

Mr. Latham: We must send that statement to the Melbourne "Age."

Mr. MUNSIE: It has been sent to them on many occasions. I combat the views expressed by the member for Pilbara. There is no company in the Eastern States that I know of, which has established branch offices in Western Australia except where it has handsomely paid them to do so. There are many companies in the Eastern States drawing considerable revenue from Western Australia and yet they have not established branch manufactories in this State. Western Australia does not owe much to the Eastern States and anything which the Eastern States have invested here, has been well paid for.

Mr. MANN (Perth) in reply [11-9]: Perhaps the strongest argument advanced against assistance being rendered to the Kendenup company is the price paid for the land and the amount charged for it. The Government recently purchased estates for less than £1 an acre.

The Premier: We paid about 8s. an acre.

Mr. MANN: And charged £12 10s. an acre for it.

The Premier: Some of the land was worth more than that.

Mr. Harrison: Only 10 per cent. of that land is fit for intense culture.

Mr. MANN: I am showing that that land has improved very rapidly. If land can be purchased at 8s. an acre and then sold for £12 10s. an acre, it shows what can be done. The estate to which I refer has been improved by the provision of roads and drainage just as Kendenup itself has been improved. I mention this aspect because it is an answer to those who complain of the Kendenup people charging £12 for land which cost £1 an acre. Having placed the matter before hon. members, I am prepared to accept the amendment relying on the Government to take a fair view of the position pending the inquiries that will be made.

Amendment put and passed; question, as amended, agreed to.

#### BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 11.14 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

Thursday, 13th January, 1932.

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

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin leave of absence for three consecutive sittings granted to Hon. J. Nicholson on the ground of urgent private business.

On motions by Hon. J. Cornell leave of absence for three consecutive sittings granted to Hon. J. E. Dodd on the ground of ill health, and to Hon. J. W. Kirwan for three consecutive sittings on the ground of urgent private business.

#### BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

New Clause:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move—

That a new clause to stand as Clause 7 be inserted, in lieu of present Clause 7 as follows:—Section 30 of the principal Act is omitted and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—30. From the taxable amount so ascertained as aforesaid, every taxpayer shall be entitled to deductions in respect of the annual amount of—(1) Losses, outgoings, interest on mortgages and loans, and expenses actually incurred in Western Australia by the taxpayer in the production or protection (where such cannot be insured against) of his income; that is, income which is not exempt from income tax under section nineteen of this Act. (2) (a) Net trading or business losses incurred in any one or more years, during the five years preceding the year of assessment. (b) Net losses arising from the loss of stock in trade,

crops, and livestock due to droughts or other circumstances or conditions over which the taxpayer had no control or was unable to protect or insure against. Provided that no losses in respect to fixed capital assets shall be allowed as a deduction under this section. (3) Sums expended by the taxpayer for repairs of premises let or intended to be let to tenants. (4) (a) Every premium or sum paid by the taxpayer (not exceeding £50) on the insurance of his own life, or that of his wife or children, or for a deferred annuity, or other like provision for the wife or children. (b) Every premium paid (not exceeding £50) in respect of any fidelity guarantee or bond which such employer is required to provide for the exercise of his profession, trade, employment, or vocation. (c) Medical expenses (not exceeding £50) incurred by a taxpayer on behalf of himself or those dependent upon him: Provided that this subsection shall not apply where the taxable income exceeds £250. (d) Reasonable travelling expenses incurred in producing or protecting the assessable income. (5) Sums expended for repairs of premises occupied for business purposes, and for the repair or alteration of machinery, implements, utensils, and articles employed by the taxpayer for the purposes of his business. (6) Such sum as the Commissioner may think just and reasonable as representing the diminished value (i.e., for the purpose for which they were intended in a going concern), by reason of wear and tear, during the year, of any machinery, implements, utensils, and articles used by the taxpayer for the purposes of his business: Provided that, where in any business income is set apart by the taxpayer by way of a fund to cover the depreciation of such machinery, implements, utensils, and articles, the amount so set apart for the year immediately preceding the year of assessment shall, subject to the approval of the Commissioner, be the sum to be deducted for depreciation: Provided that in no case shall any allowance be made for the depreciation of buildings. (7) Notwithstanding the limitation in Subsection (1) hereof, the Commissioner shall, in cases in which it may seem to him just, allow losses, outgoings, and expenses, even if incurred beyond the State. (8) Where a taxpayer employs his sons or daughters over the age of sixteen years in his trade or occupation, such sum may be deducted for their services as may be prescribed by any Arbitration award or as to the Commissioner may seem reasonable. (9) Where a taxpayer, either alone or with other persons, carries on or is interested as a partner in more than one business, and makes a profit in one or more of such businesses and a loss on another or others, such taxpayer shall be entitled to deduct the sum of the losses from that of the profits. (10) A sum representing twenty-six pounds for each child

under the age of sixteen years at the beginning of the financial year in which the income is received, and residing with and dependent upon the taxpayer. (11) The cost actually incurred during the year by a taxpayer for labour and materials employed in development work, as prescribed, in a mine, when the business of a taxpayer is that of mining. (12) All rates and taxes, including State and Federal land taxes and Federal income tax, actually paid in Western Australia in respect of land situate in or income derived in Western Australia by the taxpayer during the year in which the income was received, but not including any State income tax paid under this Act. (13) Any payment to the board or the trustees of any charitable institution, incorporated or otherwise, or of a public park or reserve, or of a university or public school, or of a library, art gallery, museum, or other institution for public education, recreation or enjoyment, subsidised by the Government: Provided that such payment is applied solely to such charitable or other public purpose. (14) The annual sum necessary to recoup the expenditure on improvements under covenant with the lessor on and by a lessee who has no tenant rights in the improvements. The deduction under this paragraph shall be ascertained by dividing the amount expended in the improvements by the lessee by the number of years in the unexpired period of the lease at the date the improvements were effected. For the purpose of this and the preceding section the word "business" shall be taken to include any profession, trade, employment or vocation, and the earning of income from other sources including investments.

As the Premier will be leaving for the Eastern States to-night it is desirable that we should conclude the debate on this Bill. I believe it to be the general opinion of members that the report of the select committee should be adopted.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The proposed new clause deals with exemptions. These exemptions appear to apply to the commercial and producing sections of the community, but to afford little or no relief to the general community. Paragraph 3 provides an exemption for the taxpayer who makes repairs to premises let or intended to be let to tenants, but no exemption whatever is allowed for such repairs to the ordinary house owner, whose house is his home. I have a leasehold home, and although the Federal authorities allow me to deduct the cost of renovations upon it, the State do not permit it. These deductions should be of general application but they might be restricted to persons whose taxable income does not exceed £250. I am pleased that the select committee have made the exemption in respect of medical expenses of some value. As to deductions in respect of children, we have not followed the Federal example. The deduction should be on an up grade, and the more children a man

has the greater should be his average deduction per child. Indeed, a man with five or six children under 16 years of age, and with an income not exceeding, say, £250, should be exempt from income taxation. I believe another place would agree to the amendment I have suggested.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: As for the appeal that we ought to hurry up with this work because the Premier is leaving for Melbourne, the Government do not deserve the slightest consideration on this Bill, which ought to have been brought down six months ago. Incidentally, to-day's newspaper states that there is not likely to be any Premiers' Conference. Since the adjournment, I have consulted Mr. Horne, the secretary of the Taxpayers' Association of Western Australia, to which association I do not belong, but which I recognise as an authority on this subject. I obtained the secretary's opinion on this clause, and I have his authority to use his name and to read his opinion—

Land and Income Tax Assessment Act. The report of the select committee reached me this morning, and has therefore not been placed before my committee; but from my own personal point of view I would say that the recommendations of the select committee, if given effect to, will tend to the improvement of the Bill as it left the Assembly. I am afraid that the efforts bestowed upon this Bill do not do very much towards bringing the State and Federal Acts into that harmonious relationship that is the intention avowed in the Preamble to the Bill, and for the current year the divergence between the two Acts must continue. In my opinion the Bill as amended by the suggestions of the select committee will be the best possible at this late stage, and it is to be hoped that the Bill as so amended may be accepted, in order that the work of the Taxation Department may not be delayed.

Now comes the important point which I emphasised last night, and I am very glad that this high authority confirms the view I then put forward—

It should, however, be impressed upon the Government that a properly digested Taxation Act should be introduced very shortly, having in view the harmonisation of the Federal Act, the State Income Tax Act, and the Dividend Duties Act.

I expect the Government to undertake this honourable understanding, that they should recognise the importance of the matter by getting their officials to work promptly, so that a proper Bill may be brought down early next session. Mr. Horne's letter concludes—

One amendment, I think, should be made in the present Bill—to increase the allowance for children to £30 to agree with the Federal Act. Apart from this slight amendment, I think the House may unhesitatingly accept the Bill as amended by the select committee.

I wish to ask a question, which need not be answered right away, which can be answered next session. It is this, whether the State Commissioner of Taxation is a State officer or a Federal officer?

The Minister for Education: A State officer.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I did not press for a speedy answer. The Minister's answer is in direct conflict with the announcement made in the Federal Parliament some months ago. I leave it at that.

The Minister for Education: It is so stated expressly in the agreement.

Hon. J. Duffell: Mr. Black admits that he is a Federal officer.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The matter is one of the utmost importance. Finally, as regards the deduction for children. To me it is curious that that matter, to which I did not ask Mr. Horne's special attention, should have been spontaneously dealt with by him. Mr. Cornell's remarks deserve a great deal more attention and consideration than they can receive here and now. The question of a deduction of £24 for children, as against £30, is not a question of policy at all, as an hon. member last night stated it to be.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I did not say so at all. I said it was a matter which could be discussed on the floor of the Chamber.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I appeal to the Leader of the House, and also to Mr. Lovekin, who seems to be an Honorary Minister for the purpose of this Bill, to see whether it is not possible to put the £30 deduction into the State Act.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Sanderson observes that the Government merit no consideration over this matter. The Government ask for none. This Bill will not assist the Government as a tax-collector. If the measure is not passed, it is not the revenue that will suffer. I want that to be clearly understood. The purpose of the Bill is to bring about uniformity between the Federal and State Departments in certain administrative matters, such as, for instance, the abolition of the assessment book and the substitution of the card system. It will also give relief to certain taxpayers whom the Government consider entitled to relief. From that standpoint it is comparatively unimportant—it is entirely unimportant from the standpoint of the revenue—and it is purely a Bill for the relief of taxpayers. The relief suggested is just and proper and I hope the Committee will agree to afford that relief. If, as Mr. Sanderson suggests, the Committee should take charge of the Bill, do not blame me if the Bill is not passed and that relief is not given to the taxpayers. The reason for adjourning consideration of this matter last night was at the request of Mr. Stewart who wished to contrast the provisions of the clause with those in the Federal Act. I have had prepared by the Taxation Department a table corresponding with that appearing in the committee's report, but instead of applying

it to the incomes averaged over three years, it applies to the rate of tax for the period of five years. I have supplied Mr. Stewart with a copy of that table, which shows exactly the same principle as the table in the report, namely that the person with an income on the ascending scale would escape more lightly under the Federal Act, than would be the case if he paid on his annual income at the ordinary rate; but that a person with a falling income would pay considerably more. These figures satisfy me that I was right in the statement I made that when the time came for the Federal Act to operate the necessity for alteration would be realised. I suggest that the amendment we have placed before members is equitable and one more likely to lead to uniformity between the Acts than the adoption of the Federal Act. As to the question of £30 as against £24, respecting children, this matter has to be dealt with in conjunction with other aspects. The big difference between the two Acts is that we treat the question of small income, namely £100 for a single man and £156 for a married man, as an exemption and not as a deduction. Under the Federal Act, after a married man has made all the deductions which are allowed, and his income reaches £157, he pays only on the extra £1. Under the State Act such a man would pay on the full £157. To reconcile the difference between the two Acts, would necessitate the State surrendering £50,000.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Why?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It would relieve from taxation most people receiving up to £200 income.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why do you not do it then?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It might be decided as a matter of principle that it was right to follow the Federal practice, but if that were done, it would be necessary, from a financial point of view, to simultaneously provide other means of securing that amount. When it is said that I refused, in Committee, to deal with this question as a matter of policy, that is not so. It had to be recognised that it would not be competent for the House to suggest increased taxation.

Hon. A. Sanderson: If you allowed £30 instead of £24, what would it represent?

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Commissioner was not able to work it out.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It would be almost impossible to work it out, as the Commissioner said, because of the different scales of income to which it would apply. The committee did not go into the three points affected—the question of £30 as against £24, the exemption of £104 instead of £100 deduction and the £156 instead of the £150—because we cannot recommend increased taxation and it was not desirable at the present juncture for the State to sacrifice £50,000. I agree with Mr. Sanderson that the two Acts should be brought into conformity as much as possible.

Hon. T. MOORE: Subclause 2 does not seem to me to cover prospectors who should receive consideration. I move an amendment—

That after “trading” the word “prospecting” be inserted.

A prospector may spend four or five years looking for a goldfield and during that period he will spend a considerable amount of money, which, it does not seem to me, can be covered by the provision for net trading or business losses.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Are they not business losses?

Hon. T. MOORE: They may not be construed as such, but I think they should be included equally as much as the business losses incurred by men in the agricultural areas.

Hon. J. Cunningham: What about the man who is out of work for many months?

Member: He does not experience losses.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Yes, he does—loss of employment.

Hon. T. MOORE: I think the position will be made clearer by the amendment I suggest.

Hon. J. Cunningham: On a point of order. I have had an amendment affecting Clause 5, which appeared on the Notice Paper on the 15th December.

The CHAIRMAN: It does not appear on the Notice Paper now. Clause 5 has been agreed to as amended. The hon. member will have to recommit the Bill if he desires to deal with it.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I think prospecting would be included in the term “business” but I have no objection to the amendment. The exemptions already existing have not been touched by the committee. Some members are in favour of synchronising our exemptions with the Federal deductions. It is better to have a deduction of £156 than an exemption of £200 because the worker will be better off. But for this year the rate of the tax has been fixed.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing that.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: But it might save time. Let us facilitate the passage of the machinery Bill now, and if at the beginning of next session the Government do not bring down another amending Bill providing for these deductions, I will find a way of introducing the amendment myself. However, I can see no practical purpose in trying to make these amendments to-day.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: Under this clause the very people who have suffered for lack of the averaging system will not get the five years' right.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Would not agriculture be regarded as a business?

