

Criminal Code Amendment Bill.
 Premium Bonds Bill.
 Ministerial Statement (Premiers' Conference and Plan).
 Winning Bets Tax Bill.
 City of Perth Endowment Lands Act Amendment Bill.

House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1931.

	PAGE
Assent to Bills	5638
Question: Federal Aid Roads Agreement ...	5638
Workers' homes, reduction of interest rates ...	5638
Personal explanation, coal industry, Collie ...	5638
Bills: Appropriation (No. 2), 2R., Com. report ...	5639
Secession Referendum, Com.	5662
Insurance Act Amendment, 2R., etc.	5667
Electric Lighting Act Amendment, recom., etc. ...	5667
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2), 2R., defeated	5671
Appropriation (No. 2), 3R., passed	5673
Secession Referendum, Com. recom., 3R.	5677
Electric Lighting Act Amendment, Assembly's Message	5684
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 1R. ...	5684
Hospital Fund Act Amendment, 1R.	5684
Ministerial statement	5684

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Administrator received and read, notifying assent to the under-mentioned Bills:—

- 1, Swanbourne Reserve.
- 2, Licensing Act Amendment (No. 3).
- 3, Electoral Act Amendment.
- 4, Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment (No. 3).
- 5, Land Agents Act Amendment.
- 6, Forests Act Amendment.

QUESTION—FEDERAL AID ROADS AGREEMENT.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: Since the Federal Aid Roads Agree-

ment was entered into, what has been (a) the total amount of money provided by the Federal Government under the agreement; (b) the total amount of money provided by the State Government; (c) the cost of main roads constructed, and the mileage; (d) the cost of the Perth-Fremantle-road, and the mileage; (e) the cost of the Canning-road, and the mileage; (f) the total amount collected in the country areas from motor truck licenses; and (g) the total amount collected in the metropolitan area from motor truck licenses?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: (a) £1,018,515 to the 30th June, 1931; (b) £386,915; (c) £1,405,430; (d) £5,713 (one-third of a mile); (e) £129,376 (eight miles); (f) £49,932 to the 30th June, 1931; (g) £28,707 to the 30th June, 1931.

QUESTION—WORKERS' HOMES.

Reduction of Interest Rates.

Hon. W. H. KITSON asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Government make a full statement of the position of Workers' Homes Board clients as affected by interest reductions under the Financial Emergency Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The Financial Emergency Act does not apply to any mortgage given to or by the Crown. The Workers' Homes Board capital is provided from loan funds raised in London and Australia. The reduction of interest on Australian loan money has enabled the board to reduce interest payable by clients from 7 per cent. to 6½ per cent. less another half per cent. for prompt payment, making the net interest 6 per cent.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Coal Industry, Collie.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It has been pointed out to me that part of my answer to a question asked yesterday by Mr. Cornell regarding the sidings of the Coal mines at Collie is liable to convey a wrong impression. That portion of my answer relates to sidings only, and not to main lines such as Collie-Cardiff. Sidings from the main line to the mines are put in at the expense of the companies.

BILL—APPROPRIATION (No. 2).*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. A. KEMPTON (Central) [4.41]: On the question of unemployment, I sympathise with the Government in their very trying position, due to the difficulty in obtaining funds to carry on necessary services. There are essential services which must be carried on—for example, law and order, education, and so forth. Again, funds are always needed for the indigent sick of the population. A great deal of money is constantly required under these heads. However, in my opinion there are avenues of employment, not yet tapped by the Government, which would yield much better returns for money expended in relieving unemployment. Like other country members, I am indeed sorry that the Government saw fit to do away with the system of providing sustenance men with work on farms, the Government paying 15s. per week and the farmers finding food and lodging as well as a certain amount of money. I listened with great interest to Mr. Thomson's speech, particularly his remarks on the Collie irrigation scheme. That scheme will certainly not be reproductive for a considerable time. It is a scheme that may be all right in prosperous times, when money is available at a low rate of interest; but at a time like this, when it is necessary that new works should become reproductive almost at once, the Collie irrigation scheme is not in the best interests of the State. From a speech in reply made by the Chief Secretary, I notice that he is a little restive under criticism.

The Chief Secretary: Not under reasonable criticism.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: The hon. gentleman always complains that the criticism is not constructive, but destructive.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is just a habit.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I suppose so. I do not say for a moment that the Collie irrigation scheme is not good in itself. I regard it as perfectly sound in principle. Still, I repeat, a long time must elapse before the scheme will be reproductive. Apparently even the people for whose benefit it is being constructed are decidedly not in favour of it. There are no Crown lands adjacent to the site of the scheme. Mr. Thomson has estimated the cost of it at

£500,000, but let me say £300,000. However, we all have in connection with Government work a feeling that it will not be carried out for the amount it is estimated to cost. That has been the case in connection with public works carried out in the past. Again, there are the Geraldton harbour works, estimated to cost £500,000. I suppose that before the first section is completed, the cost will be nearly £1,000,000. I have little doubt that the Collie irrigation scheme, before it is finished, will cost very much more than the estimate of £300,000. However, I think the unemployed could be well engaged on work that would be reproductive, and more particularly would be of great assistance to the men on the land, who are at present struggling to make things go. It almost looks as if we shall have to get back to that older system under which the Government provided certain sums of money to districts so that the farmers in their spare time between seeding and harvest could take up outside work and so gradually solidify their position. It is impossible for the farmer and the settler at present, when they have to add interest year after year, to get out of their difficulties. If that money were allocated to such work as road work, which must be carried out, and is at present being carried out by the Main Roads Board, and if those farmers and settlers could do the work, it would be a great help. Of course, under that system, the progress of agricultural development would not be nearly so rapid as in the past, when huge sums were borrowed and put into clearing, but at all events the progress made by the farmers and settlers would certainly be very much more solid. Then there is such work as the regrading of railways, in which the farmers and settlers could help. That would not be work lost to the State, because the Railway Department would gain a big advantage from it, inasmuch as the engines could haul far bigger loads, more particularly in the northern districts, up Mullewa way, where frequently trains have to be cut in two because of the load. Primary production is supposed to be the backbone of the country, but it seems to me that in the past everybody has urged the farmer to go in for more development work, to get more land under cultivation. That has occurred not only in Western Australia, but also in Australia and indeed all over the world. A great deal of notice is taken of production,

but very little is taken of consumption. Now that we have all the countries of the world growing wheat, it means a lowering of prices, which I suppose will be permanent because of the huge undertaking in all the countries of the world in connection with production. It seems almost futile at present to talk of new railways but, as I have said in the House before, it is quite possible to take up a number of lines that at present are not of any use, since the towns they once served have dwindled and the railways are left there to decay. I say it would be possible to take up those lines and relay them to farming centres where they are required. Throughout the back country areas there are men gradually working out their own salvation, men who have not had much help from the Agricultural Bank or the financial institutions, but have struggled on from year to year simply to make headway. The Government Statistician, in his advance report on the coming harvest, has stressed the fact that there is a very much smaller area under cultivation this year than there was last year, and that unless we take great care the position next year will be even worse. It is pretty clear that if it be not possible to give help to some of those in the back country by means of railways, those men will have to leave their holdings.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Why do they not go out and work, as they used to do?

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: That is what I suggested just now. Instead of that, the system we have been following has meant that money has been plentiful owing to borrowing, and so gradually an army of casual workers have grown up and they have gone into road work. Thus it is scarcely possible for the farmer to get any of that additional labour. If certain moneys were allocated to districts where roads are required, it would be possible for farmers to work out their own salvation instead of piling interest on interest and rent on rent until it will become impossible for them to extricate themselves. For it is becoming harder and harder every year for the Agricultural Bank to provide any money for them. As to the taking up of useless railways and relaying them in new areas, I would point to the district of Balla-Dartmoor, which was opened up five or six years ago. North of Geraldton, it is the farthest north in Western Australia where wheat has been grown. During its five

years, Balla-Dartmoor has not known a failure. Ministers and representatives of the Agricultural Bank have visited the area, and come away declaring that they would not hesitate to give necessary facilities for such a place. Balla-Dartmoor means the opening up of a new wheat province. People up in those areas are beginning to feel that they are working at the wrong end of the South-West Division; that if they had been in the lower South-West and could show the results they have shown, they would receive very much better consideration from successive Governments. But they have gradually become disheartened because of the small amount of help they have received in respect of their carting. Some 53 miles north of Yuna, which is the nearest siding, and 20 miles above the rabbit-proof fence, experimental plots were put in. They have shown wonderful results. I have here a letter from Mr. Banks, who is particularly well pleased with those plots. He writes as follows:—

We have pleasure in enclosing herewith memo giving details of rainfall, seeding and harvesting results.

This location as you are aware is in the heart of the newly classified area and is north of Dartmoor, 20 miles from the rabbit-proof fence or 53 miles north of Yuna Siding.

The soil on the plot and timber thereon (mostly large pine) are typical of a good portion of this new area, but south of the plot a lot of the country is similar to Dartmoor lands.

Dartmoor has established its claim to being one of the best and safest wheat areas in the State ever since development began there five years ago, and it is heartening to see such a good result as the harvest returns disclose from the adjoining country further north.

When this land is thrown open for selection and facilities for development are provided this area will produce a very large tonnage of wheat which will help to justify the large amount of money expended on Geraldton harbour development.

Let me give some particulars of these plots. The various wheats grown were Nabawa, Gluyas Early, Beneubbin, Merredin, Noongar and Geraelying. The summary of results shows that the Noongar wheat yielded 18.20 bushels, and the Merredin wheat 20.00 bushels, the average being 19.20 bushels. The seeding dates were 17th, 18th and 19th May, 1931, the seed used was 45 lbs. per acre, the super 90 lbs. per acre, and the harvesting dates were 28th to 31st October, 1931. From January to November of this year the rainfall prior to seeding was

489 points; after seeding it was 499 points, and after harvest 45 points, or a total of 1,033 points. Blocks taken up in Balla and Dartmoor aggregate 44,400 acres of first class, 38,250 acres of second class, 23,250 acres of third class, or a total of 105,900 acres. In addition, there have been selected 26,000 acres of which I cannot give the classification. Then there is a surveyed and classified area, the bulk of which is first class, of 318,958 acres, or a grand total of 450,858 acres. I have here a report on the district as follows:—

The Dartmoor Area lies to the north of Yuna Siding, which is the head of the Upper Chapman Railway. Balla area adjoins the west side of Dartmoor and connects with the Northampton-Ajana line at Bianu. Dartmoor settled blocks extend to the rabbit-proof fence 33 miles north of Yuna.

A Government experimental block (No. 9104) of 100 acres, 20 miles north of the fence is now under cultivation, 50 acres being under wheat and oats and 50 acres under fallow. The soil is mostly a red and brown friable loam in the forest country and is evidently capable of producing high yields on a light rainfall. According to report the average annual rainfall is between 11 and 12 inches. Dartmoor and Balla have produced consistently good crops since commencement of settlement five years ago. Land under fallow at Dartmoor last season yielded an average return of 27½ bushels per acre. The land was ploughed with a disc plough in July (one working only) and seeded early in the following season with 48lbs. graded seed and 75lbs. super per acre. There is no doubt when this area is opened up and developed a very valuable wheat province will be added to the Victoria District. Such development must be of material advantage to the port of Geraldton.

