I think we ought to go into Com-

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