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not know. No period of years is provided in paragraph (b). I see no reason for not bringing the two Acts into conformity and increasing the State de-

duction for each child. However, we ought to have a period in Paragraph (b). I move an amendment—

That after "arising" in line 1 of paragraph (b) "over a like period" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That after "was" in line 5 of paragraph (b) "reasonably" be inserted.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Where is this going to take us? I can understand an agriculturist being able at a given moment to insure against loss, but if we insert "reasonably" it will give rise to endless litigation, and more particularly will it operate against the agriculturist. It is a very dangerous amendment.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I suggest that instead of "reasonably" the hon. member ought to insert "for unavoidable reason." We cannot be too careful, for there is no appeal against what happens in the Taxation Department.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: You are going to make it still worse for the taxpayer.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think rather it will give him something to fall back upon.

Hon. H. STEWART: If my amendment will lead to delay, I shall not press it. Losses arising from stock-in-trade, crops and live-stock can be insured against, but the position becomes more difficult when we specify droughts and other circumstances. However, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted to stand as Subsection 4:—"Sums expended by the taxpayer for repairs to his dwellinghouse whether such dwellinghouse is fully purchased or in course of purchase: Provided that this subsection shall not apply where the taxable income exceeds £250.

I would go so far as to give this exemption without the proviso. A man has to work many years in order to get a home, and he has to renovate it and no deduction is allowed. From the arguments of members, it appears that whatever the Federal authorities adopt in future, we shall have to adopt

Hon. A. H. PANTON: They are all becoming unionist.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. A person living in his own house has the right to deduct interest paid on the purchase price. If a man spends money in improving his premises, he should not be able to deduct it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The position we have been manoeuvred into is that if other amendments, apart from those recommended by the select committee, are proposed, the Bill will be lost.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The same thing will apply next year and we shall not get what we want.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Does the hon. member wish to see the Bill dropped?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Cannot we try to improve it?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If we attempt to put the Bill into the order in which we wish to see it, it will be dropped, and that will be inadvisable from our point of view.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I support the amendment. I cannot see the logic of the Minister's argument. Why not allow a deduction for improvements?

The Minister for Education: You are going still further now.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: If it is right to allow a deduction for interest, it should be equally right to allow a deduction for money spent on improvements. I am not satisfied with the Bill or with the report of the select committee.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The report has not been debated and it is very difficult to understand it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am unaware of any desire to ram the report of the select committee down the throats of members. It is not customary to take the report of a select committee as read.

Hon. A. Sanderson: That is what we have to do.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine himself to the amendment.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I support the amendment. Mr. Sanderson said we have to adopt the report of the select committee or run the risk of losing the Bill. As a member of the select committee, I might inform members that there were a number of things we would have liked to deal with, but it was considered inadvisable to do so. There are other amendments we want to make, and I will support this one as a preliminary.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Everyone is allowed to deduct from his income the cost of repairs to business premises, but not of alterations or additions. I am allowed a similar deduction in the case of my private house.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The State Taxation Department does not allow such deductions in the case of an ordinary dwelling house, and does not allow interest in the way of discharging the capital cost.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you ever claimed the deduction?

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is sufficient to say that I have read the taxation forms. Our object should be to extend the incidence of taxation to all sections of the community.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 4, paragraph (c), the words "(not exceeding fifty pounds)" be struck out.

I see no necessity for limiting the amount of the medical expenses in this way.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If it is desired to make an allowance in the case of medical expenses a greater allowance should be made for country people than for town people.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (c) the word “sub-section” be struck out, and “deductions” inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: With reference to paragraph (d), who is to be the judge as to what reasonable travelling expenses are?

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is a question for the Taxation Department to decide.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: I have never had any difficulty in my allowances for reasonable travelling expenses.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 10 the words “twenty-six” be struck out and “thirty” inserted in lieu.

The exemption in the case of each child should not be less than £30.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Parents should be assisted in their difficult task of clothing, feeding and educating their children. I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the word “thirty” and inserting “forty” in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The amendment would involve a large loss of revenue. This should not be done unless some other means be found to compensate for the loss.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The exemption should be increased in the interests of the man with a family. He should be given every encouragement the State can afford him, because of the benefit he has been to the community. Of course the State is going to lose taxation if this proposal is carried, but cannot a compensating tax be placed on the man who has no children?

Amendment on the amendment put and passed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	..	9
Majority for	..	..	..	..	2

#### AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. F. A. Baglin
Hon. J. J. Holmes	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. P. E. S. Willmott
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. C. McKenzie	(Teller.)

Amendment on the new clause thus passed; the new clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

#### Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. J. Cunningham, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clauses 3 and 5.

#### In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

#### Clause 3—Amendment of Section 10:

Hon. H. STEWART: This clause provides for the deletion of the proviso to Subsection 2 of Section 10, relating to improvements on land used for agricultural, horticultural, pastoral, or grazing purposes. The proviso which Clause 3 proposes to delete reads as follows:—

Provided that any improvements made on any one parcel of such land shall extend to any one other parcel belonging to the same owner, if such parcels of land are not at a greater distance than 10 miles, measured from the nearest boundary.

The proviso was intended for the benefit of people who took up conditional purchase land after the best of the land had been picked; hence this provision permitting concentration of improvements for the purpose of land tax. I shall vote against the clause.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I agree with Mr. Stewart. The proviso is a very important one, especially in view of the limitation of area, which prevents people from obtaining good holdings. I have always considered it better that improvements should be concentrated rather than be distributed in dribs and drabs over several properties. Men anxious to develop the country are not now able to obtain larger areas, and therefore must take up several small ones. Accordingly, the proviso is now more necessary than ever.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	13
Majority against	..	..	..	7

#### AYES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)
Hon. C. McKenzie	

## NOES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. A. H. Pantou
Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. J. Cunningham
Hon. T. Moore	(Teller.)

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 16:

Hon. H. STEWART: The clause seeks to make income what the court has decided is not income. Up till now the Taxation Department have not taxed returns from a sale which is not a man's ordinary avocation. When an agriculturist sells out, he is doing something which is not his ordinary avocation. The Federal Act exempts working animals and breeding stock.

Hon. A. H. Pantou: There would not be much else on a farm.

Hon. H. STEWART: It is being sought in the Bill to subject the proceeds of a sale to taxation as income. I move an amendment—

That proposed Subsection 4 be struck out.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It would be very unfair to strike out the subsection. I—

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Oh, just vote in the negative.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I move an amendment—

That the first proviso to Subsection 16 of the Act be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This proviso is the one exempting the incomes of single persons up to £100. The second proviso exempts the incomes of married persons and persons with dependents up to £156. The hon. member desires to exempt everybody, married and single up to £256. I can only say it would be nonsense.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

# BILL—PRICES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Amendment (six months) carried.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.49] in moving the second reading said: The old Act came to an end on the 31st December, 1921. The Government are of opinion that at a time when prices are falling there probably is greater need to protect the consumer than when prices are rising. It is not intended by the Bill to continue the existence of the Commission; indeed the Commission has gone out of existence,

but it is deemed desirable that the Government should have authority, when occasion arises, to refer any particular matter to the Commission and allow the Commission to fix the prices. The difference between this proposal and the old Act is that under the Act the initiative lay with the Commission, which was a permanent body, whereas in this instance no Commission will be in existence, but if at any time the Government consider that in the case of any particular necessary commodity the consumer is being treated unfairly, it will be competent for them to reappoint the Commission, and to confer upon it the powers set out in the Act, which is revived for that purpose only. It may interest members to know that from the inception of the Commission, on the 1st January, 1920, up to the end of last year, the total cost of the Commission to the State was £4,469. Since the Commission went out of office complaints have been received that in certain instances the prices of commodities have been increased without justification. I do not think there is much doubt that prices are being fixed, and it is just a question as to whether or not the Government should be able, if circumstances warrant, to step in and see that prices are not unfairly fixed. In Sydney a week or two ago, in the Profitsteering Court, Judge Beeby issued a warning, that if practices said to be adopted by certain persons with a view to regulating the minimum prices at which their products could be sold, both wholesale and retail, were repeated, action would be taken by the court. It was alleged, he said, that vendors were asked to sign "price maintenance agreements," in which they contracted to observe the scales of the prices, discounts and rebates fixed by the proprietors or agents of certain articles, and, further, to contract not to supply directly or indirectly any goods to vendors who did not observe the conditions of the agreement. A further allegation was made that the vendors who refused to observe the conditions of the agreement were refused supplies, and that discrimination was exercised against co-operative undertakings, and that the effect of the practices complained of was to restrict competition and maintain the artificial regulation of prices. It was further stated that if these complaints were repeated, action would be taken after the vacation. That warning was issued in the city court just prior to the Christmas vacation. It is circumstances such as these—the improper regulation of prices—against which the Government desire to guard. I have here a publication known as the "Western Trader, the Retailers' Journal and the Storekeepers' Guide."

Hon. J. Duffell: You should hang on to that; it is an important document.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This publication is dated 10 October, 1921. On page 5 the following occurs:—

It was reported at the quarterly general meeting of members that grocers at May-

lands had for weeks past been selling sugar below the fixed price. The secretary was instructed to visit Maylands and interview the grocers concerned. This was done, with satisfactory results, all the grocers concerned agreeing to revert to the original price of 6s. a dozen. The secretary reported that he had approached one of the suburban grocers, who had been underselling 11d. milk, and succeeded in getting him to revert to the 11d. price.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The master grocers have a "bonzer" union.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Quite so. It is not intended to invoke the powers of the Act unnecessarily, but it is thought that power should rest with the Government in the case of any obvious abuses of re-creating the commission in order that those abuses might be rectified.

Hon. J. Duffell: The Government have enough to do to straighten the finances.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is part of the proper functions of Government to protect the public. It is all very well to say that these things are regulated by the law of supply and demand, especially when we see these combinations and the actual fixing of prices, and as referred to by the judge in Sydney, a refusal to supply goods to persons who sell below the fixed price.

Hon. J. Duffell: It is a price-raising Commission.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is idle to say that the public are protected by the law of supply and demand. The House would be well advised to pass the Bill, so that, if the occasion arises—the power will not otherwise be used—the Government may appoint the commission, and refer to it those special matters in regard to which it is considered that abuses are being perpetrated. I move —

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.54]: Communities throughout the world got along before the war without any price-fixing commissioners. Price-fixing was really a war expedient, and it is now time that trade was given the free hand which it had before, to work out its own salvation. It is no use members coming here and bringing up matter which has obviously been supplied by someone in the department. It is commonly rumoured that the real object of the Bill is to provide a sum sufficient to pay the salary of a particular individual.

The Minister for Education: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I make that statement believing it to be a fact. It is time we finished with price fixing and all forms of State nursing. At this stage of the session I am not prepared to go into the Bill any further. I therefore move an amendment—

That the word "now" be struck out, and "this day six months" inserted in lieu.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH (North-East) [4.55]: I was rather surprised at the remarks of Mr. Lovekin. I support the Bill. I wish to deal with a concrete case which occurred during the last few months.

Hon. J. Duffell: On the question of milk?

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: Yes, and it will greatly affect the hon. member's electors. In spite of what may be said to the contrary, the Commission during its term of office had a steady effect upon trade generally, including the retail trade. About three days after the Commission came into existence the producers in the milk trade had occasion to go before the Commission. The milk producers comprise the dairy farmers at Osborne Park, Queen's Park, Cannington, Yalup Brook, Bibra Lake, and surrounding districts, from which are drawn the supplies of milk for the metropolitan area. The producers have not been a united party until recently. They work long hours and have been exploited by the retailers and milk dealers of the city. From time to time the Commission has regulated prices between the producer, the depot keeper and the retailer.

Hon. J. Duffell: If the Commission stopped overlapping, they would be doing something towards reducing the price of milk.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The cost of distribution.

Hon. J. Duffell: Quite right.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: The Commission fixed the price of milk to the producer at the milk depot at 1s. 9½d. less railage and cartage. That left the producer 1s. 7½d. or 1s. 8d. The price fixed for the depot keeper was 1½d. for storing, cooling and handling the milk to the retailer. The retailer was allowed to charge the public 9d. a quart or 3s. a gallon. This meant he had to pay the depot keeper, if he bought it from him, 1s. 11d., leaving him to get a profit of 1s. 1d. per gallon from the public. Some of the retailers go along the line, that is to say, to the districts where the milk is produced, at certain periods of the year when there is a flush of milk on the market, such as between November and the end of February, and practically coerce the producer into selling his milk at a reduced price.

Hon. A. H. Panton: What method of coercion is used?

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: They threaten that they will not take their milk unless they sell it at a certain price, a price considerably below the price fixed by the Commission, which was recognised as a fair price to the producer to enable him to keep himself, his wife and family.

Hon. J. Duffell: Over 50 per cent. on the cost.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: The retailers did not stop at that. They sold the milk in Perth at the full prices fixed by the Commission, and contrary to the decision of the Commission. They were only allowed to charge sufficient to make a profit of 1s. 1d. per gal-



lon from the public, whereas they were buying at 1s. 4d. or 1s. 5d.

Hon. J. Duffell: It used to be 1s. 2d.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: With bran at £4 10s. a ton!

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member can speak afterwards.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: All through the milk-producing districts they have had to pay up to £13 10s. a ton for bran; to-day it is down to £8 per ton. During November the retailers' association asked for a conference with the producers and we met them in conference. The only thing they wanted to discuss was a reduction of 2d. a gallon to the producer. They contended there was a surplus of milk, and without any compunction laid this proposition before the producers. The producers refused to accept the price, and told the retailers to have the matter adjusted by the Commission. They failed to do this. Since then the dealers and retailers have kept on cutting the price against the producer, with the result that they are selling to the public at 3s. a gallon, or 9d. a quart. This is what the producer objects to, and it is a reason why they want the Commission reinstated, and the Act continued for another 12 months, so that these matters may be rectified. I may as well inform hon. members that it is the intention of the producers to establish a depot of their own in Perth and, if possible, to retail their own milk.

Hon. J. Duffell: That is the point.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: If they can get the Government to do this, it will be done before November next, and the people will get cheaper milk and, in some instances, I believe, a better quality of milk than in the past. There are upwards of 200 milk producers in the district I have referred to, and they have a production of from 3,000 to 5,000 gallons of milk per day. The producers are prepared to go before the Commission and if the price of bran were to come down, they would be prepared to give the consumer the benefit of the decreased price.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.16]: Is it a fair thing to us or to the people we represent, that we should have this Bill brought before us now?