Surely when one can show an area of nearly half a million acres, the majority of which consists of first-class land, it is not foolish to talk of taking up some railways that are practically not in use and relaying them in areas where they will be of distinct advantage. Such railways would pay their way almost from the start. Probably it would be found on pulling up those lines that a lot of the sleepers were in very bad condition, but why not put on the unemployed at sleeper cutting in our jarrah country? With those railways it would be possible to give the men out back facilities for carrying on their work and so avoid the necessity for their leaving their blocks, which would be something in the nature of a disaster to the State. It is foolish to build roads in National Park when there is land nearly half a million acres in extent ready to be cultivated. The roads in National Park can

only be used for pleasure and may not be wanted for another 25 or 30 years. Even then it would be possible to do without them.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Better for the unemployed to be building roads there than have them doing nothing.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Undoubtedly; but it should be possible to send those men out where they could form camps to pull up lines that are not required and put them down where they are urgently needed. There are places everywhere from which farmers are carting wheat under great disabilities. Those farmers cannot possibly continue operations under existing conditions. There is a matter respecting the railways on which I wish to touch, and which will fit in very well with Mr. Thomson's motion for the appointment of an honorary Royal Commission to investigate the position of the railways generally. There are anomalies everywhere connected with the railway system. There is every reason why such a commission should be appointed so that the system might be placed on a better footing. I do not blame the Commissioner or his staff for the existing condition of affairs: they are working their hardest to make the railways pay. It does seem strange, however, that the only railway in Western Australia that is paying is that which is privately owned. I refer to the Midland line under the management of Mr. J. J. Poynton. I have here a report of the latest meeting held in London which shows that after placing a big sum to reserve, the company were able to pay a dividend of 3 per cent.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: And they have not written-down any of their capital.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Quite a number of railways in the State have been built purely for developmental purposes and I admit it is difficult for the Commissioner to make such railways pay. There are also other railways that do not pay for axle grease, and we cannot attribute the blame for that to the Commissioner. If blame is attachable to anyone, it is to Parliament for authorising the construction of such lines. A Royal Commission investigating the position of many of these lines would be bound to recommend that some of them be pulled up and re-laid where they would be of some use to the State. I have a letter from Mr. Mountain, a merchant of Geraldton, who draws attention in connection with railway

rates to the fact that Geraldton is at a disadvantage compared with the metropolitan area, and that apparently Bunbury and Albany are also at a disadvantage. Mr. Mounttain says—

A distinct advantage is given to the metropolitan traders by these long-distance rates; they give the metropolis the monopoly of the produce trade throughout the Murchison. Apparently, when the long-distance rates were compiled our railways were of no great length. For instance, any goods of 1 cwt. taken 500 miles would cost, according to the rate book, 15s. 6d., and over 500 miles 16s. 6d.

Fremantle is 612 miles from Meekatharra, and Albany is 927 from Meekatharra, so apparently both would pay 16s. 6d., that being the rate over the 500 miles. It means that the rate per mile is very much heavier from Geraldton than it would be from Fremantle, which is 612 miles from Meekatharra. It works out in this way: Class A rate, Fremantle to Meekatharra, 612 miles, per ton £2 12s. 3d., or 1.024d. per mile. Geraldton to Meekatharra, 334 miles, £1 14s. 11d., or 1.255d. per mile. Under Class B rates Fremantle to Meekatharra, £3 12s. 2d. per ton, or 1.415d. per mile; Geraldton to Meekatharra £2 8s. 5d. per ton, or 1.739d. per mile. Class C rates, Fremantle to Meekatharra, £5 6s. 5d. per ton, or 2.086d. per mile; Geraldton to Meekatharra, £3 10s. 8d., or 2.539 per mile. That means that

under Class C it is a matter of paying ½d. per ton per mile more from Geraldton than from Fremantle to Meekatharra, which amounts to a good sum of money. Since the above figures were compiled there has been an addition of 15 per cent. to the rates. This addition, however, does not affect the disparity shown. Geraldton has no help in connection with this matter of goods when the goods are delivered in Geraldton by boat. The cost of landing goods at Geraldton on a through bill of lading is from £1 15s. 0d. to £2 1s. 6d. per ton more than the landing cost of the same goods at Fremantle. Thus it will be seen that Geraldton will be seriously handicapped in respect of Classes A, B and C. Then again there is the absurd policy adopted by the Public Works Department which has not yet handed over to the Railway Department the Meekatharra-Wiluna line. That means that all the goods that go from Geraldton to Wiluna have to pay two rates, one rate to Meekatharra and another rate from Meekatharra to Wiluna. That is absurd considering that Wiluna has progressed wonderfully and that a tremendous tonnage goes over the line. There should be some reciprocity between the Public Works and Railway Departments and the double rate cut out. I have a list here showing what that means to the traders of Geraldton—

RAILWAY RATES—GERALDTON TO WILUNA.

	Miles.	Special Grain.	Class C.	Class 1.	Class 2.	Class 3.	Class 3 + 10%.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Geraldton to Meekatharra	334	1 0 9	2 10 8	5 15 0	7 10 9	9 5 11	10 4 0
Meekatharra to Wiluna	100	0 11 3	1 13 5	2 8 9	3 3 8	3 15 2	4 6 0
		1 12 0	5 4 1	8 3 9	10 14 5	13 4 1	14 10 6
Through Rate— Geraldton to Wiluna	443	1 5 0	4 4 10	6 18 5	9 1 7	11 3 0	12 6 5
Excess Charge per Ton		0 7 0	0 19 3	1 5 4	1 12 10	2 0 1	2 4 1

Example of Excessive Minimum Railrage—GERALDTON TO WILUNA.

1 bag Rice, ½ cwt.—		s. d.
To Meekatharra	at 115/- Minimum ...	4/3
„ Wiluna from Meekatharra	48/9 do. ...	2/3
Total		0/6 — £13 per Ton.

1 case groceries—		s. d.
To Meekatharra, O. 2, 14	at 150/0 Minimum ...	8/3
„ Wiluna from Meekatharra	63/8 do. ...	3/9
Total		12/- — £18 per Ton.

Motor Trucks—		
Perth to Meekatharra	Flat Rate	£5

The Government have repeatedly tried to make it impossible for motor trucks to carry on this trade. Mr. Mountain writes:—

Traders of Geraldton are being badly hit by the motor truck owners from Perth and Fremantle and from Leonora and Merredin. Goods of class 2 and class 3, railway rates on which are from £11 to £14 per ton Perth to Meekatharra, have been trucked at a flat rate of £8 per ton—the rail service from Geraldton being £7 10s. 9d., class 2, and £9 5s. 11d., class 3, to which must be added cost of ship's freight or Midland line railrage, Fremantle to Geraldton.

It will be realised that the people of Wiluna have a distinct grievance, seeing that their tonnage has to be carted at such heavy rates. This arises merely because there is no reciprocity between the Works Department and the Railway Department. Surely some arrangement could be made so that the through rate could apply as soon as a railway was completed.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They have not done that yet.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: That is no reason why it should not be done.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is the policy of the department.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: That is what I am pointing out, and what Mr. Thomson tried to point out. The departmental policy that has prevailed for so long should be thoroughly investigated, and it should be demonstrated that it is possible to levy more reasonable rates. The long-distance rate that I have referred to is peculiar to Western Australia. When it was fixed in the first instance, possibly the longest railway line in the State was not over a distance of 500 miles. To-day it is over 1,000 miles by rail from Albany to Wiluna, and apparently the long-distance rate of 16s. 6d. for railrage over 500 miles continues to be levied. It is 612 miles from Fremantle to Meekatharra, and that makes the cost per mile from Geraldton to Meekatharra so much greater than it is from Fremantle to Meekatharra.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That means increased revenue to the railways.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Of course, and it is quite good for the metropolitan area, but no good at all for districts outside the metropolitan area. Then there are the pre-

paid parcel rates on perishable goods such as butter, bacon and cheese:—

Perth to Meekatharra, 600 miles pays half of 16s. 6d. = 8s. 3d. per cwt.

Geraldton to Meekatharra, 334 miles pays half of 14s. 6d. = 7s. 3d. per cwt.

That gives Geraldton an advantage of 1s. per ton. But Geraldton has to receive its produce either by ship or via the Midland railway. The cost of railrage is 50s. per ton, or 2s. 6d. per cwt., which means that Geraldton is at a disadvantage to the amount of 1s. 6d. per cwt. If Geraldton gets its produce by ship, it means from £1 15s. to £2 1s. 6d. more for the through bill of lading. These anomalies were recognised by the Federated Chamber of Commerce of Western Australia. The combined chambers meet each year in the different big country centres throughout the State. A month or two ago their gathering was held at Albany, and twelve months previously at Geraldton. The Chambers of Commerce include in their membership lists, representatives of all the principal business concerns in Western Australia. At the conference at Albany, the representative of the Bunbury Chamber of Commerce dealt with this matter by motion, and twelve months before at Geraldton a similar motion was passed, clearly showing that Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton suffer from similar disabilities arising out of the anomalous railway rates imposed. It will be seen, therefore, that I am not speaking on behalf of Geraldton only, but in the interests of other centres as well. The motion that was carried at Albany read as follows:—

That this conference confirms the zone system, so that each port shall receive the trade to which it is entitled by reason of its geographical and economic advantages.

This question in itself furnishes a good reason for the appointment of an honorary Royal Commission, as suggested by Mr. Thomson. By such means these anomalies may be rectified. Until something of that nature is provided, it will be impossible for us to reach any satisfactory conclusion regarding railway rates. I have no doubt that one of the first matters that will be considered by such a Royal Commission will be the suggestion that railways that are unused at present shall be pulled up. Hon. members will remember that the Labour Government introduced a Bill seeking the authority of Parliament to take up certain railways that were not made use of, so that the material could be laid down elsewhere. By that

means good results would be achieved. If that policy were adopted to a still further degree, tremendous help could be afforded people in the outback areas, who are at present without facilities for carting or other purposes, without which it will be impossible for them to carry on. During the last few days I have spent quite a considerable time in going through the bulky file in connection with the Irwin coal seams. The file was tabled by the Chief Secretary recently, and it is indeed interesting, although bulky. There are a number of reports included in the file that deal with the coal prospects in the Irwin, Eradu, Geraldton, and other districts in the North. To members representing that part of the State in particular, and to members generally, the file should prove most interesting and is worthy of perusal. They will find that it contains much in connection with the coal seams in that part of the State. Wherever we go through the Midland area, or along the Wongan Hills line, the question is constantly being asked, "What are the Government going to do in connection with the Irwin coal seams?" If the coal deposits were opened up, it would mean a tremendous help to the Government, to the railways, and to the people interested in that portion of the State. It would mean that coal would be available at a convenient centre for the Midland railway and for the Wongan Hills and Murchison railway systems. Those railways would be run much more cheaply than is possible to-day, and Geraldton is the centre of the huge district concerned. Instead of the long haulage of coal from Collie and the necessity to import shipments from New South Wales, we would be able to meet local requirements completely, provided the coal seams at Irwin proved to be as satisfactory as we anticipate.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Has the value of the coal there been proved?

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I have taken a number of extracts from the file that I will read to the House in order to indicate the position from that standpoint. I am right, I believe, in saying that either vested interests have been brought into play in connection with the development of the Irwin coal seams, or it has resolved itself into a question concerning the proximity of the Midland Railway and Land Company's interests. It is a question of the coal occurring on land held by a private company, and not on Crown lands. Mr. Drew, Mr. Hall, and

others interested in the North must remember distinctly that month after month the Geraldton Municipal Council, and the Northern Districts Conference of Local Authorities and Industries at their regular gatherings, have each stressed the fact that the coal seams in the North should be properly tested, to ascertain whether it were possible to procure supplies of satisfactory coal there. The extracts I will read will show clearly that there is payable coal to be obtained, more particularly in the Irwin area. I will not deal with Eradu or the other districts. I believe that at Eradu a deep bore was put down, but apparently the result was not satisfactory. Two goldfields men have sunk a lot of money in testing the different areas. One was particularly persistent in his prospecting and spent much time and money in an endeavour to ascertain whether there was good coal to be obtained in payable quantities.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did they not put down a bore 800 feet and reach the sea bed, so that it was no good going any further?