Hon. J. Cornell: And in the form in which it is?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I will deal with the form of the Bill later on. I address this question to the Government and through the Press to the public. Is it reasonable that a matter affecting the community as a whole, should be brought down to the Council at this hour? Does it give a fair opportunity for members to confer with those who are interested? Take the dairying industry referred to by Mr. Ardagh. It is not unfair to say that my colleagues and myself have a special claim to be heard on behalf of the dairy people, particularly those of Osborne Park. What opportunity have we had to communicate with those people? Even assuming that we have

had some time to communicate with them, considering the hours they keep and those we keep, what opportunity have we had of visiting them and trying to understand their conditions? To do that is a matter of some difficulty and requires some little time. I only mention that as one illustration, because the principle of price fixing is not confined to those engaged in the dairying industry. I would have no hesitation in facing the electors of Osborne Park if the Bill were dropped, on the ground that they were not given an opportunity of placing their views before their Parliamentary representatives. If the Bill were introduced for the purpose of dealing with someone's salary, as suggested by Mr. Lovekin, it might be said to have some merit and specific object. What the purpose of the measure is, I do not know, unless it be another illustration of the stupidity, of the ignorance and of the cowardice of the present Government who are too frightened to deal with this measure. The Premier has told us not once, not twice, but three times—

Hon. J. Cornell: They are chloroforming it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: At any rate, the Premier has three times told us that he does not believe in this system. The Leader of the House does not approve of it, as we know. He could make as excellent a speech in favour of the old Act or of the present Bill as he could in favour of the abolition of the legislation.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He does that regarding any Bill.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: For my part, I will inform my constituents that the State cow is a great deal better than the Osborne Park cow, and the greatest industry before us at the present time is that of exploiting the Government. I am totally opposed to price fixing and prices regulation, questionable even in war time. I would rather have seen the whole thing carried out under military law, so that the military authorities would have seized goods and distributed them fairly among the community.

Hon. A. H. Pantou: It would not have been done fairly.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It would have been difficult, I admit.

Hon. A. H. Pantou: The officers would see about that.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: This was introduced as a war measure. As long as a man tried to do his best, Minister or departmental officer alike, I would not discuss his actions during the war period, but the war is over and the question is: Is it, or is it not, a wise policy to continue this system? If it is not, the sooner we get back to the older system the better. If that is the position, the Government should have given more notice. I cannot understand why the Bill did not appear before us earlier in the session.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: We have had 50 already.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have glanced through the Bills we have passed this session and surely that under discussion is a great

deal more important than many of the measures which already appeared before us. We are manœuvred into the position that we now are facing. Are we to throw this Bill out without discussion or are we to permit it to go on the statute-book against our better judgment? I do not think any section of the community or the consumers have expressed opinions regarding this matter.

Hon. J. Duffell: I have been approached.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: I will give you a message from them.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Will the hon. member permit me to give a message to the people?

Hon. J. Cornell: He is going up for election.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I take it that my hon. colleague indicates that he has been given a message by the Osborne Park people to vote for the Bill. It is not a threat, but it puts me in a difficult position because these people are entitled to put their case before us. I put that aside, however, and ask: Are there not other sections of the community entitled to consideration? Are the city merchants in Perth not entitled to have some notice? I think six months' notice is what they should be entitled to, but should they not have at least three months' notice that the Bill will be dropped, say, after December?

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: It is on that assumption that the retailers are working.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: They cannot work on any assumption, any more than we can. We are to oppose or pass the Bill without proper discussion, owing to the stupidity and lack of foresight of the Government.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You seem to be discussing it fairly well.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am certainly having a small say on the matter, but I am entitled to discuss it. The farmers, for instance, have taken good care to fix up their wheat business.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They did not want to come under this Bill.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: No, they did not. It would not be any exaggeration to say that the people in the country, having fixed up a good deal for themselves, do not take any interest in this measure. What of those others who are entitled to consideration? Are not the small people, whom we brushed aside in the Income Tax Bill and the merchant princes and ordinary storekeepers entitled to a hearing and to justice? What are we to do? Are we to pass the second reading of the Bill and waste three or four hours in Committee or are we to refer it to a select committee? We have found out recently that there are several ways of defeating a Bill. Are we to divide ourselves into equal numbers and permit you, Mr. President, to decide upon the legislation for the State by means of your casting vote? If so, I would not envy you your task. It is a matter of considerable difficulty for members representing some metropolitan districts to come

to a fair decision. After a certain amount of hesitation in view of all the circumstances, and recognising that whatever is done, injustice and hardship will be worked upon some section of the community owing to the lack of foresight on the part of Ministers, I have determined, without having had an opportunity of consulting my colleagues or the electors, or other sections of the community with whom I would like to have conferred, to oppose the second reading of the Bill. If anyone should complain I shall not argue, but admit that the complainant must go to the head and front offender and request information from the Premier and his colleagues. It would not be difficult for the Government, having a whole army of civil servants at their disposal, to collect the necessary information to enable them to give proper notice to those concerned as to their intentions regarding this legislation. The Premier should have made a public statement at an early stage. That would have been a statesmanlike attitude to adopt. It does not require much foresight and statesmanship to get Ministers to decide the matter around a conference table and inform the public that after a certain period the legislation will lapse. Regarding the public utterances of Ministers, I am not surprised that one hon. member should refer to the retailers gambling on the position. The Premier has stated officially that he does not believe in the price-fixing business and the Leader of the House is of the same opinion. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill and, if it is defeated, I hope as little damage as possible will be the result of my action.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (West) [5.32]: I am an advocate of price fixing, in view of the fact that practically the whole of the commercial enterprises are so well organised nowadays that the old idea of supply and demand has gone by the board. However, I enter my emphatic protest against the attitude of the Government on this measure. The Leader of the House told us that the commission had gone out of office. When did they go out of office?

The Minister for Education: On the 31st December.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am inclined to think that some of the commission are still in office.

Hon. J. Duffell: Then the Leader of the House ought to pay for them.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Mr. Ardagh referred to the milk supply. There are two organisations interested in the milk supply, the producer and the retailer or middle-man. Mr. Ardagh's complaint about the middle-man exploiting the producer comes very late in the day. I have never known anything else to occur. It is of no use the hon. member putting up a plea for a half measure of this description, simply because the organisation of milk vendors has got in ahead of the

producers' association on this occasion. It is not a great while since the position was reversed. I remember a whole host of milk carts being drawn up in front of the Trades Hall. Their owners were not interested in the Trades Hall, but they were looking for the disputes committee.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And the water supply is not kept there.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No; they came there for brains and received the benefit of them. The producers had got in on the retailers.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: This is the first time I have ever heard of that occurring.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The retailers had refused to pay the price asked for the milk and the producers—rightly so in my opinion—said they could not get it for less. The disputes committee were asked to deal with the matter, but we referred them to the Prices Regulation Commission, and some settlement was arrived at, but there was a possibility of the retailers being held up by the producers. I was pleased to hear from Mr. Ardagh that the producers are awaking to their responsibilities. We have the producer, then the depot, then the retailer and then the consumer, and we talk about calling in the Prices Regulation Commission to deal with a position of that kind! I hope Mr. Ardagh and his producer friends will get their depot going so that the consumer may be supplied direct by the producer. One of the great difficulties existing to-day is the cost of distribution. With scientific research and up-to-date machinery, production has reached the point when the world's markets are over-supplied but, owing to the cost of distribution, there is no chance of bringing down the cost of living. What was the cause of the delay in bringing this measure before Parliament? Mr. Sanderson said it was a war measure. I do not think that is correct.

Hon. A. Sanderson: That was the origin of it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: When it was introduced by the Labour Government, it was thrown out. While the war was in progress, we did without it. The measure was re-introduced in 1919, and it was then that the regulation of prices was begun. The Government are merely trying to make the people believe they are doing something to protect them, though they well know that it is impossible to protect them by means of this measure. The Leader of the House knows it and the "Western Trader" knows it. The organisation responsible for that particular journal came into being about 1913. The rules of the Shop Assistants' Union were borrowed and rules were drafted from them. It is a fairly solid organisation, quite capable of dealing with the business of to-day. If the Government were honest in their intentions they should have introduced the Bill earlier. Everyone knows that during the last six months deputation after deputation from the Chamber of Manufactures and the Chamber

of Commerce has urged the Premier to do away with the Prices Regulation Commission. The Minister knows there has been a continual agitation by big business men to get rid of this law. I think the Government are trying to placate two sections of the community—the big business people and the consumers—by introducing this measure. The Government should have expressed their agreement with the Chamber of Manufactures and the Chamber of Commerce and said that the day of price fixing was ended, or told the consumers they believed further protection was necessary and that the Act would be continued. As the Government were not prepared to do either of these things, I shall not support them in any half measure. I stated in 1919 that I had very little hope of the Prices Regulation Commission accomplishing any real good. I pay tribute to them for their earnest endeavours, but the bulk of a grocers' stock comes from the Eastern States and practically the whole of our wearing apparel is manufactured in the Eastern States. The manufacturers put the price on the manufactured article; the wholesale people had to get their commission and when the goods eventually reached the retailer, what could the Commission do? They must be fair. They asked the retail grocer whether a certain price was a fair one for a manufactured article like oatmeal. He produced his invoice, and all that the Commission could do was to agree to him adding a fair margin of profit, generally about 16 per cent. The grocer works on a smaller margin than any other section of trader, usually from 16 to 30 per cent. The Commission could do nothing with G. Wood Son & Co., J. & W. Bateman, and such like firms whose head offices are in Adelaide, Melbourne or Sydney. These firms put their prices on manufactured articles, and so arranged their invoices that the Commission had to admit the landed cost was as shown, and had to allow a fair margin of profit on that. Consequently, the Commission never had an opportunity to do the work they should have done. The only method of regulating prices would be by having a Federal Commission.

Hon. J. Cornell: A Federal commission could trace the goods to their source.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes. Now what is going on as regards the manufacturers? Bulletin No. 14 of the Federal Statistician shows that the number of employees in manufacturing in 1911 was 311,710 and in 1920 376,734; the number of proprietors 13,332 and 13,936, the wages paid to employees £27,523,371 and £52,115,588. The wages paid represent an increase of about 55 per cent. The value of material used in 1911 was £79,004,376. In 1920 the figures were £187,722,877, a vast difference in the value of the material used. The margin for overhead charges and profits in 1911 was £26,489,343. The margin for overhead charges and profits in 1920 was £52,698,143. It will be seen that in 1911 every penny of that increase was passed on

to the manufactured article, plus just over 20 million pounds in addition. Those are not my figures, they are the figures of the Federal Statistician. Let me put the position in another way. Regarding wages, the average per annum in 1911 was £92 5s., while the average amount taken for profit per proprietor was £1,986 18s. In 1920 the wages averaged £143 6s. 8d., while the average amount for profit per proprietor totalled £3,781 9s. These figures show that while the average wage paid to the worker in 1920 was 55 per cent. higher than in 1911, we find that the profit per proprietor was 90 per cent. higher. Bearing in mind those figures, I contend that to tinker with prices regulation by means of a pettifogging measure of this description is only wasting the time of the House and the country. We find on the Estimates that a sum of only £700 has been allowed for the work of the Commission. The Minister told us that the cost of the Commission for the whole period was £4,800. During that period there were three Commissioners, one of whom from the inception retained his position in the service of the State as Controller of Stores, and I presume that the only additional salary he drew was the difference between what he received as Controller and as a Commissioner. During Mr. Rae's absence, the Registrar of Friendly Societies, Mr. Bennett, was given a seat on the commission. Mr. Bennett controls a big department which must take up a good deal of his time, and it often puzzles me how those two gentlemen were able to carry out their dual duties. They must have had quite sufficient to do in their own departments without being asked to do any work on the Prices Commission. I consider the House is justified in refusing to pass the measure. No one will give the Government more ardent support than I when it comes to a question of protecting the consumers from exploitation. But it is useless to say that, as the war is over, prices will come down because competition is keen, and all that sort of thing. There is no competition to-day so far as commercial enterprise is concerned, or at least there is very little, because every section of the community is organised to such an extent that they regulate their prices and the only difference between them and the workers is that they meet together and set their prices, whilst the workers have to go to a tribunal to get theirs fixed. I regret that the Act was not re-introduced for another year to give the Commission a chance of doing the best they could. I believe they have done some good. They have been energetic in their work, even though they have been at a big disadvantage owing to the facts I have quoted. Under the Bill before us we try to induce the public to believe that we are giving something to protect them. I say we are only throwing dust in their eyes, and there will be no possibility of the public getting redress out of the Bill. Consequently I will vote against the second reading.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.50]: I fancy this is a topsy-turvy world. The last speaker is an advocate of price fixing but he proposes to vote against the Bill. I have supported two price fixing measures brought into this Chamber since I returned from the war, and at the same time I have always said that in normal times I am against price fixing. I intend—and this is perhaps where I may also be accused of a topsy-turvy act—to support this Bill, and I do so for the reason that we are now undergoing a transition period from price fixing to de-control. In these circumstances anomalies are bound to occur and certain injustices such as have been pointed out by Mr. Ardagh may be inflicted upon the primary producer and the consumer, and possibly at times on the middleman. I understand it is the intention of the Government to maintain the existing price fixing machinery which they may want to use if they consider it necessary to do so in the interests of any of the sections of the community I have mentioned. It is on that understanding that I intend to support the Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [5.52]: Just prior to the Christmas adjournment I asked the Leader of the House what was going to become of the Prices Regulation Act and I think that the answer he gave was that it was to be allowed to lapse. Evidently the Act has been buried, but now has been exhumed to enable a post mortem to be conducted on it, and I suppose that is one of the reasons that prompted Dr. Saw to take part in the debate. If the Bill before the House had any substance, hon. members would be justified in supporting it. But it has no substance. What does it propose to do? It proposes to revive a corpse. The position is that we had a parent Act and an amendment Act. The parent Act provided for three Commissioners, whose duties were to inquire and report from time to time on the prices existing, wholesale, retail, etc. The Bill before us re-enacts the amending Act abolishes the Commission. That is really what it amounts to and it authorises the Government to re-constitute the Commission when necessary.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Quite reasonable, too.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The work of the Commission has been to act as police. If we abolish the Commission, who is to make reports to the Government so that Orders-in-Council may be issued? Then the position will be left to the whims and wiles of the Government. Therefore, I cannot support the second reading. I will not be too hard on my colleague from the goldfields, who is not here, but I will content myself by saying, "He thinks he doth protest too much." As for the transition period to which Dr. Saw referred, I would like to know where the de-control is in Western Australia. It is not the war that we are suffering from, but peace.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [5.55]: The Bill seems to me to be one of the most simple and reasonable that has come under notice. There has been an immense protest from a number of people, as instanced by Mr. Panton, who objects to price fixing. To meet that objection the Government have said, "We will do away with price fixing." Then another class of people said, "We must be protected." The Government say "If you are being unfairly dealt with, if monopolies are being carried on, or any injustice is being done, here is the machinery to inquire into it." It seems to be a most reasonable Bill and I cannot understand why my friend should make so much trouble about it. All we have to do is, if we do not want price fixing, to vote against the Bill. If we want control over prices, then let us support the Bill. I have been struck by the moderation of the Bill and the common sense in it. I feel that it does away with the objection of those who do not want price fixing. It does away with the Commission, or whatever it is called, and machinery is arranged by which if people are indulging in monopolies, to which I object myself, or if people are endeavouring to make others pay exorbitant prices, it will be available to stop that kind of thing. Unless I hear anything further to influence me, I shall vote for the second reading.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (South-West) [6.0]: It struck me that Mr. Panton used excellent arguments against the Bill. He pointed out that, to really do any good, there should be a Federal Commission. If a Bill is to do any good at all I contend it must provide for a universal commission to deal with the prices of the world. We are at the present time endeavouring to pass a measure which will enable the Government to deal with prices in the State, and the solid argument has been advanced by Mr. Panton who pointed out that articles manufactured in the Eastern States are practically untouchable by the Commission with regard to prices. I go further and say that every producer in this State has been, and is to-day, at the mercy of the manufacturers overseas, who send us goods for which we have to pay extortionate prices. What do we have to pay for imported clothing and for imported tinned goods. The whole thing is a farce. Mr. Panton is concerned about the consumer, but I am deeply concerned about the producer. It would be a good job if the producer of milk were pinched a little bit. The producers would then see the necessity for waking up and working in together.

Hon. F. A. Baglin: Economic pressure.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: They would then start the depots and carry out their own distribution. Bad debts and the cost of distribution have been the cause of much of the trouble over the past years in regard to the price of milk to the consumer.

Hon. J. Duffell: The Government are in possession of all these particulars.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I think the biggest deputation that ever waited upon a Minister, waited upon me from the milk people. I said to them "You see a dozen carts going down one street; you complain of bad debts; what you ought to do is to work on the ticket system, which would prevent bad debts, allocate different districts to different depots, and cut out the huge cost of distribution incurred by having a dozen vehicles chasing each other down one street."

Hon. J. Duffell: That was advocated five years ago.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: The producer is getting 1s. 0½d. for his butter fat. If he made his own butter instead of sending his cream to the factory the storekeeper would give him 1s. 1d. per lb. Half an hour afterwards the storekeeper would sell it over the counter for 1s. 6d. He tells the producer he cannot afford to sell at less than 1s. 6d., and cannot afford to pay him more than 1s. 1d. According to his argument it costs him 50 per cent. on his purchase price to retail the butter over the counter, although it is supplied to him in pound lumps. How much more must it cost the producer to produce the milk, when he has to buy the land and milk and feed his cows?

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: What about his rent and assistants?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: The retailer has his heel upon the neck of the producer, and will keep it there until the producer tackles the proposition himself. What has the Prices Regulation Commission done for the fruitgrower? I have sent the finest quality lemons to market in 40 lb. cases, and received the magnificent return of 2s. 6d. per case. The cost of the case, the freight, commission and cartage came to 2s. 9d. The lemons were retailed in the shops at 2d. The Prices Regulation Commission did not help the producer. The whole thing has been a farce in the case of the producer, and has been no better so far as the consumer is concerned. The whole thing has been a myth. While we have such useless measures on our statute book so long will the public continue to go to the Government or the commission with complaints. The public should be able to deal with this question very much better than the commission, which has never been of the slightest assistance either to the consumer or to the producer. I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—on amendment) [6.5]: I trust the amendment will not be agreed to. It has been objected that the Bill has been brought down late in the session. We have had altogether 59 Bills to deal with. This House and another place have been working hard since the session commenced in July. As Sir Edward Wittenoom has pointed out, in this Bill the issue is a simple one, and no member should have any difficulty in making up his mind upon

it. The work of the Commission in the past has been such as to justify the passing of the Bill. One reason why it was introduced late was that the Government did not think the circumstances existing to-day were such as to justify a continuance of the Commission in its old form. They felt, however, there might be a great danger in suddenly relaxing all control without taking any power to deal with abuses which might arise. I can understand the attitude of Mr. Pantou in supporting the amendment that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. I think I know the motive of the hon. member, and it is a good one from his point of view. He thinks if it is not read a second time now, and there is no control over prices for the next six months, there will be such a public outcry for the resumption of price fixing that Parliament will re-enact it in its full form. He thinks the unjustifiable increases in prices will be such that within that period there will be a public demand for price fixing generally. I am inclined to agree that this is what will actually occur.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But prices are falling.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Undoubtedly, but it is a question whether they are falling as rapidly as they should be doing in many cases. Reference has been made to the question of supply and demand. Let me take superphosphates. We have two companies in this State manufacturing this commodity, competing against each other to such an extent that if one company receives an order that is not altogether suitable to it, the order is passed on to the other company, and the price is arranged between the two. The Commission has already stepped in to prevent an increase in the price, and in another case insisted upon a decrease.

Hon. J. Duffell: That is only an isolated case.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is the sort of case that may recur. These companies might have put up the price even beyond the figures they desired to reach but for the intervention of the Commission. Many cases of this kind may occur. I know of numerous instances in which trade is controlled. When we find cases where trade is so controlled as to constitute profiteering, that combinations are exploiting the public, there should be some power in the hands of the Government to appoint a commission and have a full investigation. The matter is entirely within the discretion of members. It is singular to me that we should find, as we do in so many cases, two extremes in opinions voting together. We were told that the lion and the lamb would not lie down together. On this Bill it looks as if we should find members who are opposed to price fixing voting with those who desire it in a most extreme form.

Hon. A. Lovekin: If you think that, why do you not make it a permanent measure?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think it is justifiable as a permanent

measure. It is not my opinion that price fixing generally does any good, but at present there is need for the Government to have this power. If this power be taken from the Government the chances are a strong case will be built up for price fixing generally. Mr. Willmott has referred to overseas prices, and the impossibility of fixing them. I quite agree with what he says. There are a hundred and one things which the Commission could not do, and if the Bill be passed there are many things which it would not be competent for the Government to refer to the Commission. Because we cannot do everything, is that any reason why we should not endeavour to do something? I hope the amendment will be defeated, and that the Bill will be read a second time now.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN (West) [6.12]: I am convinced that there is need for the Prices Regulation Commission, and what we want is something of a permanent nature. Three permanent Commissioners should be appointed for this purpose, and if the Bill had provided for that I should be supporting it. It is one of the most disappointing measures ever brought down to us.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: You believe in no bread being better than a half loaf?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: This is an abortion of a Bill.

Hon. J. Duffell: That is a good word.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: It is of no use whatever, and I am going to vote for the amendment. I hope the Government will see the error of their ways and appoint a permanent commission when they next meet Parliament.

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

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Before tea I was expressing my disappointment with this Bill. I would have supported the measure had it been a comprehensive one, or one on the lines of the Bill brought down by the Labour Administration in 1914. Even at this late hour I might be induced to support the second reading of the present Bill, if there were some Minister in charge of prices regulating legislation other than the Leader of this House. If we carry the measure, it will be administered by our Leader; and I am not prepared to trust that gentleman with the powers under the Bill. The present Mitchell Government seem to have set out with an absolute determination to cripple the Labour policy, particularly as regards the State trading concerns. What is wrong with those concerns is faulty administration.

The PRESIDENT: I might point out that we are not discussing the State trading concerns.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: No, Sir; but I wish to make the point that I am not prepared to hand over to an unsympathetic Minister legislation of this kind. We can only expect good administration of an Act when the Minister is sympathetic towards the Act. Some years ago I read in an old book the question, "Can

the leopard change his spots?" No. No more can the present Leader of the House change his views. On the measure placed before this House by the Labour Government in 1915, the present Leader of the House spoke as follows, his remarks being recorded in "Hansard" of the 28th September—

I cannot see any justice in the Commission fixing prices. There is also this dangerous feature, that the law of supply and demand operates so that when supplies get short, the prices get higher, and the people economise, and, therefore, a particular article is made to go further than it otherwise would. But if we attempt by artificial means to keep the price down we lose the economy, and the community in the long run is the loser . . . The whole theory of price-fixing is wrong; the law of supply and demand not only fixes prices, but regulates the consumption in a way which will work out for the good of the community.

Not only did the present Leader of the House speak in that way against that Bill, but he voted against it. And yet he advocates the Bill now before the House.

Hon. A. Lovekin: He has changed his opinion.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Why does he not say so? I am not prepared to hand over legislation of this character to unsympathetic hands, and so defeat what I believe to be a good thing, and something that the community requires. I know that a reaction will set in. I have heard the present Prices Regulation Commission designated a "prices raising commission." The Commissioners have been held up to ridicule by a large section of the public. Despite the views expressed by the Minister for Education here to-day, I am not prepared to vote for this Bill. During the same discussion in 1915, and on the same day, the Hon. J. J. Holmes, spoke as follows:—

I rise to oppose the second reading of this Bill, and if I had not thought out any argument myself, the speech delivered by Mr. Colebatch was sufficient in itself to justify anyone in rising to oppose the second reading.

Why this change of front on the part of Mr. Holmes? There must be an explanation, and surely the House is entitled to that explanation. Again, Dr. Saw stated in 1915:—

I am one who in normal times deprecates most strongly any undue interference with trade. If this Bill was to continue, or any measure of the same kind was proposed, during peace times, I would oppose it most strongly.

There is not much consistency as between that kind of language and Dr. Saw's attitude to-day.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Elections come round.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: It is remarkable to observe how when a measure of this kind is introduced by a Government to which the hon members in question are not opposed they take the very contrary view to that which they expressed and acted upon when similar

legislation was introduced by a Labour Government. I have not been able to trace any observations by Sir Edward Wittenoom in this connection, but I do find that he voted against the 1915 Bill. So he has changed, too. Now, what does the present Bill provide? It provides power to the Minister to call the Prices Regulation Commission together when it so pleases him to do, and he can then say to the Commissioners, "Here is a certain commodity, and I want you to deal with that commodity and fix a price for it." That is not right. If the price of one commodity is to be fixed, let us fix the prices of all commodities; otherwise let us have no price fixing at all. I am prepared to support the Government if they will bring down a Bill that will prove of any service; but this measure is useless. Moreover, if a law is to be administered effectively, it must be administered by a sympathetic Minister. In 1915 such a measure as this was, according to the present Leader of the House, unnecessary and in restraint of trade. If the hon. gentleman was honest in all he said then, it is almost impossible for him to administer effectively this measure, in which he cannot believe. I shall vote against the second reading.

Hon. T. MOORE (Central) [7.43]: Although I shall not speak at length, I cannot give a silent vote. I hold that there is a good deal to be said for price fixing. Though I am of opinion that the present Government will not give legislation towards that end sympathetic administration, I am hopeful that there will be another Government in power, who will administer such a law as this sympathetically. I can see the signs of the times. From the attitude adopted by various members of this Chamber, it appears that they also feel that if the change does not take place, it ought to take place.

Hon. J. Duffell: It looks very much like that!

Hon. T. MOORE: I believe that such a measure as this, sympathetically administered, can very frequently prove of use. But if the Commissioners are not available at all times, there will be no authority to police prices. On the other hand, if a rising price for any particular article does not justify itself in the eyes of the consumer, he will very soon make himself heard, and he will go to those in authority and ask that the Commission be instructed to investigate. In this way the matter can be policed; whether it will be another question. It will give the consumer the right to go to the Government and say, "You can stop this." If the Bill is defeated, the Government will be able to say, "We have no power." If members wish to provide the Government with a loophole, they will defeat the Bill. Their reason for not putting on commissioners in the past was that the Chamber of Commerce has been knocking at the door and telling the Government that they are in power to look after the Chamber of Commerce. The policy of the Government is supposed to be in sympathy with those things

desired by the Chamber of Commerce, but I am not going to allow the Bill to go by the board, simply because the Chamber of Commerce chooses to kick up a noise.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The members of that body are against the Government.

Hon. T. MOORE: Only on certain things. The legislation which the Chamber of Commerce would have knocked out is legislation which, in my opinion, is good for the country. Unless we retain the measure the Government will be without power to do anything in the matter of price fixing, and both the consumer and the producer will be detrimentally affected.

Amendment (six months) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	6
Majority for	..	..	..	3

#### AYES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. E. H. Harris	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. R. O. Ardagh	Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Cunniffham	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; Bill rejected.

### BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT.

#### Third Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East): The third reading of this Bill was deferred until the certificate of the Chairman of Committees was ready. I understand that the certificate is now ready and I am prepared to move the third reading. I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

### BILL—ARCHITECTS.

#### Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly, notifying that it had amended amendment No. 3, and had disagreed to amendment No. 5 made by the Council, now considered.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Council's amendment No. 3. Clause 27, Subclause (3), line 2.—Strike out "one-third" and insert "one-sixth" in lieu there-

of. Line 3.—Strike out "or represented by proxy."

Assembly's modification. Strike out the words: "Line 3.—Strike out 'or represented by proxy.'"

#### The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:

The form in which the Assembly's modification has been sent down is not very clear. It, however, affects only a temporary matter and is not worth worrying about. I move—

That the Assembly's modification be agreed to.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Council improved the position and the Assembly has now made it worse. I think the amendment should be sent back to the Assembly.

#### The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:

I would be inclined to try to get the matter put in better order if this were a permanent provision, but it applies only to a purely temporary matter prior to the establishment of the board and, therefore, is not of great consequence.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's modification agreed to.

No. 5. Insert the following new clause, to stand as Clause 34:—"The provisions of this Act shall apply only to the metropolitan area."

#### The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:

This amendment is one which I endeavoured on two occasions to get the Council not to insist on. The reason given by the Assembly for disagreeing to the amendment is that to restrict the operations of the association to the metropolitan area would not be in the best interests of the State. With that reason I agree. When the Bill was before us, it was intended that it should not in any way interfere with persons doing the work of architects. In order that this should be quite clear, we put in a further amendment making it more definite. With that further amendment, the Assembly has agreed. There can be no question as to the right of any person to design and carry out buildings anywhere in the State. The only thing he cannot do is to set himself up as an architect. In view of this, it would be a great mistake to insist on the amendment. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

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

### BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

#### Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [8.0]: In moving the second reading said:—This is a short Bill and is intended to remain in operation only during the present year. It will be within



the knowledge of members that a comprehensive licensing Bill was introduced in another place. That Bill has been referred to a select committee and will be exhaustively inquired into and, therefore, cannot be passed until Parliament reassembles. In the meantime it is considered by the Government to be necessary to do something to prevent the intentions of the local option section of the Act from being defeated. This Bill provides that—

It shall be unlawful, during the continuance of the Act, for a Licensing Court to grant any license or to register any club for or in respect of premises not licensed or registered at the commencement of this Act: Provided that this section shall not apply to eatinghouse, boardinghouse, or lodginghouse licenses, billiard table licenses, or occasional licenses.