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I believe that was so, but it has been said on the authority of some world-known geologists that a worse place in which to sink the bores could not have been chosen. The bores were sunk where there was no coal. Apparently no Government to date have been game to thoroughly test the coal possibilities of the districts I have mentioned.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Have the Midland Company done anything?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They ran a boat from Geraldton or Dongarra 40 years ago.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Hon. members may be aware that Block 900 is a Government reserve. From the reports submitted by Mr. Montgomery, the then State Mining Engineer, who said that they had put down the bores which showed that the seams dipped towards the Midland Company's area, it would seem that as soon as it was known that coal would be found in the Midland Company's area, nothing more was done. What does it matter whether the land is held by the Midland Company or by the Crown? If coal were found in the Crown areas, it would mean that the Government would not work the seam, but a company would take up the area and operate in the same way as the gold-mining companies do at Kalgoorlie. As a rule, the Government do not run mining ventures, and there is apparently no reason why the development

of the coal seams should be held back, merely because they may be on Midland Company land.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did not the Government reserve a coal area?

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: That is what I am speaking of. Mr. Holmes has a large farm in the district and knows more of the country there than anyone else in this Chamber.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I discussed this question with scientists from all over the world some years ago.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I am dealing with the matter on the basis of the information contained in the files, and it is for this House to demonstrate to the people in the North and to the State generally, whether or not good coal can be obtained from the Irwin area. In one of his reports, Mr. Montgomery stated—

The importance of this coal discovery lies very greatly in its position which would enable coal to be supplied via Mingenew to the Midland railway and Geraldton district and via the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway to this and the Murchison railways. Supplies of coal from the Irwin River fields would be very beneficial to all the country whose port is Geraldton and which at present is disadvantageously situated for coal, having to depend on the distant Collie and New South Wales supplies.

Then there is this statement in a report from Mr. John Johnson to the Mines Department—

Immediately on my arrival home I sent a sample of coal to Messrs. Allsop and Don. Their report of the analysis is to me very satisfactory.

All these reports that I am quoting from are dated 1918. So, apparently, there has been little done to test the Irwin coal seams from that date. The next is an extract from a report by Mr. Montgomery—

The analysis is promising, seeing that the coal has come from somewhat deeper below surface than most previous ones. The low moisture agrees with Messrs. Allsop & Don's determination, so there seems more reason to hope that there has been a real improvement in the coal. The present analysis shows a coal somewhat better than the average Collie mineral and the ash is also lower than in previous samples. The analysis is—

Moisture	9.48
Volatile matter	32.17
Fixed carbon	49.17
Ash	8.76
	<hr/>
	100.00

Calorific value—11,380 B.T.U.

Later in the file I found a letter which showed that Dr. Simpson, the Government Mineralogist, was the man who had made the analysis. He was not the only one because Mr. Allsop, who is connected with the firm of Allsop & Don, also analysed the coal and the two analyses practically agreed. Dr. Simpson stated that there had been an arithmetical error and that the calorific value was really 10,494 B.T.U. That, I believe, is rather better than Collie coal.

Hon. J. Ewing: No.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Then it is about the same. Mr. Montgomery, in a letter dated 25th March, 1918, said—

Mr. Johnston wishes assistance to enable him to sink his shaft right through the coal seam he has struck so that bulk samples of the coal may be extracted and submitted to practical trials. On the face of it this seems very sensible and practical, but the evidence already known is quite sufficient to show there is coal of good value on this field in seams of workable size, and there is nothing really to be gained by troubling to get a few tons carted out at high expense to make practical tests, which leaves the main problem of opening up the field quite unaltered.

Subsequently Mr. Montgomery said—

It is really immaterial to the people generally whether the coalfield is worked by the Midland Company, or the Government, or other companies taking their titles from them, or by persons and companies holding titles directly from the Government. The point is that many thousands would be saved yearly by the people of the northern end and by the Railway Department, who would get cheap coal for their Geraldton, Murchison and Wongan system. Of course it would be necessary for a railway to run to Mingenew and also one to the Wongan line. The coal seams are about midway between the Midland and Wongan railways.

I think we would be safe in following the advice of the then State Mining Engineer. I have been careful not to deal with any other reports because I considered that we should follow what Mr. Montgomery has said. On the 29th April, 1918, Mr. Montgomery wrote—

It has been pointed out previously that the best part of the coalfield probably lies outside the coal reserves on land held by the Irwin River Coal Company, an offshoot of the Midland Railway Company, and that the action taken by the Government to develop the coalfield must take this private ownership into account. It appears to me that as far as the State in general is concerned, the principal intent is to have the coalfield opened up and that it does not greatly matter what particular owners will work the colliery. If the land were all Crown land, it could be taken up and

worked by the first applicants who could secure a mining title to it, and it would be worked by colliery companies formed to do so. From the general State point of view it would seem that the Irwin Coal Company might just as well develop the ground as any other colliery company, and if they are prepared to do so, they should receive encouragement and not hostility. It does not seem to me, therefore, that, at the present stage of the matter, the Government should refrain from taking any steps to prove the coalfield on the ground that the land is held by private owners and that the latter ought to develop it themselves. A coalfield in so useful a position is a matter of much consequence to the State, and the main point is to get it opened up and worked. I would recommend that the geological survey be put in hand at the earliest moment at which it can be arranged.

There is an important letter on the file testifying to the quality of Irwin coal. It is dated 30th September, 1924, and was written by Mr. F. W. Ede to the Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. M. J. Calanchini—

The 20 tons of coal from the Irwin River was tried on the Government railways under the personal supervision of the Minister for Railways, Hon. J. Willcock, and I have just received a wire reading, "Coal ran train from Geraldton to Mullewa and back on scheduled time." As the distance from Geraldton to Mullewa and back is 130 miles, this should settle for all time the question of the steaming qualities of the Irwin coal. Furthermore, the coal has been gradually extracted since May last, and therefore some of it has been exposed to atmospheric conditions since then without disintegrating.

I urge the Minister to investigate the matter, because it is essential from the point of view of the northern districts. We have a long line of railway from Perth to Geraldton via Mullewa and right through to Meekatharra and Wiluna, as well as the Midland Railway. It would be wise for the Government to test the seams thoroughly and determine just what their value is. I would recommend members to peruse the files and see for themselves exactly what has been said about Irwin coal. It looks as if successive Governments, for some reason, have rather gone back on the coal, because of the Midland Railway Company. But there are two railways running north, the Wongan line and the Midland line, and the coal is apparently midway between the two. Money would be needed to build a line to one or other or both of the main lines, but it was rather a dog-in-the-manger policy that the Government adopted when the Midland Company sought permission to construct spur lines. They should be permitted to throw out some spurs under the super-

vision of the Government. We should not retard the progress of the State because some people object to a private company engaging in certain developmental work. One other matter I wish to mention. Recently we have lost by death one of the trustees of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. Cooke. I do not know whether I am stepping in where angels fear to tread, but I wish to stress the point that when the Government appoint another trustee, if they do appoint another, he should be a man with a knowledge of the Victoria and Murchison districts. In the other two trustees, Mr. McLarty and Mr. Moran, we have the greatest confidence, but they are connected more particularly with the South-West and the Great Southern. They do their work thoroughly well, but I consider it only fair that our huge district should be represented on the board, so that when people from the northern districts approach the bank, there will be someone in authority who will understand the conditions prevailing there. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.40]: Possibly I would not have spoken on this Bill but for statements made by members regarding a particular work in the province I represent. It seems to me that some people have a distorted idea of the big Collie irrigation scheme that the Government have decided to bring into being as soon as possible.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You should take members down and get them acquainted with your district.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I would be only too happy to do so, to the end that their education might thus be furthered. In this State for many years there has been a continual cry for intensive settlement. We have a Closer Settlement Act and other measures designed to foster the closer settlement of our agricultural lands, and the Collie scheme, an immense one in effectiveness and extraordinarily cheap considering its capabilities, is designed to that end. I wonder whether members realise that the Collie scheme, when completed, will hold one and one-third times more water than Mundaring Weir. In the Collie district we have a regular and well spread rainfall, and at the foothills is some of the richest land in the State. Harvey is a wonderful example of an irrigated area. Some years ago Harvey was purely a citrus

fruit district. After some years the citrus trees were found to be affected with die-back, and people who had sunk their money in orchards began to look for other avenues and decided to engage in dairying. To-day Harvey is one of the prosperous towns of the State, and it is wholly due to the existence of the irrigation scheme. I appeal to members to take a broader view of the scheme. I am convinced, and so are many others, that it will not only open up the whole of the country in its vicinity but will be the means of creating an immense amount of wealth which the country so much needs. I ask members not to run away with the idea that because the work is in the South-West there is something wrong with it. Other drainage schemes have been embarked upon in that part of the State. After a fairly extensive tour and a knowledge of the Commonwealth, I say that no more effective drainage work has to my knowledge been done in any country than has already been carried out in the South-West. As a result of drainage that part of the State is now producing root crops in great abundance, and it has turned out to be a fine and a rich locality. Any criticism I have to offer is not made in any party spirit. Indeed, I congratulate the Government upon what they have been able to do in the last twelve months with limited funds. There are one or two things that should be done, and I wish to enumerate them before I conclude. The first thing to which I will make reference is cool storage facilities at the port of Bunbury. Last year was not a wonderful one for apples and pears on account of the outbreak of thrip. This particularly affected the Mount Barker apples. The growers there had practically no crop, and are to be sympathised with for the losses they suffered. To their credit they did not go around the country squealing over their troubles, and asking the Government for bonuses and other assistance because they had passed through a bad time. Our fruit production has reached the stage when it must be reckoned with. Notwithstanding the unfortunate circumstances which affected one portion of the State last year, our fruit production for that period was 1,380,000 bushels, of which 554,000 bushels were exported. The growers were fortunate in getting a good price for their crops. If members want evidence that the depression is not affecting some people, I advise them to go into the fruit-growing districts. The orchardists have

done very well; they are extending their planting, and building up increased areas of fruit-growing country that will soon have reached the productive stage, and will increase the need for shipping facilities. I am now speaking particularly of the district that is served by either Bunbury or Fremantle. One of the secrets of handling fruit is to keep it from getting heated. Fruit is entrained, say, from Manjimup, and on its way to Fremantle passes within four miles of Bunbury. It is transported in heated trucks, and the journey takes 24 hours longer than it would if the fruit were sent away from Bunbury. I urge the Government to take into consideration as early as possible the provision of cool storage facilities at Bunbury. The facilities I advocate are not only required for fruit, but will soon be required for butter. We are rapidly overtaking the local demand, and in the near future the export of butter will be a big factor in our annual production. Bacon will also become an important factor. Members will be glad to know that throughout the extreme South-West much more attention than formerly is being given to the production of pork. Mr. Kempton referred to the cutting of sleepers in association with unemployment. During the last eighteen months the Government have employed many men cutting sleepers for their own use. Part-time employment has been found for those who, put off from the mills, have been unable to get any other work. I believe the Government have got good value for their money. The hewing which has been done under the supervision of the Forests Department has not been detrimental to the State, and the percentage of accepted sleepers has been highly satisfactory. I wish to refer to the experimental work that has been conducted by a gentleman well known to most members. He is a sheep breeder in a large way, and some time ago imported at his own expense many varieties of seeds of grasses, with the idea of trying them out on his own property. He has spent a lot of money in this direction. I understand from him that he offered to supply the land and the labour, and to look after the flocks, indeed to do everything that was essential, if the Government would supply the seed and the fertiliser. There are no experimental plots in the district. Between Boyup Brook, Dinninup and Bridgetown there is some remarkably fine sheep country. The Government might well assist settlers by establishing experimental plots

and thus offer a measure of encouragement to them. Experimental farms have been established elsewhere in the State, and we have no quarrel with them. I do think experimental plots in the South-West would lead to a great advantage being derived by all concerned. We do not want large farms established. If there are people prepared to undertake the work, they should be encouraged so that the State as a whole may reap the benefit. I hope the Government will persevere with the idea of excluding from the jarrah forests small areas of timber country on which no jarrah is now growing, and make them available for the use of unemployed persons. There is a genuine desire on the part of many good people to take up these small areas and turn them into productive use. This morning I received a letter from a young man who has not earned any wages for the past twelve months. He owns a block in the Margaret River area. For the last year he has been working with an adjacent group settler, merely for food. He has received practically no money throughout that time, and is tired of that sort of thing. He cannot get any assistance from the Agricultural Bank, and is talking of throwing up the block and coming to Perth, where he would be a charge upon the State. Some of us have been doing our best to dissuade young men of this type from taking that action. The Government would be well advised to give them what they are giving the road workers, and allow them to remain on their blocks and work them under the control of the Agricultural Bank. Already there are too many young men in the city. We need only to walk through the streets of Perth, say, between William street and Barrack street, at almost any time of the day, to see half a dozen young fellows who would be better employed in the country working their own blocks.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: But they will not work.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Young men of the type I refer to will work. Once I find that a man is a malingeringer, I am finished with him. Whenever I speak in the country I make that quite clear. If there are young men who are willing to work in this way, the Government should do their best to help them. I may be twitted about my reference to one other question, but I must refer to the action of the Government in allowing Caves House to remain the eyesore it is to-

day. Despite the paragraph which appeared in the "West Australian" this morning, I hold the view that Caves House is a shocking example of an hotel.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Was it not burnt down?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Portion of it was burnt, but practically nothing has been done to restore the premises.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The insurance was collected and paid into revenue.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I believe so. I understand that £1,800 was spent on the place, but I defy any member to put his finger on £800 worth of work. I understand there was £400 or £500 worth of material replaced. That represents part of the expenditure. Beyond that, there is nothing but the patching of a wall and the turning of a ragged end into a kind of sitting room which will be in the glare of the afternoon sun, being without a verandah. The place is a shocking example of what an accommodation house should not be. Many members, who travel a good deal, know what the tourist business means to other countries, such as Canada, New Zealand, Britain, and European countries generally. It is a business of staggering dimensions. There are still many people desirous of travelling, but I can assure hon. members that visitors who now come to my home town, unless they ask me to take them to Yallingup since the accommodation house was burnt down, do not see the caves. I have taken them to the Margaret River caves rather than let them see the shocking example of Government ineptitude in the Caves House. I know that the Premier has been spoken to about the matter, and that he has some ideas regarding it: whether they will come to fruition I do not know. Before anything is done, however, I would like the Government to obtain photographs of some accommodation houses existing in other parts of the world. I would recommend as a model the one erected at Waitomo in New Zealand. It is a charming place. When I was there visitors told me they loved the place and the comfort and facilities obtainable there. Omitting the Glowworm Cave, Waitomo has nothing approaching what we have in Western Australia; and the tariff there is double the tariff here. Visitors pay £6 6s. per week, instead of £3 3s. as here. Yet people will go to Waitomo to stay for weeks and months

on end, leaving their good money there, rather than go elsewhere.

Hon. A. Thomson: New Zealand caters for the tourist traffic.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes, and so should we.

Hon. A. Thomson: I quite agree with you.

Hon. W. J. MANN: We have numerous places that are highly interesting. In the South-West there are some most delightful spots. Thanks to the efforts of the Main Roads Board, one travels on excellent roads; by reason of the money which has been expended by the Commonwealth and the State, our roads are now in good condition. Whereas five or six years ago it was an affliction to travel any considerable distance, now it is a charm, and people can enjoy themselves to the full while travelling. I cannot let pass some remarks made by Mr. Kempton regarding the railways. It is not my intention to refer to Collie coal, because I am satisfied that if there are in Western Australia any better coal seams than those at Collie, shrewd business men would have had been utilised ere this. I do not wish to say anything derogatory of Irwin coal. I believe there is coal at Irwin, and good coal. So far as is known, however, up to the present the mining of it has been a losing proposition. A much better variety of coal will have to be found before it will be wise to expend any great amount of money in its development. Vast sums of money have been sunk in the development of Collie coal. If it were possible for us to secure coal equivalent to Newcastle, I should say, "Go ahead for all you are worth and open it up." But until it has been proved to me that another coal is considerably better than Collie, I fear I cannot agree. One of the things I have to complain of is a retrogressive step on the part of those who control our railways. I mentioned at the beginning of the week that the railway service between the town in which I live and the metropolis is worse now than it was 30 years ago. I complain that the journey takes too long. We travel from Russelton to Boyanup, a distance of 28 miles. Flying along we do that distance in two hours. Then, probably because we are shaken and upset by that terrific speed, we are left to cool our heels for an hour on the railway station before resuming the journey. Until the end of last month we had to wait only 45 minutes; but

because a section of the staff, I am given to understand, desire a little extra crib time or something of the sort, another 15 minutes has been added to the delay. If we are extremely fortunate, we do 150 miles in from seven to eight hours. I can get in a motor car at my own door and without fracturing any of the speed laws land in Perth in 4½ hours; and that is a comfortable trip. How in the name of fortune can those controlling our railways expect to build up revenue under existing conditions? They are losing a tremendous amount of revenue because the time taken by the train is too long for the journey. Last summer the department tried the system of three fast trains and three slow trains per week. On one day we left our home town at 11.15 a.m., and were fortunate to arrive in Perth at about 8 p.m. On the other three days we left at the same hour and arrived here at 6 p.m., saving two hours on the journey. The Railway Department have demonstrated throughout the summer that that saving of two hours can be effected. However, for some technical reason not explained to me, that idea has been dropped, and we are now back where we were. In fact, it takes us half an hour longer to do the journey than it took 25 or 30 years ago. At Bridgetown one can leave the train, transact business for an hour, and then by taking a car catch the train at Greenbushes, 16 miles further on. If those in control of our railways want to dissuade people from travelling by road, they must accelerate the train service. I do not think the men who run our railway system are so inefficient that that cannot be done. There are some influences—I do not know what they are—imposing this go-slow policy on our railways.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Labour influences.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I will not say that they are Labour influences. However, there are some influences interfering with the railway service. I urge the Commissioner of Railways and those associated with him to consult the interests of the travelling public a little more, for I am certain that if they do so they will recover a great deal of the traffic they are now losing by road. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [7.30]: I do not propose to keep

the House long, but I should like to make a few remarks on the Bill. I understood when the Premiers were in conference that they intended to make the Budgets balance. But I take up the first page of this document and find that there is an estimated deficit on the year's operations of £1,256,000. That is not a very good way of balancing the Budget. In recent months I have made many suggestions as to how money could be saved, but not one of them has been adopted. I turn to page 16 and find that the University of Western Australia has been granted no less a sum than £24,800. In face of a starving population of farmers, and in face of the position of those men in the North-West, it is what I call a criminal business to give £24,800 to a highly endowed University. The University was endowed by the late Sir Winthrop Hackett to the extent of about half a million of money, notwithstanding which they ask the taxpayers also to contribute towards it. It is absolutely unreasonable, and I think the Government are most unfair in giving away this money. On a previous occasion I spoke of this, but the Leader of the House said they could not depart from an honourable understanding. I pointed out to him that already they have departed from a good many honourable understandings. I can only say I think it is criminal to give £24,800 to a well-endowed University, all for the sake of carrying on, I am told, 700 well-dressed, well provided for, well-educated men and women. We have heard a lot about secession, and have had some discussion on the subject. In view of what is happening to the State's affairs to-day, I ask whom are we going to get to manage the country if we have secession, and where are we to get the necessary money from? Both the Treasurer and Mr. Collier are capable financiers, but if they cannot carry on the State without deficits, who is going to carry it on when we have secession? I can suggest a few methods for the improvement of our financial position. The Minister will say we have to do so much for the unemployed, who are starving. I say, let us do away with the Arbitration Court and the basic wage, and then we shall find the unemployed getting work and earning wages. To-day they are not allowed to do that, either because of the basic wage or because of the Arbitration Court. Moreover, they would not be permitted to do it by their leaders, who run them and induce them to do what they should

not do, and then try to get them out of their trouble. If we were to leave the unemployed to get employment wherever they can, we would not have so large a deficit. I do not know that I need say much more about these things. I am sure I cannot convince the Minister. I have tried my best on several occasions and have done all I could to show him how to reduce expenditure. Yet in face of that the Government put on the Estimates £24,800 for a highly-endowed University, and then talk about trying to work for the country. We have those people up in Kimberley, half of them with little or nothing, and the unemployed, who have next to nothing, and the farmers, who are almost on the starvation line. Yet we find the Government, supposed to be looking after the affairs of the State, saying they have exploited every possible way of saving money, notwithstanding which they are going to give £24,800 to a highly-endowed University. Of course it is of no use voting against the Appropriation Bill, but I say that money ought to be saved in some of the many ways I have suggested on previous occasions.

HON. SIR CHARLES NATHAN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.40]: Being only a novice and a newcomer in Parliamentary affairs, I have perhaps an erroneous impression of the importance of the Bill we are now discussing. It does not seem to me that so important a Bill should be brought down in the last stages of the session, when everyone is desirous of closing down as quickly as possible, when an immense amount of rush legislation is being placed before us, and when members are wearied with the long hours we have sat. I address myself to the subject with considerable diffidence, knowing full well that members are wondering how many more are going to speak, and how quickly can the measure be put through, so that we may get on with the remaining business and clean up. I confess I can see no good reason why a measure of this importance, together with the Loan Bill, should not be brought down much earlier in the session. We know that the closing of the accounts takes place at the end of June, and that if the departments are run on business lines, as no doubt they are, it is known from month to month how they are going. Therefore at the end of June, when the accounts are closed, the departmental officers could arrive at the result of last year's operations,

and an estimate of the revenue and expenditure for the coming year could well be placed before the House at a much earlier period than that at which we usually get such information. I believe that, if possible, it is a method of procedure which the Government might well take into consideration. I see no reason why the Bill could not be brought down, at all events by the end of September, which would afford ample opportunity to members to give it their fullest consideration, instead of rushing it through at the last minute under pressure, when members generally are desirous of closing the session. Far be it from me at the present juncture to unduly criticise the Government or any actions they have taken or propose to take for the control and management of this country's affairs.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: That is what you ought to do, and so teach them how to do those things.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: I have heard somewhere of an old statement about teaching grandmother to suck eggs. The other day we had a division in which members voted against the second reading of the Loan Bill. I can only imagine members taking such a course as the result of being goaded by a realisation of the ineffectiveness of the their discussion and protests from year to year. As I said, I am diffident about criticising the Appropriation Bill, realising as I do the difficulties the Government are up against. Quite a little while ago we had severe criticism of the Government for certain relief measures that were being adopted and which some members claimed to be non-productive. Those members said that if money was to be spent in the relief of unemployment it should be spent on reproductive work. Immediately afterwards the Government brought down measures for the spending of money on works which they claimed to be reproductive. Then we had the criticism of members that those works would not be reproductive, that they were going to be a load around the neck of the country. Therefore I have no desire unduly to criticise the Government for the programme they have placed before us and the appropriation made in the Bill we are now discussing. I am, however, a little uneasy in respect of some of the works referred to, and it is my duty to voice that uneasiness. Mention has been made by a number of speakers of the Colli-