Those licenses issued under Section 45 of the principal Act are licenses situated not less than 15 miles from an existing license. In that respect this Bill does not limit the powers of the licensing bench. What the Bill does is to prevent something which we have good reason for supposing would occur if the Bill were not passed. Premises that were licensed only to the end of last year, and whose licenses were taken away because of the recent local option poll, may be taken over by clubs. Clubs at present can be registered, and such premises could then be conducted as registered clubs. There is nothing to prevent it. It is within the knowledge of the Government that preliminary steps have in some cases been taken to endeavour to have this done. I think the House would agree that it would be a most improper evasion of the local option vote if licensed premises, which had been closed in consequence of the local option vote, could be reopened as a club and obtain registration. The local option poll does not apply to clubs, and consequently if the licensing bench received an application for a certificate complying with the conditions of the Licensing Act, and the premises were suitable—they would be suitable because they would already have held a general license—it would be very difficult for the bench to refuse it. At the same time this would be very improper, and the purpose of the Bill is to prevent it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.3]: Whilst I am in accord with the Bill there is one thing I should like to see inserted in it. It provides that no new license shall be granted, and I should like to see a provision inserted protecting any license which has already been promised by the licensing bench. There is a building being erected on the Esplanade by the A.N.A. as club premises. I understood that the directors of that association have already been promised a license for their club, but this is held in abeyance until such time as the premises are completed. These are very nearly

finished now, and it would be an injustice and a breach of faith to this association if, after all this money had been spent, the license were not granted. It is for the purpose of protecting a case of this kind that I desire to see a proviso inserted in the Bill. On that understanding I will support the second reading, but if the Minister refuses this request I shall have to take other measures to bring it about.

The Minister for Education: When will the premises be completed?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I believe within a month or so, but they cannot be licensed until they are finished.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It was promised by the bench.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [8.5]: It seems an extraordinary thing to take these powers. My province is not affected by the Bill.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The metropolitan area does not mind.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is an extraordinary thing to bring down a Bill to declare that any act of the licensing bench, which has been set up in a legal manner, shall be unlawful.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN (West) [8.6]: I am prepared to vote for the second reading, but something will have to be done with Clause 2 in order that any body of persons who may desire to form a club may be protected. I am not disposed to give exclusive rights to existing clubs.

Hon. Sir Edward WITTENOOM: Would it be retrospective?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: From the commencement of this Act, and for the next 12 months no other club can be registered. I sympathise with the Government in their endeavour to carry out the provisions of the recent local option poll. There is some truth in the statement that the owners of some premises are trying to evade the effect of that poll by converting into clubs hotels that have been de-licensed. That would be a most undesirable thing. The people have declared that these places shall be closed, and the will of the people will have to be obeyed. For my part I would not have closed any of them. The owners of closed premises should be prevented from having them converted into clubs, and for that reason I shall support the second reading. Where, however, a legitimate case is made out by a number of persons for the registration of premises as a club, so long as such premises are not those which have been used as an hotel that has been closed under local option, I fail to see why the application should not meet with success. If this safeguard in regard to premises already closed is taken into account that should be sufficient protection. There may be many places outside the metropolitan area where clubs are wanted, and the people concerned should be given an opportunity of getting them. We have a workers' club at Fremantle, and it

has been stated that the workers of Perth want one here. Provided they open in a place that is suitable to the licensing bench there is no reason why the license should not be granted. I also understand the A.N.A. desire to form a club at Fremantle. If that is desired I am not prepared to vote for a Bill that will prevent that club securing a license. The whole thing can be safeguarded by the licensing bench refusing to grant a permit in the case of any premises closed as a result of the local option poll.

Hon. T. MOORE (Central) [8.10]: The Bill will have a far reaching effect. The licensing bench, in granting club licenses, should be in a far better position to deal with the matter than we are. If a club license was required for premises which had been closed, the people concerned would have to prove that they were the bona-fide owners of the premises. If the licensing magistrates are of opinion that the application is a bona-fide one, they will grant the license; if not they will refuse it, more especially if they think that an attempt is being made to evade the result of the recent local option poll. It is not necessary to have this Bill placed on the statute book for the next 12 months. It savours of rush legislation. Because it has been suggested that one place will be turned into a club why should we deprive other people of the right to form a club? We are taking the hurdle before we come to it. If the Bill does not go through it is certain that other clubs will be registered. The only place in which hotels have been closed is in the metropolitan area. I shall vote against the Bill.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.12]: I am in favour of the object of this Bill, although I agree with the remarks of the last speaker. When I heard of the Bill the first question I asked was "Who are the licensing authorities, and have they power to deal with this question." I was told that they had practically no power to deal with clubs, and would be compelled to license them. I can hardly credit that.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is an important point.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Have you verified that?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have not been able to verify everything during the last 48 hours. I intend to support the Bill, but have to express my regret that it seems necessary to interfere with the ordinary course of business and justice in this country.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [8.13]: The Government are to be commended for bringing forward this measure. From the standpoint of the licensing bench, hotels and club licenses are different. If a combination of 30 men apply for a club license it may be a difficult matter for the bench to refuse the application.

Hon. A. Sanderson: For hotel premises which have been closed?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: For any premises. I am not a strong supporter of Clause 2. We shut the door for 12 months against any persons who may desire to form a club.

Hon. T. Moore: They shut it against everyone.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It goes further than I desire. I am, however, prepared to support the Government in the object they have in view. It would be a bad thing if the position were such that the decision of the local option poll could be evaded by persons who would use closed premises for the sale of intoxicating liquor.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Only the general licenses have been cancelled.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The electors have spoken in no uncertain voice, and there must be reduction.

Hon. J. Cunningham: So far as hotels are concerned.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: So far as the premises where liquor is sold are concerned. If a club can distribute as much liquor as can be put through an hotel wherein does the difference lie? I will support the second reading with a view to seeing whether in Committee an amendment cannot be made to Clause 2.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION Hon. H. P. Colebatch—(East) in reply [8.15]: I have no objection to the amendment suggested by Mr. Duffell. Undoubtedly if a promise has been made by the licensing bench and on the strength of that promise people have spent a good deal of money, the promise ought to be honoured.

Hon. T. Moore: That is only one case. What about others?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I will extend it to all such cases. Although the Bill says the Act shall continue in force until the 31st December, 1922, that is subject to repeal, and there is no intention that the Act shall remain in force one day after the comprehensive Licensing Bill is passed. That Bill will contain a clause repealing this measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Granting of new licenses suspended.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the proviso, "Or to club registrations already provided by a licensing bench."

Hon. J. CORNELL: Why should it be confined to promises? Suppose an application be properly lodged before the passing of the Bill.

The Minister for Education: It could not be.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But have no applications been lodged?

The Minister for Education: The licensing bench does not sit till March, and so no applications could have been lodged.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In case such application has been lodged we should leave the granting of it to the discretion of the court.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I will oppose the amendment, but I should prefer to see the clause go altogether. We propose to make provision for the A.N.A., which has a building in the course of erection for the purposes of a club, but what about other centres? Many large districts are not in favour of reduction at all. Why should they be brought under the provisions of the Bill?

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I wish to move an amendment prior to that before the Committee.

Mr. Duffell: I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I move an amendment—

That after "in respect of" in line 3 all words down to "principal Act" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu, "No premises which have been closed under the provisions of the local option poll taken in 1921."

The amendment means that the licensing bench shall have power to grant new licenses to clubs in respect of buildings other than those closed under the local option poll. Also, it may be necessary to grant general licenses in other districts.

The Minister for Education: That can be done under Section 45 of the Act.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Still the amendment is desirable.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The objection to the amendment is that it would permit of the defeating of the intention of the local option provision. It refers to premises. What about localities? The local option poll had relation to localities. To set up a club next door to de-licensed hotel premises would be to defeat the intention of the poll.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Government have had more time in which to consider the points involved than have we, and so, with a protest against this scamping of work in the closing hours of the session, I will support the Bill as it stands.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I will support the amendment, because I think it meets all we were led to believe was required in the Bill. The Minister has told us that the object of the Government is not to prevent the issue of club licenses in respect of hotel premises which have been closed, but club licenses anywhere; yet he is prepared to differentiate in favour of a certain club.

The Minister for Education: Because a promise has been given already.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The amendment will meet all requirements.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The point raised by the Minister is a good one. We have to realise that although clubs were not specifically dealt with at the local option poll the electors in certain districts voted "reduction," which means reduction in the consumption of liquor, if it means anything at all. When the will of the people, as set out in the recent liquor vote, is in favour of the closing of an hotel, we should not afford an opportunity for a club to be started in that district.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Because the people in that locality decided otherwise.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Why not wipe out the wine shops if that argument holds good.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I will support the hon. member in any effort, not only to wipe out the hotels and wine licenses, but the manufacture of liquor altogether. As to the A.N.A. license—

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Are you a member?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Ever since I was 16 years of age, I have been a member of the association but not of the club, and that is nearly as old as the hon. member. They have been granted a license pending the completion of their premises. They would not have put up such a building if they had not been able to get the license.

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

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I shall vote against Mr. Baglin's amendment.

Hon. T. MOORE: The Bill means a lot more than we anticipated. Not only does it seek to prevent persons opening up premises as clubs, but it goes much further than the liquor poll, inasmuch as it provides that we shall not permit further licenses to be granted. If that is the intention hon. members should wake up to the fact. It should be remembered that the question of club licenses has never been before the people, who voted on the question of hotel licenses only. There is a great difference between drinking in hotels and in clubs. It may be that members who voted at the recent liquor poll, had in mind the starting of clubs in districts where the hotels were being carried on. There are many ways of carrying on the liquor traffic, and clubs are not the worst form. I am sorry the Bill is to be rushed through this evening.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is only a small measure.

Hon. T. MOORE: The Minister took the trouble to point out that fact. I am not in favour of Mr. Baglin's amendment nor am I in favour of that indicated by Mr. Duffell, because it singles out one section.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I cannot agree with the Leader of the House or Mr. Panton that we are attempting to make inarticulate the decision of the people as indicated at the liquor poll. They were never asked to vote

regarding the club licenses in their district. We should not allow premises which the people decided should be closed as hotels, to be opened as clubs.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That the words "or to club registrations already promised by a Licensing Bench" be added to the proviso.

Hon. T. MOORE: I protest against the amendment, because it will bind the country down too strictly. It will have a far reaching effect respecting which members may be sorry in the future.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That the words "promised by" be struck out and "already applied for to" be inserted in lieu.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: We should not by legislation make it mandatory for the licensing bench to grant certificates to everybody who has an application in at the time this Bill becomes an Act.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I want to provide that any club license that has been applied for may be considered by the licensing court.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It does not say so.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is the logical inference.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I want to give the bench the power to say yes or no to an application.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: My amendment is as narrow as I can make it, and it is wide enough too. Where a promise has been made, that promise should be fulfilled, and where it has not been made, there are reasons for the license not being granted.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I object to the clause altogether, as well as the amendment. Some time ago the Lands Department had under the Lands Act, thrown upon it practically the work of the licensing bench. A Royal Commission was appointed to go into the whole matter and I had to give evidence, and the judge said that it was most improper that the Minister for Lands or any other person should interfere in any shape or form with the functions of the licensing bench. I was Honorary Minister for Lands at that time, and I replied that I was in accord with the remarks. That is on record. It would be inadvisable to allow this to go on the statute book at all because more injustice may be done by the passing of this measure than any possible injustice to a certain number of people, who by their votes have expressed their opinion that there should be a reduction of licenses in their particular locality. To protect those people it is proposed that the privileges and rights of the rest of the State shall be taken from them.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	5
Noes	...	...	...	13
<hr/>				
Majority against	...	...	...	8
<hr/>				

AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. J. Cunningham
Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Cornell	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. A. H. Panton	(Teller.)

Amendment on amendment thus negatived.

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

Clause 3—agreed to.

New clause:

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move:—

That the following new clause be added to stand as Clause 4, "The provisions of this Act shall not apply to the Goldfields districts or the North-West districts as defined by the Sale of Liquor Regulation Act, 1915."

I do not think hon. members can object to that. These districts have been given special consideration in the past.

The Minister for Education: They come under the local option poll just the same.

Hon. T. MOORE: This is a special Bill and it is for a special purpose and, therefore, should not be confined to the metropolitan area. It is unfair if we are to have the goldfields district and the North-West singled out. There are other places just as important as the goldfields and the North-Western parts of the State, and there are many rising townships in which no licenses have yet been granted. I would ask Mr. Cornell to restrict his amendment so that the measure will apply only to those portions of the State where reduction has been carried.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The difficulty could be overcome by moving the insertion in the new clause, after the words "goldfields district" of such words as "agricultural districts"; or we could restrict the operation of the Bill to the metropolitan-suburban district.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Mr. Moore's principal argument was that rising country towns should have the opportunity of obtaining a license. But latterly towns have not been springing up in this State like mushrooms. This measure will be superseded by a Licensing Act Amendment Bill to be introduced next session.

Hon. J. CORNELL: How do you know that Bill will pass?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: How do I know I shall be here? If Mr. Moore's amendment is to be carried, let us adjourn the discussion in order to ascertain in which districts reduction was carried. I do not feel disposed to support Mr. Moore's amendment unless I am satisfied that it includes no district which has carried reduction.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Panton has the broad outlook of Matherites. I am consistent in asking hon. members to exempt certain portions of the State.

New clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	9
Noes	...	...	...	7
Majority for	...	...	...	2

#### AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. H. Pantou
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. E. H. Harris	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. E. Rose	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Sanderson	Hon. J. Duffell
Hon. A. J. H. Saw	(Teller.)