Irrigation Scheme which is to cost approximately £300,000 and probably considerably more. From the little knowledge gained of the progress of irrigation works throughout Australia I am of the opinion that the views so expressed are well founded. The Government would have been well advised had they examined the economics of that scheme. I know nothing about the engineering side, but I do know in other irrigation works throughout Australia which have been examined by bodies with which I have been associated, that despite the advice of engineers who are supposed to be capable men, when independent and expert opinion was sought to check up, serious discrepancies were found in the engineering views. I know also that the examination of those schemes has revealed that the economics of very few of them will stand investigation. It is not always a question of production. Production only counts when consumption can keep pace. I do not wish to labour that particular aspect, but I should have felt much more easy had the Government more closely examined the economics of the Colli-scheme before deciding to embark upon it. There are other matters to which I might refer, and my remarks will be directed towards the one aim, namely, that it is only the wise expenditure of public funds at this juncture that will help to get us out of the trouble we are passing through. The Estimates of loan expenditure include a sum for the Lake Grace-Karlgarin railway. Last year £96,847 was voted and this year £20,000. This money will bear the current rate of interest which will be something like 5 per cent. I know that this and similar schemes in that area were closely examined by the Development and Migration Commission. I am aware also that the Commission definitely were opposed to the construction of that railway as being a proposition which could not reasonably find interest and sinking fund. What happened? Although the Migration Agreement was in existence at the time, this railway was not submitted as a scheme under that agreement. But it was approached and entered upon by the Government of the day with 5 per cent. money; had it been a sound scheme it would have met with the approbation of the Commonwealth and British Governments, and would have been constructed with the cheap money that was available at the time. Therefore I cannot help looking with some little degree

of uneasiness at propositions of this kind. I notice also that there is an amount of £10,000 for the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway. If my memory serves me correctly that line was proposed as far back as 1925-26 and it was accepted subject to investigation by the Migration Commission as a scheme that might be brought under the Act with 1 per cent. money. I need not go into details except to say that the previous Government realised that there were other works that could be constructed with better advantage to the State, and as a result of representations made by the Development and Migration Commission that railway was withdrawn from their consideration. Now we are committed to it by the sum of £10,000 which appears on these Estimates. This is to be the initial expenditure of a work that is estimated to cost £450,000. Again I say it is things such as this that make me uneasy and cause me to think that we are not going the right way to re-establish our National position. This railway is now to be constructed with 5 per cent. money! Looking further down the Estimates we find the Nornalup land scheme. From a humanitarian point of view there is no finer proposition before this country. That scheme is helping to settle 80 or 100 men, who were out of work and were in a hopeless position, on land that it is expected—and I sincerely trust the hope will be justified—will enable those men at least to make comfortable provision for themselves and their families. This scheme is estimated to cost £1,000 per settler, or a total of £100,000, but we all know what the results have been in connection with land settlement schemes of the past. It is one of the difficult propositions the Government are up against; they are attacked from all sides for not finding reproductive work, and I can understand how they might well hold up their hands and say, "What a helpless position we are in." Immediately the put men on to work which they hope will be reproductive, they are attacked by criticism such as mine. But I am not attacking a scheme like this from a sentimental point of view. My sympathies are with the men wholly and solely, but I hope that we shall see some earnest attempts made to safeguard the finances of the State. I feel the time is over-ripe, as Mr. Thomson has suggested, for the appointment of a Public Works Board, the purpose of which body would be to examine schemes such as this. I know the difficulties

departmental men are up against when reporting on schemes of this kind. I am aware that they are competent officers, but I know they are not always men most capable of judging the economics of such proposals and it is essential at the earliest moment that a Public Works Board should be created so that a close examination of all such schemes should be made. I do not propose to labour the question at any length. I have taken merely two or three items from the list for the purpose of illustrating my argument not with the object of unduly criticising, but to stress the need for the appointment of an independent board to examine the various schemes. I wish to pass along now to another aspect, and that is the methods of administration. In the past the methods adopted have resulted in the creation of a multitude of departments, and the sooner administration can be simplified, the better will it be for all concerned. In many of the departments there are most capable men in control, but they are necessarily governed and operated more under the control of the principles—if they can be called principles—of political expediency, rather than by sound financial and administrative principle. In this connection I should like to say a few words about the Agricultural Bank. I am the last man in the world—and I say it with all sincerity—to criticise those men who have been in control of the Agricultural Bank for so many years. But it is not the men I wish to criticise so much as the policy under which they operate. If members will refer to Item 44 they will see an amount of £298,000 set down as the working capital of the Agricultural Bank, and an amount of £259,000 for assistance to settlers. The bank has a capital of between 11 millions and 12 millions of money. Members know quite well that the institution is controlled by a manager and trustees. It is said, of course, that the bank is not subject to political control. I admit that is so, as far as administration is concerned, but its policy for the time being is the policy of the Government in power. In many instances the Agricultural Bank is practically compelled to make advances against the better judgment of the men in control, and I am bound to say that there have been a considerable number of advances made to settlers on land beyond the limits of safe rainfall, and where there are no railway facilities. How has it been done? It has not been because those in control of the Agricultural Bank have considered them

sound ventures. Far from it. It has been because the trustees have been told by the Government that if the advances were made, the Government would guarantee them against losses. It was in those circumstances that the advances were made, not as a result of the considered judgment of the trustees, but, to a certain extent, under compulsion and in an endeavour to carry out the policy of the Government for the time being. Referring to the Agricultural Bank, members will find in the annual report the following entries that illustrate the effect of the guarantee:—

Debts cancelled under Treasury indemnity.	£
Cancelled debts due by Treasury indemnity	215
Cancelled debts recouped by Treasury	8,000
Losses on realisation, recouped by Treasury	4,779

Those are only small items. In giving evidence before the Royal Commission the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. McLarty, indicated that he was fully seized of the position, for he made the admission that 40 per cent. only of the group farmers became firmly established. That estimate checks off with the experience right throughout Australia. I remember, as Vice-Chairman of the Migration and Development Commission, making a close examination of the finances of group settlement schemes throughout Australia, including the Western Australian scheme, and the conclusion that was definitely fixed in my mind was that 60 per cent. of the settlers who were put on the land without capital of their own and received advances from Government sources, were failures, so that Mr. McLarty's statement squares with the conclusion arrived at by an independent body. I have already referred at some length to the Industries Assistance Board, and particularly to the operations under Part III. of the Industries Assistance Act. I did so because in taking one of the smaller departments, I was of the opinion that, by making a close examination of it, I would find a duplicate in many of the other departments that handle Government funds. I have been stupid enough on occasions to hazard certain estimates of losses likely to be made. I believe that if the affairs of the Agricultural Bank were closely examined—they never have been, and I do not know that it would be wise to examine them now, in view of the financial circumstances of the Australian States—we

would find, not taking the conditions that obtain to-day and the effects of the depression, but the position of the bank as it was two years ago, that 33 per cent. of the capital advanced could be considered as definitely lost. In my opinion, the Agricultural Bank should be placed entirely under an independent board of governors. They should be men seized with a desire to use the bank to the fullest extent for the development of agriculture throughout the State. No one will deny the fact that, in the development of Western Australia, the Agricultural Bank has played a most important part, and has rendered wonderful services. I am satisfied that those results could have been achieved at much less cost to Western Australia. Had the trustees been in the fortunate position to exercise their own judgment, they would have been able to say whether or not they would make advances.

Hon. H. Seddon: Do you contemplate a board similar to the one controlling the Commonwealth Bank?

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: I would not like to mislead the hon. member. I contemplate a somewhat different type of board. One similar to the Commonwealth Bank Board would hardly meet the requirements I have in mind, because they go to the other extreme. The Commonwealth Bank Board know no rule except the law of finance. A board such as I visualise would be one on which there were keen financial men, associated with others having a knowledge of agriculture, and a full realisation of the necessity for using the institution for the development of agriculture, not maintaining operations strictly along hard and fast financial lines such as those pursued by the Commonwealth Bank Board.

Hon. W. J. Mann: In other words, you want practical farmers on the board.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: Yes, as well as financiers. I will refer again briefly to the Council of Industrial Development. When I spoke on the Industries Assistance Act Continuance Bill, I referred to the activities of the board and to operations under Part III. of the Act. An hon. member interjected that there had been a board in existence. There was such a board some time ago. It was established by the Premier when he was previously in office. It comprised men who, in an honorary capacity, spent much time each week in carrying out certain important

functions, and they operated on a promise by the Premier that the board would be constituted under an Act of Parliament so as to assure that recommendations made would not be thrown into the waste-paper basket. The members of that board served for nearly two years. They included Mr. R. O. Law, a well-known manufacturer and a man of parts, the late Mr. C. E. Crocker, who was a capable electrical engineer, Mr. A. J. Monger, who represented the primary producers of the State, and Mr. Perry, who is both a manufacturer and a capable chemical expert, with myself as chairman. We went out of office because the Bill that was to provide us with statutory authority was never introduced. I am prepared to assert that had the board remained in office, the sum of £445,000 would not have been advanced to industries as shown in the latest report. It is true that the Council of Industrial Development is in existence to-day, but it consists of civil servants, men who would be only too pleased to be relieved of the task so that they might devote attention to their other important duties. Matters are referred to them only when it is so desired. It would be of advantage to the State if the Government could constitute an independent board to consider the expenditure of loan funds under Part III. of the Act. I shall refer briefly to the railway administration, but shall not labour that phase because it has been dealt with at length by other hon. members. I believe if members of this Chamber could make their voices effective, 75 per cent. of them would agree to the necessity of placing our railways under strong, but not political control. It is shocking to think that our railways are placed under the control of a Commissioner who is responsible for meeting interest and sinking fund charges, and whose hands and those of his chief officers are tied and whose actions are crippled by acts of Government. When we consider railway lines that have been constructed at the request of members of Parliament, and that many of them can never pay operating expenses in our time, we cannot fail to recognise that some measure of relief is due to those in charge of the railway administration, and that their hands should be strengthened so that they can carry out their task in the way it should be done. I have already referred to the position of the tramways. We know that if they were under the control of an independent tram-

way trust, as obtains in other parts of the Commonwealth, there would not be the irksome restrictions that are now imposed upon the people in an almost futile effort to make the few profitable lines pay for the unprofitable ones that should never have been laid down. Dealing briefly with Government methods of finance, I hope members will bear with me a little, because those methods of Government procedure and management in relation to the finances are somewhat new to me, and consequently I often wonder if the lessons I was taught in my early days, and the experience I have gained in the last 30 odd years of active business have narrowed my vision and made me feel I am a baby, knowing nothing about broad methods of finance. No doubt the Minister will be able to enlighten me. From my point of view, I see some grave objections to the methods adopted by the Government as a matter of general practice, particularly in, shall I say, the attempts made to square the accounts, not the revenue of the country. In a previous speech, I pointed out that, under the Industries Assistance Board, £60,873 had been taken from loan funds in order to pay Government interest, and from the Agricultural Bank, £81,000 had been taken for the same purpose. It may interest hon. members to mention one phase I have had special reasons for noting, to show how one may attempt to safeguard the financial position, and how a hard-up Treasurer can find a way out. I refer to page 5 of the Auditor General's report under the heading of group settlement losses. The amount of £115,000 odd was taken from a trust fund and utilised as Government revenue for the purpose of meeting losses, and by a most ingenious way, as members will realise when I tell them the story. Some year or two ago the British Government were concerned about a contingent liability under the Migration Agreement for losses on group settlement by losses on stock. They had a contingent liability in common with the Commonwealth Government. There was also a contingent liability to the Commonwealth Government with regard to the rate of interest on which the Commonwealth loan under the Migration Agreement was to be raised. The British Government asked to be relieved of that liability and offered the Commonwealth a cash amount of £20,000 for every £750,000 borrowed by the States. The difficulty was that before the Common-

wealth Government could accept that amount, they had to make some estimate of what the contingent liability might be. The whole amount involved was £1,000,000. It was my task to endeavour to arrive at the basis on which the Commonwealth Government could intelligently review and decide the matter. After going into the question, the Commonwealth Government made an offer to the States. The Commonwealth Government agreed to release the British Government of the contingent liability and at the same time accepted the liability for the higher rate of interest, offering the States the £20,000 for every £750,000 borrowed if they in turn would relieve the Commonwealth of the contingent liability due to loss on stock. That was to apply to group settlement only and, in the circumstances, Western Australia was to get the major portion of the £1,000,000 if the whole of the £34,000,000 was expended. Negotiations were conducted with the Treasurer of the day, and he was induced to accept the proposal, but recognising that there would be a tremendous loss on group settlement, the hope was expressed that the State would create a reserve against that loss. That was on condition, that the money should be placed in a trust account to meet group settlement losses as a whole. The ex-Treasurer held to that trust, and the sum of £115,000 remained in it. But it is not there to-day or, if it is there, it will not remain there much longer, because by an interpretation of "losses"—the Government have not been able to get their interest from the group settlers—instead of the £115,000 being used to recoup capital losses, it has gone into revenue to recoup the Government for interest, and thus increase their revenue this year.