New clause thus passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

### BILL—LOAN.

#### Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [9-15]: in moving the second reading said: This Loan Bill is the necessary corollary to the passing of the Loan Estimates. The position is that on the 30th June last the Government had available for raising on General Loan Account a sum of £4,013,072. A loan for three million pounds has since been issued in London, but that amount included a million which was purely for redemption. Thus the authorisation is decreased to two millions on that account. For soldier settlement £677,800 has been advanced by the Commonwealth, and that sum has to be deducted from the two millions, leaving approximately £1,323,000 now available to be raised. The present Loan Bill contemplates the raising of two millions. Parliamentary authority is required for the purpose of covering expenditure under the Loan Estimates; that is, in cases where the previous authority has been exhausted, or where any new principle has been introduced. It is usual to provide in a Loan Bill for the requirements of the current financial year, and the first six months or nine months of the succeeding financial year. To show the necessity for this Loan Bill, I will quote two or three striking cases. For instance, we have existing authorisation for additions and improvements to opened railways, amounting to £117,376. More than that is required. In accordance with the Loan Estimates which have been passed, a sum of £129,000 is needed. On this Loan Bill £50,000 is provided for that purpose, so that there will be a balance remaining on that vote of £38,376. The position is similar as regards the Wyalcatchem-Mt. Marshall railway; an authorisation of £55,000 is existing, and another £25,000 will be needed to complete the line. For the

electric power station, there is an existing provision of £131,000, and £175,000 is required, and further provision is made on this Loan Bill for that purpose. The most striking instance however, is probably that of the Agricultural Bank. At the present time, on the existing loan authorisation, there is an amount of £107,000 for the Agricultural Bank. A sum of £600,000 is required under the Loan Estimates passed by Parliament. Of the sum included in the Bill, £800,000 is for the purposes of the Agricultural Bank. Thus there will be a surplus of £170,000. For land resumption, as I have already said, no sum is provided at the present time but the Loan Estimates provide for £230,000 and this Loan Bill, £250,000, which will leave a surplus of £20,000. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9-19]: This should be the opportunity to make an examination of our loan authorisations, the position of the loan account and the loan market at the present juncture. It is obviously impossible to do so with any profit, partly because half the members are absent. We have not yet finished our work, most of us are somewhat exhausted, and to appreciate to the full any examination of our financial position, would require freshness and close attention. I have one or two notes in a file which I keep on the loan question which may appeal to hon. members, and if they get beyond this Chamber, they may act as a warning that the position of our loan account should be considered with the greatest concern. By this Bill, we are asked to add two million pounds to our loan account. In order to make the position as graphic as possible, we should consider the question of the capital account and the income account; that is to say, however foolish anyone may be regarding the annual income and annual expenditure account, he should not be led into serious difficulty owing to his foolish handling of the capital account. There are two reasons for this: we are dealing firstly with a much larger figure and, secondly, with an income account with regard to which there is some check on the annual revenue. Once we pass this Bill, for all practical purposes it disappears from our view and control. The principal matter in connection with this loan, is not the actual amount of two million pounds but the fact that we are going to pay something over 6 per cent. for the money. I realise that if we look at the official statements, and listen to the Ministerial representatives, we might gain the impression that 4, 5, or 5½ per cent. would be about the average rate of interest. In order to emphasise that point, I make the statement which cannot be contradicted by anyone who is acquainted with the money market outside Australia—inside Australia it is like the Prices Regulation Act, for by an extraordinary procedure we are limiting the interest on money borrowed from the Federal Government; it is all paper money and for some purposes can be ignored—that it is the outside borrowing that is of supreme importance. I say, without fear of contradiction, that the least at which we shall be able to borrow money outside Australia is 6 per cent. It will be a little more, but to

say 6 per cent. will be on the safe side. Unquestionably, Victoria stands in the soundest position, and recently that State floated a loan. The nominal figure was 6 per cent., although it really amounted to a little more because of discount, exchanges, allowances, and so forth. New South Wales raised a loan at  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., both this and the Victorian loan being floated in London. As to the Queensland loan, it is difficult to follow the position owing to the American exchange, but it runs out at about 7 per cent. Coming to our own affairs, we have to recognise that every penny borrowed will cost us 6 per cent. That is exactly double what we paid in 1896. In that year, we borrowed money on the London market. I think Sir Edward Wittenoom was in London or was a member of the Cabinet at that time. The loan on that occasion was the greatest success we have yet achieved. We secured a million pounds at 3 per cent. and received a slight premium; that is to say, instead of £100, we got £100 2s. 3d. That was the highest point we reached. Will the loan under this Bill reach the lowest point? I question whether it will. It was deemed advisable by Mr. Watt, when Treasurer two or three years ago, to sound a warning that 1922 and 1924 would be the two years of the greatest danger so far as Australian loans in London were concerned. I am quoting from Mr. Watt's statement, which he made in the Federal Parliament, so it may be taken as more or less reliable. He informed the House that in London in 1922, 23 millions of money would have to be raised by Australia, and in 1924, 31 million pounds. That is to say, over 50 million pounds will have to be paid in London within the next two years. What are we going to pay for this money we are authorising? It will be quite 7 per cent. What are we going to invest that money in? I ask hon. members, most of whom are more or less acquainted with the financial position, what we can invest this money in so as to secure a return of 7 per cent. It will take some doing and skilled management. Have we got that skilled management under present conditions? Without further comment, Mr. President, although a great deal more could be said on the subject, I leave it with that note of warning. I can see great difficulties in connection with this matter. If London is to be asked for this money—and I take it London will be asked for it—I suggest to the Leader of the House and his colleagues, both for the sake of Western Australia and for the sake of the people lending the money, that every effort should be made to get Sir James Mitchell to proceed to London. These visits to Melbourne, so far as I can see, are of very little value to Western Australia. The Premier could send his most junior member to these conferences, in order that he may gain some experience in diplomacy and deportment. To send the Premier to London, is of supreme importance. The people there are entitled to see the man and the type of man he is who has 50 millions of their trust funds to administer. I believe that with his knowledge and personality, his honesty and experience, Sir James Mitchell would make a very good impression in London. His experience there might be of assistance to him and perhaps serve as a warning regarding his administration. The policy

of settling in this country is right and this money is to be used for that purpose. Well and good. I think the people in London have almost the right to demand that Sir James Mitchell shall go to London so that they may see him. We shall then get the two millions of money.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. EWING in the chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6—agreed to.

First Schedule:

Hon. A. H. PANTON: A sum of £50,000 is provided for Fremantle harbour works. This is a very small amount in view of the fact that the big traffic bridge is getting dangerous. For water supplies for towns generally, £25,000 is provided and for water supplies in agricultural districts including drainage and irrigation, £50,000. What do the Government intend to do regarding the water supply for Perth and Fremantle? It would be difficult to imagine a worse state of affairs than that which exists at Fremantle. During the summer time it is difficult to get any water at all in the middle of the day at South Fremantle. The women folk have to fill utensils at night in order to have sufficient for the needs of the following day. The water, too, is of bad colour and always hot. Perth and Fremantle are growing, and we should have some statement as to what is proposed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: For the Fremantle harbour there is existing provision for £27,339 to which will be added this £50,000, making a total of over £77,000. For water supply for towns, there is provision under previous Loan Bills of £108,000 which, with the £25,000, gives a total of £133,000. The hon. member cannot reasonably expect me to say what it is intended to do at Fremantle, but it is considered that the amount available will be sufficient to meet expenditure during the period covered by this Bill.

Schedule put and passed.

Second and Third Schedules, Preamble and Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and passed.

#### BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 13:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: This is the most important clause of the Bill. Members have the report of the select committee before

them. If they are satisfied with it, they will strike out this clause. The select committee had no difficulty in arriving at this conclusion. As the Minister for Works said it was the intention to introduce a main roads Bill next session, and as the question of the cost and maintenance of the Perth-Fremantle-road is an extremely intricate and vexed one, we had no hesitation in coming to this conclusion. If members agree with us, the whole question of the Perth-Fremantle road can be discussed when the main roads Bill is before us. The interests of the Perth City Council in this matter are considerable, and it is regrettable that some heat has been engendered between the Works Department and the Perth City Council. One might almost say that a personal antagonism, quite unnecessary and mistaken, exists between these two great bodies. To accurately, justly, and fairly allocate the different burdens, responsibilities, liabilities and distribution where public money is involved must necessarily evoke keen discussion. If this were the time or place, I would be in a position, fortified by the file, to trace the whole story from the time when the Government spent £27,000 on the reconstruction of the Perth-Fremantle-road. If members wish to grasp the problem of this road, they must go back at least to that time. If the Committee agree that this clause should be struck out the effect will be to stand the matter over for five or six months.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What will happen to the road in the meantime? It is already going to pieces.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Perth Council has indicated that it will do something in the matter of attending to the Perth-Fremantle-road from William-street onwards. The amount in dispute is only £700. Both the Mayor and the Minister for Works gave evidence before the committee.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Did you find justification for your recommendation?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Yes.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: With the other recommendations of the committee I cordially agree, but I cannot follow the reasons set out for the recommendation in this case. The one weak point I see is that while the committee say that the problem of the Perth-Fremantle-road should be dealt with next session under a main roads Bill, the road cannot wait until next session. During the last five and a half years some £12,000 has been spent in repairing the road. It is in such a condition now that unless it is repaired at once an enormous sum of money may be required to put it into order. It is considered that between £4,000 and £5,000 spent now would put it into perfect order. The proper course from which to get this money is the traffic fees. Pending the introduction of a main roads Bill I do not see why we should not obtain from the traffic fees the money required to prevent the road from going to rack and ruin.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: This is the most important clause in the Bill.

The Minister for Education: I would agree to the recommendation, but for the fear that the road will fall into ruin.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The interest in this question is intense. The Minister for Works travels over the Perth-Fremantle road every day and has a personal interest in it, but the Perth-Guildford road is also entitled to consideration. If the Minister is given power to take from the £15,000 raised by way of license fees, £5,000 to put the road in order in his own way he will dislocate the finances of these local bodies, and antagonise them.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: How is it proposed to keep the road in order in the meantime?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The money will have to be advanced. The Bill seeks to give the Minister power to take from the money collected whatever he thinks fit to keep the Perth-Fremantle road in order, whereas it certain portions of the money raised were allocated to the different bodies affected, they would be able to do something with the road.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I want to hear stronger arguments before I will support the recommendations of the committee. A main roads Bill cannot be put through Parliament for another 12 months, and one can imagine what the state of the road will be like by that time. If £5,000 is spent within the next three months it will save the expenditure of at least £20,000 at the end of the year. The license fees are collected from those who use the road.

The Minister for Education: The money should come from the people who use the road.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They are the people who pay the license fees.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I regret that I am unable to agree with the recommendations of the select committee. This road extends from Perth to the North-Fremantle bridge, and a large number of local authorities are interested in it. We are to have a main roads Bill next session.

The Minister for Education: I do not think that is quite correct. The Minister for Works hopes to be able to bring it down.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: In view of that, a number of the local authorities will be inclined to neglect their respective portions of the road, and so if Clause 2 be struck out the road will get into a hopeless state of disrepair, or at all events certain sections of it will. In view of the existing high railway freights, the heavy traffic on the Perth-Fremantle road is rapidly increasing, with inevitable results to the road. Most of the heavy lorries using the road belong to Perth, and so it would be unfair to ask the Cottesloe Beach and the North-Fremantle local authorities to be responsible for the maintenance of so much of the road as runs through their respective districts.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Before I can support the recommendation of the select committee I require to hear more about it. Whenever the Perth-Fremantle road gets into disrepair the

King's Park Road has to carry the heavy traffic which ought to be on the main road, and in consequence the King's Park Board has to close the Park against vehicular traffic during certain hours, and in addition has to incur heavy expenditure in repairing the park road. The Perth-Fremantle road is again getting into disrepair, and presently the King's Park Board will be in trouble once more. Therefore, I cannot vote against the clause and so deny the Minister the power to get money for the maintenance of the Perth-Fremantle road. That road cannot wait for the promised main roads Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I went on the select committee against my will, but with a perfectly open mind and I quickly discovered that my previously entertained views were all wrong. The whole crux of the Bill is in this (clause 2. I do not care what legislation may be passed, we must take this into consideration, whether or not the Bill we are considering is going to validate something that has been done. The Minister for Education shakes his head. The evidence will reveal that on the first day the Minister for Works appeared before the select committee this assurance was asked for: Was it intended that the Bill should be retrospective and if the Bill passed, would it allow the Minister for Works to charge the Perth City Council or any other local body on the original cost of the Perth-Fremantle road? The Minister said "No." The opinion given by the Mayor of Perth was that if the clause passed it would permit the Minister to deduct from the allocations from the local governing body not only proportions for the maintenance of the Perth-Fremantle-road, but also deduct an amount for the original construction. The Minister said he did not intend that the Act should be retrospective beyond the 1st January, 1920. The Perth City Council would be apt to test the Minister's powers in the law courts. Instead of forcing through a fundamentally wrong amendment of the Traffic Act, let us adopt the suggestion of the select committee. After all, the difficulty is only a small one, and could be overcome by conciliation. I understand that the other local authorities have not objected to the deductions made by the Minister for Works, though, as the law stands, the Minister has no power to deduct. Further, under the Municipal Corporations Act a municipality cannot expend money outside its boundaries. The clause is unnecessary.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** Even if a comprehensive main roads Bill were passed, it would not alter the principle at all. The principle which Mr. Cornell has denounced as vicious and immoral is absolutely right—that the people who use the road should pay for its maintenance. The hon. member talks about injustice, but my reading of the clause fails to show me how it can act retrospectively. I am perfectly willing to insert in the clause words which will make it absolutely clear that the provision is not to operate retrospectively. We need not bother our heads about past disputes between the

Minister for Works and the Perth City Council. The road cannot be allowed to go to ruin, and the £5,000 required should be deducted from the subsidy, in which case Perth will contribute only its fair share. This clause seeks to assure the future of the road.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: As to a main roads Bill, the circumstances are that some week or two ago the Minister for Works said in another place that he intended to bring in such a Bill next session. When the Minister was before the select committee, I questioned him on that point; and his answer was that he intended and hoped to bring in such a Bill next session. Mr. George went on to say, "It is necessary and urgent." That statement of the Minister is a most important one. As regards the retrospective business, I am entirely with the Leader of the House. Now, what is to be done in the meantime and who is to find the £5,000 required? I, personally knowing the circumstances, would do a good deal and sacrifice something in order to compel the Government to deal with the main roads question properly at the beginning of next session, even if the Perth-Fremantle-road was permitted during the next few months to get into disrepair. That is putting the matter in an extreme form. But the expenditure of £5,000, or even of £10,000, would not place on a proper basis either the Perth-Fremantle-road, or other important roads in the metropolitan area. The roads in King's Park do not represent the only important question here involved. The Minister's principle is that people who use a road should pay for that road. The question of main roads has been discussed by authorities in many parts of the world. The theory of the experts and of the governing bodies is that the central Government should contribute towards the upkeep of the main roads. I have a suspicion that the passing of this clause will tend to prevent the bringing in of a main roads Bill early next session, though that is an urgent matter, as admitted by the Minister for Works. The Perth-Fremantle-road is possibly the most important road in the country; but there is a Perth-Fremantle-road on the south side of the river—

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Which has fallen to pieces.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I will show why. There is a Perth-Guildford-road on the north side of the river, and a Perth-Guildford-road on the south side of the river. As regards the latter road, the Belmont-road, the ratepayers borrowed £6,000 to put it in order and keep it in order. The evidence the select committee had from the chairman of that board did not agree with the opinion and the evidence of the Minister for Works. The select committee were brought up short, not having the necessary time to ascertain who was right. In the case of the Perth-Guildford-Belmont-road, the entire burden has been shouldered by the local people, who are getting into serious difficulties. The total amount of all the fees collected is only £15,000. The cost of collection was stated by the Minister as £2,000.



which seems very considerable indeed, though I do not say the cost is illegitimate in any way. However, deducting the cost of collection leaves only £13,000 to be distributed amongst the different bodies at the absolute discretion of the Minister for Works. Hon. members should have a copy of the statement issued by the Public Works Department. It shows the proposed allocation of licensing fees between the local authorities within the metropolitan area. It is certain that we cannot distribute more than can be collected, and, deducting the cost of collection, £13,000 has been available. All the local authorities have put forward good claims for increased allocations. Regarding the Perth-Fremantle road, there has been some heat and personal feeling dragged into the matter as between the Perth City Council and the Minister for Works. Mr. Lovekin made a suggestion that an amount of £5,000 should be allocated for the Perth-Fremantle road. My own impression is that mere patch work would be done if that were the amount allocated for the upkeep of the Perth-Fremantle road.