Hon. H. Seddon: Under the guise of interest losses on group settlement.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: Yes. The Minister might present what he considers an effective answer, namely, that under the agreement with the Loan Council a sinking fund is provided on all capital outlay and consequently, as the losses will eventually be written-off by the accumulations in the sinking fund, the event might well be anticipated and the £115,000 used for revenue. That would not be done in private business. I assume it must be perfectly justified in public finance, and there-

fore I repeat I feel that I have entered upon new ground and that my ideas of sound finance do not four-square with those of Governments. I feel it is time that a halt was called. I recognise the disabilities under which Treasurers labour. I know that the system has been in existence for many years, and that each incoming Treasurer, finding himself in difficulty in balancing his budget, is not prepared to take heroic measures to stop leakages and shortcomings which are occurring in the administration of the country's affairs. I can quite understand that it would require a considerable amount of personal courage in a Treasurer to say, "This has got to stop." I am satisfied that the Treasurer who said it would bring down a budget that would show a loss of not £1,600,000, as it will be this year, but double that amount.

Hon. J. Cornell: Certainly he would go out of Parliament.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: He would budget himself out of Parliament. Rather than do that, his endeavour is to show a budget as favourable as possible, regardless of the fact that the loss is being made, although it is not being shown. The whole of my remarks have been directed towards a general tightening up of the administration. I do not want to refer at length to State trading. I know just the amount of money that has been borrowed for State trading, the losses on interest and sinking fund, and the annual losses incurred. I know that the Government are legitimately and earnestly trying to see their way through that trouble. I have reason to know that when Mr. Bruce first entered the Commonwealth Ministry as Treasurer, almost his first utterance was, "We are going to get rid of that Commonwealth steamship line." Those who know Mr. Bruce best would not challenge his sincerity. Day in and day out that question was constantly before Mr. Bruce, but it took him seven years before he eventually got rid of the steamers. In the meantime he was challenged for want of sincerity, and it was said he was putting up a bluff.

Hon. J. Cornell: Now the Commonwealth cannot get paid for the steamers.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: A somewhat similar position faces the State Government. We know what has been done about the State Improvement works. It is the desire of

the Government to get rid of State trading concerns as soon as they can, but with that desire is it right to sacrifice the assets unduly? Consequently time must be taken to dispose of them. I suggest for the Government's consideration that probably the process might be hastened if the concerns were placed in the hands of a realisation board whose one job would be to watch for favourable opportunities gradually to cut down those works and realise on them to the best advantage. I know that no Government official or Minister, with the diverse responsibilities resting upon him, is in a position to cope with keen commercial men who want to trade for the purchase of State assets. It might be desirable to constitute a realisation board whose job would be to dispose of such assets as the State might wish to dispose of, at the most favourable opportunity and in consultation with the Government. The whole of my remarks, as members will have seen, have been directed to the simplification of Government finance. I believe that if the methods of government could be rationalised and simplified, the cost of administration could be reduced to a minimum. We would have greater efficiency, greater economy, lower taxation, and, in addition, by re-establishing confidence in the minds of investors, we would secure a maximum of co-operation with private capital in the development of the State's resources. I support the second reading.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [8.28]: Most members who have spoken so far have referred to the railways. Mr. Kempton dealt with them from the aspect of the carriage of freight in country districts. I wish to deal with them from the point of view of human freight particularly in the metropolitan area. I was pleased to read in the Press recently that the Commissioner of Railways had recommended Cabinet to consider the question of reducing fares. When we consider the loss of income suffered by most inhabitants of the metropolitan area during the last twelve months, we must realise it is time that the Government seriously considered reducing railway fares. We have also to appreciate the keen competition for the carriage of passengers in the metropolitan area. A comparison of the fares charged at the present time is all in favour of the companies operating in opposition to the

railways. Without going deeply into a far-reaching comparison, let me quote the fares charged between the port and the city. The first-class railway fare from Perth to Fremantle is 2s. 10d. return. The buses and taxis—the taxis run a faster service than the railways and the buses occupy about the same time as the trains—charge 2s. for the return fare. It does not require much imagination to fathom the reasons why there has been a falling-off in the number of railway passengers in the metropolitan area. The second-class fares are almost as high as the charges imposed by the buses and the taxis. The difference is only 2d. in favour of the railways. It is high time consideration was given to this matter. We were told some time ago, when a transport measure was introduced, that the Government were not concerned with the passenger traffic in the metropolitan area. For the good of the railways and the taxpayers, the sooner the Government do give attention to this question, the better it will be for all concerned.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: That is the largest source of revenue in Victoria.

Hon. G. FRASER: It could be made a greater source of revenue here. One is sorry to see the number of empty coaches, when a few years ago people had to walk along the platform to find a vacant seat. If the Government go thoroughly into the matter we may shortly have the pleasing spectacle of crowded trains. Sometimes during the day only three coaches comprise a train, and half of those are empty. Serious consideration should be given to a reduction in fares. We have always been given to understand that the railway management are opposed to that, but evidently they have now altered their opinion. It may be argued that a reduction would mean a greater loss to the railways than ever, but I think the experiment is worth trying. I hope that before the holiday festivities come on, the Government will make an announcement and give reduced fares a trial. Were they to revert to the old method of return fares for a far and a half, instead of showing a loss, I believe they would show a great increase, not only in the number of passengers carried, but in their revenue.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Would you apply that to the country?

Hon. G. FRASER: It could be applied to the country with great advantage, al-

though there is not the same competition there as there is in the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. J. Maun: There is in the matter of goods.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am referring only to passenger traffic. The Government would be wise to extend the experiment to the country. I wish now to refer to the minimum charge for electric light. The Government announced that from the 1st December the minimum charge would be reduced from 15s. to 10s. a quarter. They might well have gone further, and brought their charges into line with those imposed by municipalities which control their own lighting arrangements. Many of the users concerned receive wages from 21s. to 35s. a week, so that the half-a-crown represents a big item for them. A person can burn two lights for two hours a night at a minimum cost of 2s. 6d. a month during the summer months, and it will thus be seen that people will benefit by the reduction of half-a-crown. I am not asking for something which other bodies are not prepared to give, and I hope the Government will carry out the suggestion. I now wish to deal with the unemployment board. They have a hard row to hoe, and their position is a difficult one, but they should show more firmness in their decision. If they did it would be of much help to those of us who are mixed up with the people coming under their control. We have endeavoured to get decisions from the board in order to ascertain the lines on which we are to proceed. We have notified them that many municipalities in the metropolitan area are taking advantage of the sustenance workers, and making them carry out jobs which they should not be called upon to do. In giving relief of this sort we should not cause other people to be put out of employment. Some of the local governing bodies have dismissed their permanent hands and replaced them with sustenance workers, who are performing the duties previously carried out by the others. That will not overcome the unemployment difficulty, but is shifting the responsibility from the local governing authorities on to the shoulders of the unemployment board. When we have reported these things to the board we have received vague answers. We have asked them to lay down the duties to be performed by sustenance workers. We think they should be employed on work, which ordinarily would not be performed by the local governing body

out of general revenue. It may be said that this work must be in the nature of filling in time. There is, however, much that could be done which would not ordinarily be done out of revenue, but which would prove of great benefit to the municipalities concerned. One of these things is the construction of footpaths.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Why do you mention them?

Hon. G. FRASER: Because the authorities had not the necessary finance for this work. All the revenue they have they require for the maintenance of roads. No objection could be raised to the employment of sustenance men on footpath work. They would be performing a service which would not otherwise be carried out, and would not be displacing permanent hands. Some local authorities have had certain employees on the permanent staff, but are now getting work done by sustenance workers. Permanent motor truck drivers have been put off and the trucks have been put in the hands of sustenance men. This is merely adding to the number of unemployed.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: You do not include the city of Perth, do you?

Hon. G. FRASER: The city of Perth has never been enthusiastic about sustenance workers, although other municipalities have availed themselves of the opportunity to employ them. In many cases we have had to endeavour to get redress for the men. Sustenance workers have even been called upon to do work under loan schedules, which is quite wrong. Men employed in the Health Department have been put on half-time, although the work was absolutely necessary. The other half of the time has been filled in by sustenance workers. Office girls have been put on half-time, and the other part of the time has been filled in by sustenance workers. The board have informed us that those sustenance workers were not strong enough to do outside work. One of those persons is a football umpire. If he is not fit to do ordinary municipal work, he is not fit to be an umpire.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: They seem to do funny things at Fremantle.

Hon. G. FRASER: Practically every municipality is taking advantage of sustenance work.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: All but one.