The Minister for Education: No, not if the work were done now.

Hon. A. Lovekin: On the principle of a stitch in time.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: To put the Perth-Fremantle-road in order, we must have heavy capital expenditure so that the road can carry the heavy traffic. It will require a great deal more than the £27,000 spent last time, and then there will be a considerable amount for upkeep.

The Minister for Education: But the £5,000 would be available every year.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Out of the £15,000? If that is the position, hon. members should pause and consider that difficult phase.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is where the traffic is and that is where the people should pay.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It has to be remembered, however, that if we put the road on the south side of the river in first class order, we shall divert the traffic in that direction. This question of good roads should receive serious attention. Experts all over the world are only too ready and anxious to lend every assistance in furthering the main road question, but to properly deal with the matter here, we must have a main roads Bill. To pass the Bill in a hurry without permitting the full facts to sink in, seems to be a mistake. In order to compel the Government and ourselves to come to close quarters regarding the Perth-Fremantle road, we should strike out the clause. The effect will be to concentrate public attention on this matter and arouse such interest as will necessitate the Minister bringing forward a main roads Bill as an urgent measure. I suggest that if the Minister agrees to a compromise, he will allow the clause to go and we can pass the rest of the Bill without a division.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: There were two particular points in the speeches made by Mr. Cornell and Mr. Sanderson, who contended that if we pass the clause as it stands it will give the Minister for Works power to declare any road a main road and deduct sufficient to put the thoroughfare in a state of good repair. The clause only gives the Minister power to deduct sufficient money to keep the Perth-Fremantle road between Ferdinand-street and the North Fremantle bridge in repair. There is the limitation, so that there is not much in that point. I agree, however, that it is inadvisable to pass retrospective legislation. When the Traffic Act was passed, it was the intention of Parliament that the Minister for Works should have certain powers. It has been suggested that the City Council has driven a coach and four through the Act, and that we must amend the Act in the direction proposed for that reason. It must be borne in mind that although they are receiving less for traffic fees, the effect of the passing of the Traffic Act has proved beneficial in the regulation of traffic.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about keeping to the left?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I was not referring to that aspect.

Hon. J. Cornell: A man must be drunk to do it.

Hon. A. Sanderson: In any case, that part of the work is done by the police under the provisions of the Traffic Act.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: More fees have been collected since the Act was passed than was the case formerly, and the position which was created formerly, is not so apparent now. In the earlier days the smaller boards were always approaching the Minister for increased subsidies for carrying out their various works. I am concerned as to what will happen to the road pending the introduction of a main roads Bill. If such a Bill is introduced the same arguments as have been advanced to-night will be again raised. I cannot agree with the select committee on this clause.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Before the Minister makes the distribution he will declare the Perth-Fremantle-road a Government road under Section 86 of the Public Works Act, 1902. He will use the power conferred under that section.

The Minister for Education: Under that section he can repair the road without declaring it a Government road.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But he cannot make any deduction from this money.

The Minister for Education: He can.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: We give him the power under this clause and confine him to the Perth-Fremantle-road from Ferdinand-street to the North Fremantle bridge.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the Minister does that, there will be further litigation with the Perth City Council.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I support the Bill, because I am asked by the municipal authorities in my constituency to do so. But for them, I

would join with my colleague in voting against the clause, because I consider the principle of the clause is wrong. I do not agree with the Minister's statement that it is the duty of those who use the road to maintain the road. It is not their duty exclusively. The people to whom the grocer delivers goods are as much interested in the roads as the grocer himself. The obligation of maintaining the roads should be on the whole of the people in that particular area. There is undoubtedly a duty cast on the Government to give a grant in aid of the maintenance of main roads. I hope that within the near future some comprehensive scheme will be brought down to deal with this matter. When we passed the original measure there was no intention of giving the Minister for Works, who I might call the colossus of roads, the right to grab any of this money.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: This matter has been under discussion for over an hour and there seems to be no hope of reaching an agreement. I suggest that progress be reported.

The Minister for Education: Let the Committee divide on it.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	4
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	8
				—

#### AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. C. McKenzie	(Teller.)
Hon. G. W. Miles	

#### NOES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. V. Hammersley
Hon. J. Cunningham	(Teller.)
Hon. A. Sanderson	

Clause thus passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Sections 26, 27, and 29:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: This clause places vehicles, whether motor or horse driven, in the same category with regard to people who may be in charge of them in an intoxicated condition.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 41:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Roads are under the jurisdiction of the police in respect of the control of traffic, but footpaths are not. This clause seeks to repair that omission. To remedy what may be called a clerical error I move an amendment—

That the word "fifth" be struck out and "sixth" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That paragraphs (b) and (d) be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The point of interest in regard to paragraphs (e) and (f) is not as to the system but the cash amount of the fee. The select committee did not make any recommendation here. We are satisfied.

Hon. A. Sanderson: And the Minister is satisfied.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

As to recommittal.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move—

That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clause 2.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	10
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	3
				—

#### AYES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. J. Ewing	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. V. Hammersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. C. McKenzie	(Teller.)
Hon. G. W. Miles	

Question thus negatived.

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [11.25]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [11.26]: The extraordinary circumstances surrounding the position warrant me in saying a few words. There was grave doubt in the minds of witnesses who appeared before the select committee as to whether the Act could be made retrospective. The Leader of the House said if there was any doubt in that regard he would be prepared to amend the Bill. My object in asking for a recommittal was to give members an opportunity to insert some words which would make it quite clear that the Act would not be retrospective. Perhaps the Minister will give an assurance that it will not be retrospective in its effect.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [11.28]: From the wording of the clause it cannot be made retrospective, and I assure the hon. member there is no intention of doing so.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

#### BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

##### Assembly's Message.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

#### BILL—AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT.

##### Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [11.30] in moving the second reading said: The Agricultural Lands Purchase Act was in 1919 amended so as to provide for the sale under it of land to soldiers. The chief feature of the amendment was that interest on the sale price might be capitalised during the first year of the lease. In connection with soldier settlement under the measure there has been an expenditure to date of £562,000, while under the head of private settlement the expenditure so far totals £421,000, or an aggregate of £983,000. As the capital provided under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act was only £600,000, the land representing the difference between this amount and the £983,000 has been acquired under the Land Act. However, it is thought desirable that there should be an adjustment, making the matter uniform, and to that end the capital which may be expended under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act is increased, by Clause 2 of the Bill, to £1,200,000. Clause 3 gives authority for the requisite adjustment of accounts. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

##### In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and passed.

#### BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT.

##### Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to Nos. 1 (a), 2, 5, and 6 of the amendments made by the Council, had disagreed with Nos. 1, 4 and 7, and had agreed to No. 3 subject to modifications, in which modifications the Assembly desired the concurrence of the Council, now considered.

##### In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

No. 1, Clause 3, strike out this clause:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This is not a matter of special importance. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is not very important.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

No. 4—Clause 10, Subclause 1, strike out "two" in line 4, and insert "three."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not think we ought to disagree with the Assembly's modification, and I move—

That the modification be agreed to.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Does this refer to the clause empowering the Commissioner to extend the time for the return of the overpaid tax?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No; it refers to another matter.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Does it refer to the alteration in the averaging clause from five years to three years?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. We may well agree to this modification.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I thought the amendment referred to the other alteration of three years. I was told outside the Chamber that our alteration to three years was not agreed to by another place.

Question put and passed.

No. 3.—Clause 7, strike out this clause and insert a new clause (full text on pages 2978-9). Assembly's modifications:—1, paragraph (a) of subsection 2 of the proposed new section, substitute the word "three" for "five" in line 2. 2, subsection (4), strike out the proviso. 3, Paragraph (d) of subsection (5), insert after "in" and before the word "producing" the word "earning."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Assembly has agreed to the deduction, but desires the deletion of the proviso to the effect that Subsection 4 shall not apply where the taxable income exceeds £250. I move—

That the modifications be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

No. 7—Add a new clause as No. 32:—"Section 31 of the principal Act is amended by adding to Subsection 3 the words: 'Unless the Commissioner is satisfied that the payments have been made bona fide in the course of business and for services rendered'":

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move—

That the Council's amendment be not insisted on.

Hon. H. Stewart: Has the Assembly accepted the provision relating to medical expenses?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Is not there some proviso which we struck out and the Assembly has re-inserted?

The CHAIRMAN: It is not mentioned in this Message.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

### BILL—GRAIN.

#### Assembly's Message.

An amendment of the Council, modified by the Assembly, and seven amendments of the Council disagreed to by the Assembly, now further considered.

#### In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The first amendment to be considered will be No. 7, which the Assembly has modified.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not see that we can at any profit further discuss the Bill. The better course would be to take a division on this first amendment as a guide to further procedure. I move—

That the modification made by the Assembly be agreed to.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	11
Majority against				4

#### AYES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. C. McKenzie	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. E. Rose	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. R. O. Ardagh	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. F. E. S. Willmott
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Harris	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; Assembly's modification not agreed to.

Council's amendments Nos. 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10, to all of which the Assembly had disagreed, were then put seriatim. The Minister for Education in each instance formally moved that the amendment be not insisted upon, and the Council in each instance negatived the question.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a Message accordingly transmitted to the Assembly.

### BILL—TRAFFIC.

#### Assembly's Message.

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

### ADJOURNMENT—CLOSE OF SESSION.

#### Complimentary remarks

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [12.12 a.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till the 21st February, 1922.

This suggestion came from another quarter with a different intent. My purpose is that the House shall adjourn till the 21st February and, in the meantime, this Parliament will be prorogued, so that it will not be necessary for hon. members to return on that day as some of them desired. Before we meet again, ten of our number will have to face their constituents. I think I can safely say the whole of the other members of the House wish those members personally a happy issue out of their election campaign. If any should fall by the wayside, no matter how much we differ from them in politics, we shall regret the loss of their association with us. I think it can be fairly and freely said that, no matter how widely we differ on political matters, there is amongst the members of this House, a very strong bond of esteem and friendship. I desire to thank hon. members for the many kindnesses and courtesies that have been extended to me, not only during this session, but during the seven sessions of Parliament I have acted as Leader of the House. This has been a particularly strenuous and long session. We have handled one short of 60 Bills. At different times, a good many hard things have been said about myself. In no instances have those remarks rankled, nor do I think it was the desire of the person giving expression to those hard things, that they should rankle. I accept the criticism in the way it was meant. To you, Mr. President, I sincerely wish a period of pleasant recreation after your arduous labours, and I hope that the recess, which will be much shorter than is usual, will be a time of recreation and enjoyment for yourself. In extending the same compliment to other hon. members of this Chamber, I wish members individually and the State generally a prosperous year.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [12.14 a.m.]: In as few words as possible, I desire to endorse what our Leader has said. I wish you, Mr. President, a very successful issue from the forthcoming elections and the same will apply to the other hon. members affected. I also desire to refer to some who, I think, have been overlooked and I wish to express my appreciation of the work of our magnificent "Hansard" staff. I consider that the manner in which they have carried out their work, especially during this session, has been most creditable. I do not suppose that in any part of Australia there is to be found an equally efficient and expert staff. On this subject I can speak with per-

sonal knowledge, because I have taken a considerable part in the debates of the session. I have been more than pleased with the, I will say, magnificent manner in which "Hansard" has reported everything I have said; and I suppose that sentiment will be echoed by every member of this House.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. EWING: I feel sure that the Leader of the House will endorse what I have said regarding the work of the "Hansard" reporters. I hope we may all meet again, including especially those hon. members who are going up for re-election. I am sure I would regret it indeed if even one of them should fall by the way.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [12.17 a.m.]: As senior member of this Council, and as one who will retire in May next, I feel much pleasure in acknowledging the remarks which have been made by the Leader of the House and by the Chairman of Committees. I acknowledge them both for myself and in behalf of other retiring members; that is, unless all those hon. members wish to speak for themselves. I presume that most of us who are retiring will offer ourselves for re-election, and whether the electors will see sufficient good in us to return us here again depends on the good taste and the high education of our constituents. We can only hope that it will be so. Whether or not the hope will be realised in my case, the happiest recollections will always remain with me of my connection with the Legislative Council. I have had a long career in this Chamber—a career that has had both its lights and its shades. It began so far back as the year 1883. Hon. members will gather that I have had experience, not only of legislative and political matters, but of men and Ministers. I have occupied the comparatively humble position of a private member, and have also occupied that of Leader of the Council, and of Minister of the Crown. In all those various aspects I have been associated with members of this Council; I have never been in the Assembly. It gives me pleasure to say that I have always found the Council a very satisfactory House. Let me repeat once again a remark I have made here often, that I question whether there is anywhere in the world—and that is a wide expression—a better debating House than this Council, presided over so ably by our excellent President.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: All questions brought forward here are given the most careful consideration; and, though occasionally a few sharp things may be said, the greatest forbearance is shown in permitting each and every member to express himself as fully as he desires on all the important subjects submitted to the House. I repeat, I shall always have the pleasantest recollections of this Chamber. I only hope that in the future the Council will be as good a House, even if shorn of some of the attractions which are