Hon. G. FRASER: When these workers are performing duties which do not neces-

sitate dispensing with the services of other employees, no objection can be raised, but in many instances permanent hands have been put off to make room for them. The municipalities are not acting fairly by the Government. The answers given by the board have been evasive and indefinite. If the board were a little more definite in their decisions, better results could be obtained by the various bodies who are handling sustenance workers. The other day I asked a question about employees of the Water Supply Department at North Fremantle. The Minister admitted that men had been drafted from other works. We know it is necessary for the Government sometimes to draft "key" men from one position to another, but the whole of the employees do not come under that head. I have been informed that it was intended to give a number of the unemployed in that district the opportunity to get work near by. That particular job was employing only eight or ten men. It happens to be one of the only jobs that has been carried out by the Government under the relief scheme in the district. The local authority is employing only 20 out of the 200 unemployed in the area. Most of the men have been out of work for 12 months and are drawing rations. Now that the opportunity has come to give them a job in their own district, and to pay them cash instead of giving them rations, not one of them has been put on to the work. But men have been transferred from relief jobs in other parts of the district. That is entirely wrong, and I trust that the board will stand up to the answers furnished by the Minister on the other question, that of the South-West drain, and will draw quotas of men from various districts for that particular work. Further, I trust the board will take note of remarks made concerning them, and stiffen themselves as regards replying to various deputations. I do not ask the board to give satisfactory replies to all requests; but in giving decisions as to the class of work, they should leave no doubt in the minds of those responsible for carrying on such work. A man on 28s. employed at bitumen work is not getting the cost of the extra boots he requires. I trust also that the various departments

concerning which I have spoken, if my observations reach them at all, will give consideration to the aspects I have mentioned. I support the second reading.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [8.48]: I rise with a certain reluctance to prolong the discussion, realising, as I do, the futility of doing so—and that is a damaging admission. We heard a good deal about futility in connection with another measure, and in that case there was some justification for the term. It may also apply to the criticisms passed by hon. members in connection with this Bill. However, we have a duty to point out certain things; and I trust that by repeatedly doing so we may eventually obtain attention to our criticisms. I was pleased to hear the fine speech of Sir Charles Nathan. When that gentleman entered the Chamber it was generally admitted that Parliament would be the better for his presence. Most people recognise that Sir Charles, having had a long and successful commercial career, is placing the fruits of his experience at the service of the country. If the criticism for which Sir Charles apologised, and which recognised the difficulties of the Government, is not taken some notice of, it will seem as if discussions of this nature are somewhat futile. I shall not indulge in wearisome reiteration. I merely wish to direct the Minister's attention to an important aspect of the trade of Western Australia—the tomato-growing industry at Geraldton. There we are favoured with climatic conditions which enable us to take advantage of the Eastern States market for early tomatoes. Last year some £12,000 worth of early tomatoes were sent from Geraldton to the East. In view of the value of that market to this State, we are doubtful of the Government's wisdom in spending a third of a million on a scheme in the South-West. It is one of the schemes undertaken without full inquiry by a thoroughly competent board. No doubt of that kind, however, exists in regard to the tomato industry at Geraldton. It is the early market that our growers must avail themselves of, because later, when metropolitan and south-western growers come in, it would not be worth while to rail the tomatoes from Geraldton to Perth, let alone to Melbourne. The member for Geraldton in another place recently requested the Government to extend the Geraldton water supply by running a pipe line out a couple of miles to enable

growers to obtain water for their seedlings during a couple of months of the year. The cost is estimated at not more than £2,000. Here there is something of a definite and not of a problematical nature. The tomatoes must reach the early market, and any assistance which can be given towards that end is well worth the Government's consideration. Geraldton is exempt from frosts, but water is badly needed. I know the Government are hard pushed for funds, but when a third of a million can be spent in another part of the State we think Geraldton should receive consideration. At the same time, we are most grateful to the present and the previous Government for the expenditure on Geraldton harbour. We merely ask for this small financial assistance to an industry whose results are assured. A good deal of the estimated cost of taking the water out to Bluff Point would be spent in wages, and even if wages did not constitute most of the expenditure at least the work ultimately would cause a great deal more to be spent in wages in the development of the industry that would grow up as a result of the water being made available. So it is not the immediate effect the Government should look to, but rather the ultimate effect. One point which has not so far been touched on arises under the Railway Estimates. These provide long-service leave at a cost of £60,000. I cannot find any similar item in any other department, and I am wondering why it appears in the Railway Estimates and not in the others. There was a howl of indignation from one section of the community when the previous Government introduced long-service leave to Government employees by administrative order. Many people thought the long service leave would be wiped out upon the change of Government. However, the present Ministry contend, and quite rightly, that two wrongs cannot make a right. They would not endeavour to undo by administrative order what another Government had done by that means. In view of the financial stress, however, the Government should give Parliament an opportunity to express either accord with or dissent from the administrative act in question. I understand that the total cost to the taxpayers is about £300,000 annually.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: What is your opinion of long-service leave?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: My opinion has been stated here frequently. I consider that the administrative act which introduced long

service leave was a wrong act. Moreover, it gave many men something they cannot afford to avail themselves of. A superannuation scheme, giving them something to fall back on in their old age, would have been much preferable. I agree with Sir Edward Wittenoom as to the money annually devoted to the University, though I am not opposed to education in the true sense. We are, however, starving agriculture, more especially in the direction of research work. Last week, in company with three technical officers of the Agricultural Department, I visited some experiment plots near Government House. The sight of wellgrown tobacco plants was most cheering to a Western Australian. Any hon. member who has not visited the plots will find it well worth his while to go along. The condition of the plots, however, was anything but a credit to the Agricultural Department. All the work done on them had been done by the technical officers, while at Blackboy Hill and Hovea there are 1,500 men engaged in work of no particular value. Having regard to the agricultural potentialities of Western Australia, we should scrape together every penny we can for the prosecution of agricultural research work.

Hon. F. W. Allsop. That comes through the University.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The reverse is the position. The University turns out numerous embryo doctors and lawyers, and the comparative scarcity of scientific agriculturists is not creditable to the institution. What a field of enterprise the tobacco plant opens. When I asked the departmental officers why tobacco had not been made the subject of research earlier, they said it was because the finances did not permit of it. But for years past people have been cultivating tobacco in the South-West, and I think our technical officers should have given the general public a lead. Something was said about the Midland Railway, but there was one aspect not touched upon. Consider the number of spur lines branching off from the main lines owned and controlled by the State, and then look at the line connecting Midland Junction with Walkaway. In all that distance there is not a single mile of spur line going off from the trunk line, which traverses some of the finest agricultural land in the

State. A few years ago a previous Administration repurchased the estates Mendels, Woongundie and Kokatea. The greater portion of two of those estates constitutes some of the best land in the State, but it is impossible for the men, especially those on Woongundie and the south end of Mendels, successfully to carry on their operations unless they get some consideration in the way of railway facilities. If the Government cannot afford to build spur lines, why cannot they give the Midland Company permission to build the spur lines themselves?

Hon. E. H. Harris: Have the Midland Company made that request to the Government?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes, if not to the present Government at all events to a previous Government. I have it from the manager of the Midland Railway Company that immediately the Government give the company permission to build spur lines action will at once be taken to endeavour to raise the money to have those lines constructed. We should not adopt a dog-in-the-manger attitude, but should take the broad view. If the Government cannot raise money to develop that portion of the State, they should not stand in the way of the Midland Company doing it. If the spur line were built it would serve those repurchased estates, and would also tap the coal deposits at Irwin. The Government are careful to explain that in any new works undertaken most of the money must be spent in wages. I want to support those remarks that have been directed towards inducing the Government to give attention to the reorganisation of the administration of the Agricultural Bank. Without finding any fault with the managing trustee, one feels he would not be doing his duty if he did not attempt to impress on the Government the urgent necessity for giving the Agricultural Bank an opportunity to function in the best interests of the State. I was glad to hear Sir Charles Nathan say he was not in favour of creating a board such as the Commonwealth Bank Board. We cannot adopt hard and fast lines with a board that has the agricultural interests of the State at heart. A board would have to be composed of men prepared to take a risk. One cannot bind farming operations down to hard and fast business principles, and I think Sir Charles Nathan gave us to understand that was what he meant. Certainly something should

be done to re-organise the administration. A man in the Yuna district told me he would not have any departmental expert come on to his farm and tell him how to run it, since he had been running it successfully from the very inception. Giving expression to a second thought, he said, "But if you go 25 miles south from here, I have not a word to say." Yet we have the general manager of the Agricultural Bank, who has not been in our district for years past, trying to lay down hard and fast rules which would govern the whole of the agricultural industry. The sooner something is done to decentralise the control and place the administration of the bank on a more satisfactory basis, the better will it be for the industry. I have the keenest appreciation of the many and serious difficulties the Government have to face. In view of the state of the finances and the immense amount of money they have had to find for the relief of unemployment, I will support the second reading, and I hope that the Minister will make representations to Cabinet that some of the criticisms voiced here to-night should receive consideration.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [9.10]: I thank members for the kindly manner in which they have discussed the Bill. The Government regret that in the circumstances it could not be made more presentable. That, of course, is not possible on the present prices for wool and wheat. Something has been said about transport, and the question arises whether members are prepared to scrap the railways, in which we are all shareholders, or to charge a reasonable fee for the motor vehicles using the roads, a fee commensurate with the wear and tear on those roads. It is a question whether members are prepared to allow taxpayers to make up the losses incurred by the railway system and at the same time find the money for the maintenance of roads depreciated by the motor traffic that is robbing the railway system. It must be remembered that practically the whole of the money earned by the motor vehicles competing with the railways goes beyond the State altogether. I had to take exception to Mr. Thomson's allusion to those inspectors who have been appointed to control the traffic, to see that the vehicles are not overloaded, to examine their licenses, and generally to make those in control of the

vehicles respect the law of the land. Those inspectors are honourable men, who had the respect of the department before they were appointed to their present positions. It was wrong of the hon. member to allude to them in the way he did, for they are carrying out their duties to the benefit of the State. The same hon. member said the Government had broken their agreement by cancelling the supply of labour in the farming areas. No such agreement was ever in existence. The Government having to pay sustenance money, thought it would be better to find a certain amount for farm labour for work on farms which would not otherwise be carried out.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: You cut it off without sufficient notice.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The first allowance made was 15s. per week. But we soon found we could not finance that amount, and so it was cut down to 10s. Even then, with all care and attention, and with the help of the police, the Government found that in many cases advantage was being taken of them. Then when the seasonal work came on there was a howl because we did not allow the system to continue. It was not right to use the taxpayers' money in that way, and it was wrong to urge members of the Government to continue making the payments. Several members have criticised the Collie irrigation scheme and declared that the estimated cost was problematical. The same set of officers who advised the Government with regard to the Waroona irrigation scheme are carrying out the work at Collie, and I should emphasise this fact, that the estimated cost of the Waroona scheme was not exceeded. As a matter of fact, the cost was under the estimate. There is every reason to believe that the same position will follow in connection with the Collie scheme, because there is a wider spread there. Anyway, why do members criticise a scheme of that description and not put up something in place of it? About 1,500 men are being employed on the Collie scheme, and the Government are carrying out a work that will return something; it will produce revenue and keep State activities going. I searched my brains, and the officers of the department did likewise, to think out another scheme by which the unemployed could have been absorbed, a scheme that would return interest and sinking fund, and we came to

the conclusion that the Collie proposal was the only one that was feasible.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why did you not put up that scheme to Parliament before you started it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That interjection reminds me of the story about keeping the horse in the stable when you want to break it in. The unemployed had to be found work within a few weeks. The money was rushed on us by the Federal Government and we had to do something right away. Fortunately we had prepared for such an emergency, and actually within a week operations were begun. If we had waited for the approval of Parliament, or given an opportunity to Parliament to discuss the project, months would have passed and in all probability we should have lost the money that was allocated to the State by the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Then do away with Parliament altogether.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This Act of administration was urgently necessary. There was no time whatever to be lost. If we had not taken immediate advantage of the grant that was made, we should have lost the money and then the responsibility would have been on us to find money for sustenance. Sir Charles Nathan referred to the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway. The £10,000 allotted to that is to be used in the employment of part-time labour. That railway has been approved by Parliament, and therefore the hon. member must not blame the Government for what Parliament has done. Instead of allowing the men to remain at Blackboy Camp, we are making use of them and getting something for the money that is being spent. The hon. member also advocated the appointment of an independent board to investigate the position of the railways, and Mr. Fraser suggested that the Government should direct the Commissioner to reduce fares.