still with us; I trust that future Councils will do the same excellent work as this Chamber has done. I cannot sit down without congratulating the House on its excellent President. There is not the least doubt that under his able guidance our debates are conducted in a manner which reflects the greatest credit on any debating House. The tone of debate is dignified, and is characterised by an almost complete absence of unseemliness or of anything that is unpleasant. That circumstance is very largely owing to the personality of our President, and to the tact with which he carries out his duties. Perhaps I may be permitted to extend these references also to our Chairman of Committees; indeed, I believe I shall have the approbation of members in doing so.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Mr. Ewing is unremitting in his attention to his duties, and carries them out very well indeed. The only fault I find with our Chairman of Committees is that he occasionally tries to get the clauses of Bills through too quickly, so that I cannot always recognise what particular clause is being dealt with. I shall not refer to the staff of the Chamber, because Mr. Ewing has already done so in terms which I consider thoroughly appropriate. However, I do extend an expression of my sympathy to members of the "Hansard" staff in their work during the last few weeks. Their toil has been of an arduous and unremitting character. Were it confined to the proceedings in this Chamber and another House, it would be hard enough; but when we bear in mind that the "Hansard" reporters have also to attend to select committees and Royal Commissions, it is plain that they are entitled to our deepest gratitude and warmest appreciation. I am very grateful for the remarks which have been made by Mr. Colebatch and Mr. Ewing, and I conclude with the hope that we may all be here again when the next session opens.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [12.23 a.m.]: Speaking not for myself, but for a colleague who retires, namely, Mr. Dodd, I desire to express concurrence in the remarks which have fallen from previous speakers. Mr. Dodd has asked me to convey to hon. members his great regret at his inability to be here to-night. He also desires to thank you, Mr. President, and hon. members generally for the friendly consideration which has been extended to him throughout the session. Mr. Dodd greatly regrets that he has not been able to attend more regularly. In the becoming phrase which has been used, I shall convey to Mr. Dodd the hope of hon. members that he may not fall by the wayside.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (West) [12.24 a.m.]: In view of the fact that the senior member who is about to retire has expressed his thanks for the good wishes voiced by the Leader of the House, perhaps it is fitting

that the junior member who is about to retire should do likewise. Unlike Sir Edward Wittenoom, I have not spent many years in this Chamber; but the duration of my membership has proved very pleasant, and certainly most interesting to me. If the electors of the West Province do not re-elect me, certainly the measure of regret which will be experienced here will not be one half of that which I shall feel personally. However, like Sir Edward Wittenoom, if it should be my lot to fall by the wayside, I shall always look back with the pleasantest of recollections on the goodfellowship which I have experienced in the Legislative Council. I have heard it frequently stated here that there are no parties in the Council. A few days ago I went through the divisions here during the last three sessions, and I realised that from those divisions it would be extremely difficult to say to what school of political thought any particular member belonged—to say whether any particular member was a Labour man or not. That remark applies most strongly to the divisions during the session now closing. I desire to extend my very best wishes to you, Mr. President; and I only hope that, whatever happens to the rest of us who are retiring, the Council will not be so unfortunate as to lose so able a President as yourself. I fully endorse the references which have been made to the "Hansard" staff. Sometimes I can hardly believe that I have talked such good stuff as "Hansard" credits me with. Further, I desire to thank the members of the staff of this Chamber. I, as a young member, have very especially appreciated the valuable assistance freely extended to me by members of the staff in obtaining data which I would not have been able to find for myself. The arduous duties which the staff perform here are certainly worthy of recognition by all members. I trust that the other nine members who are facing their electors with myself will come back, and I hope we shall in the future have just as pleasant times as I have experienced during the three years over which my membership has now extended.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [12.26 a.m.]: As a retiring member, and therefore as one who may possibly be speaking in this Chamber now for the last time, I desire also to express the hope that you, Mr. President, may enjoy the short recess upon which Parliament is now entering. Further, I desire to express my appreciation of the personality of other members of this Chamber, and to say how much that thought would cause me to regret falling by the wayside. Let me add my few words of appreciation of the Leader of the House, who is at all times most generous and most fair. Very often it must have been a great trial to the hon. gentleman when we other members were not ready to go on with the business. In that respect he has always been willing to grant us latitude by postponing matters, even al-

though it might have been of the utmost importance to him to get on with them. I join with previous speakers in expressing admiration of the work that is done for us by the staff of the House. The staff are at all times ready to give us the best possible service. To "Hansard" I also wish to make my acknowledgments, for the care and ability with which they carry out their duties, thereby making our work very much lighter. If it should be my misfortune to fall by the wayside, my greatest regret will be the severance of my associations with hon. members of this Chamber. Those associations are such as to make one proud to be here and to take part in the country's legislation. I am well aware that in every part of this House there is the utmost desire to do what is best in the interests of the State. The one aim and object of all of us is to benefit the country as a whole, rather than to benefit any particular section.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [12.29 a.m.]: As one who may be addressing the House for the last time, may I re-echo the sentiments which have fallen from the various speakers with reference to our President, the Leader of the House, the officials, and the "Hansard" staff. I think it has been the experience of every one of us during our stay in this Chamber that, whereas when we came here our political differences were somewhat acute, they gradually softened. I am very glad to add that once we get outside the precincts of the Chamber those differences utterly vanish. It was the custom of the gladiators marching before the Emperor ere commencing the combat to address these words to him "Hail, Caesar! dying we salute thee." That, I trust need not be the language in which I and other members who are retiring need address you, Mr. President. But I would like to say to those members who have not to face their electors "We who are passing through 'the Valley of the Shadow' salute you." I have much pleasure in supporting the remarks which have fallen from my fellow members.

Hon. E. ROSE (South-West) [12.31 a.m.]: I, too, desire to thank you, Mr. President, for the assistance you have given me since I have been a member of the Legislative Council. This may be the last occasion on which I shall speak here.

Hon. J. Ewing: Don't be pessimistic.

Hon. E. ROSE: It may be, though I admit I have no wish to retire from political life just at present. I hope, when I appear before my masters, the electors of the South-West Province, they will express satisfaction at what I have been able to do as one of their representatives, and that they will return me again for another term. I would like to join the Leader of the House in the expression of good wishes to yourself, to the

officials, and to the "Hansard" staff. Whatever may have been said in this Chamber in the course of heated argument it is pleasant to know that, after the adjournment, it has been forgotten. I also thank the Leader of the House for the assistance he has given me in a great many ways. I have had to seek his advice on many occasions, and it has always been readily forthcoming, and this applies not only to myself but to other new members. I join in expressing the wish that you, Mr. President, may again be elected to Parliament and that you may for many years to come fill the position you have occupied with distinction for the past two years.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (North-East) [12.33 a.m.]: I desire also to thank you, Mr. President, for the help you have given me since I have been a member of this House, and I also thank hon. members for the courtesies extended to me during the five and a half years I have occupied a seat in this House. I have made many friendships here during that period, and as I feel that I shall not fall by the wayside, I hope to renew those friendships at a later period of this year, when I hope to have the opportunity of assisting this great State on the road to greater prosperity than we are experiencing at the present time.

Hon. C. McKENZIE (South-East) [12.34 a.m.]: Unlike my fellow members who are retiring this year, I do not intend to offer myself again for re-election. For the past 30 years I have followed a public life in one way or another, and I think now it is about time that I made room for a better man.

Members: Not at all.

Hon. C. McKENZIE: Since I have been a member of this House I have had a pleasant time, and I hope to leave with the good wishes of those who have been my fellow members, as well as of the officials and the "Hansard" staff. I do not know whatever made me take on public life. From a sailor to a politician is a pretty wide step, but I have nothing to regret, because I have made many friendships which will be lasting, and it will take me some time to get over my weekly routine of catching the train for Albany on Friday afternoon and returning to the city on Monday. But I shall watch with interest from the southern port the progress which my friends are making, and my sincere wish is that they may all be returned by a substantial majority. We have all worked well here, and I see no reason why the electors should wish to materially change the existing personnel of the House. Unfortunately, we cannot get a body of electors always to think as we would wish them to do, but I hope they will do so on this occasion. I have endeavoured to serve those whom I represent faithfully, honestly and well, and though I am severing my connection with political life, I shall not forget that I have

friends in this Chamber and will sometimes take the opportunity to drop in.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You can do what Gardiner does, come along at the close of the session and sing a song for us.

Hon. C. McKENZIE: I do very little singing and no talking. I have always been taught not to let my left hand know what my right hand was doing, and by following this course, I have never given myself away. I thank the President and the Leader of the House for their courtesy to me. I have received nothing but extraordinary kindness since I have been a member of this Chamber, and I sever my connection with the Legislative Council with very sincere regret.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN (West) [12.9 a.m.]: I desire to say a few words on behalf of Mr. Hickey, who had to leave for his constituency this afternoon, and who asked me, in the event of the session closing to-night, to address a few remarks to members. Before doing so I wish to express one or two opinions of my own as a junior member of this House. With the exception of Mr. Harris—I do not include Mr. Willmott, because he is an old Parliamentarian—I can claim to be the junior member of this Chamber, and as such I desire to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the manner in which you have conducted the business of the Council, and the courtesy you have always extended to me as well to the other younger members. To the "Hansard" staff I wish to express particular appreciation, and I thank the officials of the House for the assistance they have ever been ready to extend to me. It seems to me that there is no line of demarcation drawn here. It matters little to which side you belong, the greatest consideration is meted out to members. Personally, I re-echo the sentiments expressed by the gentlemen who are about to retire to seek re-election, and I trust that they may be with us when we meet again. I feel somewhat anxious in this regard—because three of the ten I look upon as my comrades—and I want to see them here when we meet again. I have just some doubt about this, however, and if they are not with us we shall be the poorer by their absence.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I think I have a good chance of getting back.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I was elected to this Chamber less than two years ago, and the opinions I have formed since coming here are very different from what I anticipated would be the case. The spirit of good fellowship amongst hon. members has been a surprise to me, and whilst I have been looked upon as one of the extreme elements, I have been——

Hon. J. Duffell: Cautious.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: Exactly. But I rose to say a few words on Mr. Hickey's behalf. Mr. Hickey is well known to all members of this House, and if the sentiments which have been given expression to by the Leader of the House apply to anyone, they apply to Mr. Hickey. He has rendered valuable service to the House, and therefore I may express the

hope that he will not fall by the wayside. He asked me to express to his fellow members his appreciation of the treatment he has received during the period he has served in this House, and he is hopeful that the electors of the Central Province will recognise what he has been able to do for them by again electing him for another term.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [12.42 a.m.]: On this occasion I may be permitted, as the mover of the motion, to say a few words in reply, so as to repair an omission that would have been quite inexcusable had it not been for the late hour that our friend Mr. Sanderson so frequently refers to. It was my peculiar duty, as Leader of the House, to acknowledge the splendid services rendered by the staff, and particularly by the "Hansard" staff, and I felt that if I did not make this acknowledgment it might be thought that I was not appreciative. I do appreciate those services, and, having some special knowledge of the work that the "Hansard" staff is called upon to perform, I have no hesitation in saying that their work is absolutely admirable.

Members: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I also overlooked the fact, when I was speaking, that the recess will not be entirely a period of recreation for yourself, Mr. President, and I can only hope that your constituents will realise that, in addition to the services you perform on their behalf, you are performing a very high duty to the State in presiding over the deliberations of this Council in the way you do.

The PRESIDENT [12.44 a.m.]: Before putting the motion, I wish to thank hon. members, and especially you, Mr. Minister for Education, for the extremely kind things you have been good enough to say about me. Allow me to say you have to thank me for very little. I, on the other hand, have to thank you, hon. members, for very much, in the first place for doing me the honour of electing me to the position I occupy and, in the second place, for making the duty I have to carry out extremely easy. Sir Edward Wittenoom, in referring to this Council, was good enough to say of it, after an experience of very many years, that it was the best debating assembly he had ever heard of. May I say I consider, at all events, it is the best behaved Council that I have ever heard of, and a great deal of that is due to the spontaneous effort of members to keep themselves and one another in order. I have to thank heartily also the officers of the House for the assistance they have at all times given to me, and perhaps I should have mentioned earlier the able assistance I have received from my old friend, Mr. Ewing, the Chairman of Committees. As for the "Hansard" staff, it has always been a matter of wonderment to me how on earth they carry out the duties laid upon them. I

do not know how they ever get any sleep at all. If some of us are inclined to talk in our sleep, surely the "Hansard" reporters must be inclined to report in their sleep. I have to thank hon. members very heartily for the good wishes expressed for my re-election. This may be the last time I shall have the privilege of addressing you as President or as a member of the Legislative Council. If this should be so, one of the pleasantest memories of my life will be the two years I have occupied the President's chair, and I shall never forget the kindness, courtesy and forbearance which hon. members have always extended to me. The analogy drawn by Dr. Saw was not quite correct, because I do not remember any instance in Roman history when the Emperor, to which proud eminence he elevated me, was taking the same risk as the gladiators. I hope we shall all meet again as happy a family as we are at present, and may I say I do not think that, on any previous occasion when I have been present at the break-up of the Council, greater good feeling has existed than does exist at the end of this session.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [12.47 a.m.]: With your kind permission, Mr. President, I would like to make a proposal. Presuming on my position as the senior member of both Houses of Parliament, I would ask members to join with me in conveying an expression of appreciation to the Leader of the House. I think he is entitled to one on his own account. When we remember the work he had to do during this session and that he has had to do that work unassisted, we can readily understand how arduous his task has been. No one more than myself appreciates his position. I had to put in nearly four years in doing similar duties unassisted, but things were then different.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You did not have any trading concerns.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: No. There were about six lawyers in the House at the time, and I always managed to get two of them on my side so that I could get them to answer any arguments advanced, thus enabling me to reserve my reply till the end of the debate. When we realise the difficulties with which the Minister, unassisted, has to contend, we can appreciate the work he has done. In another place there are six Ministers, each of whom concerns himself with only his own Bills. All those Bills come up to this House, and the Minister here has to make himself familiar with the details of them all and answer the criticisms of the 29 members here. Therefore he is entitled to our thanks and appreciation for the excellent manner in which he has carried out his work.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 12.51 a.m. (Friday).