Hon. G. Fraser: No, I said the Commissioner had requested the Government to reduce the fares.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the Commissioner's own responsibility. Certainly the railways made a loss last year but we must not forget that Western Australia has been opened up by its huge railway system. A lot of railways are not paying to-day and will not pay for many years to come, but they are opening up the country and pro-

ducing revenue. I have never believed in the system of settlement preceding railway construction; I have always believed in laying down a line and then settling the country. Moreover the railways have not been constructed on an economic basis, though they have opened up the country and are producing revenue. But for the extension of the railway system we should not have had a 50,000,000 bushel harvest last year. If we bind the railways down to a commercial basis, what is going to happen to the primary industry being served by the railways? Suppose we charged the producers the actual cost of haulage, there would be scarcely an acre cropped, and we should not have the average per acre that we have been getting because the farmers would not be able to carry on. I appreciate Sir Charles Nathan's reference to the trading concerns. Only to-day I replied to a letter from one of our bodies that is supposed to represent the commercial minds of Western Australia. That letter urged that I should close down the trading concerns altogether, or, failing that, get rid of them in some way. What would happen in this little town of ours if the private businesses that were unremunerative were to be closed down? Yet the representatives of the commercial community urge me to do something of a similar nature. I have no intention of carrying out their suggestion. It is impossible to get rid of the trading concerns in six months, and at a period such as this. It took Mr. Bruce seven years to dispose of the Commonwealth steamers. There are £2,000,000 worth of the people's money in the trading concerns, and that sum cannot be thrown on one side. The Government are anxious to get back to the actual work of administration; there is no desire to engage in trading concerns, but wisdom must be exercised in the disposal of the trading concerns. There must not be continual harping on the part of the commercial community to close down the works or to give them away. Those who talk like that show little sense of proportion, and very little business reason. We have no intention of sacrificing the assets of the taxpayers. A fact that is overlooked is the amount of money that is being returned to the Treasury by the trading concerns, but if those concerns were on a basis similar to that under which private businesses are conducted, there would be a different tone about them. A good deal has

been done during the past eighteen months in putting the trading concerns on a better footing. There is not much else I can say, and I feel that members have had just about enough of the debate on the Appropriation Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—SECESSION REFERENDUM.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Returning officers;

Hon. H. SEDDON: Can the Minister give us any idea how many officers will be required to carry out the referendum?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have not that information.

Hon. H. SEDDON: My reason for asking is that it affects the question of expense. I am afraid the Minister's estimate of £5,000 is entirely inadequate and that £15,000 will be nearer the mark. I will move an amendment to add a provision to the clause setting out that the expenditure incurred shall not exceed £5,000.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept such an amendment. There is a clause in the Bill in connection with which this question can be dealt with later.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Issue of writ for referendum:

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That at the commencement of the clause the following words be inserted:—"Within six months of the passing of this Act."

If we are to have a referendum, the sooner it is disposed of one way or the other the better. If we are to incur what I regard as totally unnecessary expense, it should be undertaken within six months.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I support the amendment for another reason. I want ample time to be given the electors to consider this question. As the Bill stands now, as soon as the

measure is assented to, the Governor must issue a writ at once, and, in accordance with the general practice, Bills are assented to within a fortnight. Section 32 of the Interpretation Act shows that when the word "shall" is used in conferring a power, that power must be exercised, and at once.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot place the same meaning into the clause as Mr. Drew has done. Certainly the Governor must issue a writ, but surely it will be issued on a date to be chosen.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I support the amendment, because, as the clause stands now, there is nothing to prevent "1941" being inserted in the writ instead of "1931" or "1932." Some limit should be provided so that the referendum, if it is to be taken, shall be held within a reasonable time.

Hon. J. M. DREW: In proof of what I have said regarding the time when an Act becomes operative, I would draw the attention of members to Sections 6 and 7 of the Interpretation Act. The Chief Secretary may say that the Executive Council might advise the Governor not to assent to the Bill, but if they were to do that, they would establish a precedent not adopted in any other part of the British Dominions. I do not know that any Government has dictated to the Governor regarding the assenting to an Act.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am afraid Mr. Drew has placed an interpretation upon Sections 6 and 7 of the Interpretation Act that has no application to this particular clause of the Bill. Those sections have a special meaning and apply to the coming into operation of an Act of Parliament. This is not an Act of Parliament. It is merely a measure to provide for the taking of a referendum. The Governor will issue a writ and the usual practice in reference to the issuing of a writ will be followed. At present there are various circumstances that might be considered.

Hon. G. FRASER: For instance, if there was a change of Government in the Federal arena, you would not take a referendum?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not say that, but suppose an election took place seven months hence, why should the Government be put to the additional expense of taking a referendum earlier? If no time were stipulated, the Government would issue a writ at a suitable and proper time and would probably save the expense that Mr.

Seddon has deprecated. The matter should be left to the discretion of the Government.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Does not the Electoral Act specify a time in which a writ shall be issued?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That would apply to elections, not to a referendum.

Hon. G. FRASER: The clause contains a definite instruction to the Government to issue a writ.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Forthwith?

Hon. G. FRASER: The Bill has reached the stage when some members are afraid of their vote and are hoping that the Government will dally with the question for another 18 months.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I must call attention to the hon. member's suggestion. I have no such hope and I believe I am speaking for other members.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Hear, hear!

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Fraser imputed no motives.

Hon. G. FRASER: It appears to me that many members are now shuffling.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not anticipate.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Is that Parliamentary?

The CHAIRMAN: I have corrected the hon. member by telling him he must not anticipate.

Hon. G. FRASER: I feel restricted in attempting to express my views. Though I am opposed to the Bill, I shall vote for the amendment. If the measure is to be passed, the sooner the referendum is taken the better. It should not be a Kathleen Mavourneen. Six months would be ample time for the Government to make arrangements and for the people to make up their minds.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	10

Majority for .. 2

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1 the words "a compulsory basis on" be struck out.

No penalty is provided. The people will simply be told that they are compelled to vote and that will be an end to the matter. If we are to have compulsory voting, there should be a penalty. It is proposed to insert the necessary machinery to ensure that there shall be compulsory voting and that there shall be a penalty.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot understand the hon. member's attitude. The new clause indicated may not be agreed to and there would then be no provision for compulsory voting.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The words proposed to be struck out mean nothing.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Committee would be wise to leave the words in.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I have an amendment to provide that persons shall be compelled to record their votes. The words "on a compulsory basis" were inserted in another place, but no machinery was provided for making the voting compulsory. My proposed amendment is copied from the Commonwealth Act. If we do not have compulsory voting, the decision will be of no value.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I do not see the necessity for the amendment. If Mr. Harris's amendment is carried, the inclusion of these words will not affect the position.

Hon. J. M. DREW: In the absence of a definition of the compulsory basis, or provision for a fine, I should say that "compulsory basis" would mean the employment of an army of constables to force people to go to the poll. Possibly special constables will be sworn in for the occasion.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	10

Majority for .. 2

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. E. H. Harris
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. J. T. Franklin
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I move—

That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	12

Majority against .. 2

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Seddon
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. V. Hamersley
	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 6—Question to be submitted to electors:

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That after "and" in line 31 the following be inserted:—"Are you in favour of dividing that portion of the State of Western Australia East of the 119th Meridian of East Longitude extending North to the 29th parallel of South Latitude and that portion of Western Australia North of the 29th parallel of South Latitude from the remaining portion of the State of Western Australia with the object of allowing the electors resident within those portions of the State remaining as a State under the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (Imperial) and"

On the second reading I indicated that in my opinion it was only right and logical if a referendum on the question of withdrawing from the Commonwealth was to be taken, that we should concede the corresponding right to people who feel just as

strongly in favour of remaining in the Federation. The goldfields people do not wish to be dragged out of the Commonwealth, in which they are strongly interested, and which they feel is a part of the Constitution for which they have stood in the past.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Is it fair to allow an amendment such as this, which does not appear on the Notice Paper?

The CHAIRMAN: In substance it does.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: How do we know where these geographical boundaries are until we see them on the map?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Bill has evidently been introduced with the definite object of dealing with the question of seceding from the Federation and not with the object of dividing the State as proposed under the amendment. Is this an appropriate amendment? In what way can the amendment be associated with the idea of secession? It has no such association. It refers to separation of one part of Western Australia from the rest. It is quite foreign to the issue at stake. We should refer to some committee the question what area is comprehended within the boundaries stated in the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall reach finality sooner by my being asked for a ruling whether the amendment is admissible. Having got that ruling the hon. member, if he does not like it, can move that it be disagreed to. I may rule in support of the hon. member's contention.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Bill in itself does not create secession, but merely enables the people to express their opinion on the subject. Other Acts of Parliament would be necessary later to create secession. As the amendment imports something altogether new—

The CHAIRMAN: I again remind the hon. member that he is using a welter of arguments where there is no question to use them on. The Chairman has not ruled as to the admissibility or otherwise of the amendment. I cannot allow the hon. member to argue on nothing. If I ruled the amendment out of order, the hon. member would have nothing further to say.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I ask the Chairman to give a ruling on the question.

The CHAIRMAN: I am asked to rule whether or not the amendment is admissible. The first point to be considered as to the admissibility or otherwise of any amendment

on any Bill is to be found in Standing Order 191, which says—

Any amendment may be made to any part of the Bill provided the same be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, and be otherwise in conformity with the Standing Orders.

In order to get the scope of the Bill, we must turn to the Bill itself, and to the Title of the Bill, which is—

An Act to submit to a referendum questions in relation to the State of Western Australia and the Federal Commonwealth established under the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (Imperial).

Clause 1 says that this Act may be cited as the Secession Referendum Act, 1931. Clause 6 may be described as the Bill. It says what questions shall be submitted to the electors. There are two of them, one for secession, and the other for the holding of a convention. If any member can find any relevancy between those two questions, I will thank him for it. There is much more relevancy in Mr. Seddon's amendment than there is between the second question in Clause 6 and the Title. Mr. Seddon's amendment is an alternative to the first question in Clause 6, and so it is entirely relevant. There is much more relevancy in the question that Mr. Seddon would put to the electors than there is in the question as to whether the electors are in favour of a convention. So I rule that Mr. Seddon's amendment is admissible.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Your ruling, Sir, seems to have been given on the ground that the second question to be submitted to the electors, contained in the second paragraph of Clause 6, is even more foreign to the Title than is Mr. Seddon's amendment. I should like your ruling as to whether that second question in Clause 6 is in conformity with the Title. How you can hold that Mr. Seddon's amendment is properly in place in an Act for a referendum on secession is beyond me. Certainly it does not fit the Title of the Bill. Your explanation, Sir, which covered a lot of ground, was that you are going to accept Mr. Seddon's amendment because it is not so decisively contrary to the Title as is the second paragraph in Clause 6, which refers to a convention.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I can give Mr. Holmes a ruling, Mr. Hall will have to withdraw his request for my earlier ruling. Only then can I give the ruling asked for by Mr. Holmes.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I will withdraw my request for your ruling.

Request by leave withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Now Mr. Holmes has asked whether question 2 in Clause 6 is relevant to the Bill, whether it conforms to the Title, as it must do under Standing Order 174. I rule that the second question in Clause 6 is foreign to the Title, and that therefore the Bill is foreign to the Committee. That ends the Bill, unless some member takes exception to my ruling.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Do I understand you, Sir, to say that unless someone disagrees with your ruling, that ends the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Well, someone had better disagree with your ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: You asked for a ruling and I have given it. If the Committee disagree with my ruling, I must report to the House, and if the President rules that the Chairman has ruled correctly, and if the House disagrees with the President's ruling, then that which is foreign to the Title will remain in the Bill.

The Chief Secretary: I certainly disagree with your ruling.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Cannot the Title be altered, Sir? Why should the Bill be lost? Is there not a means of rectifying that?

The CHAIRMAN: The procedure is not to alter the Title unless the Bill be amended. Mr. Drew, a very old member, knows that Bills have been ruled out in this Council because of a clause foreign to the Title.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Do I understand that the Bill is lost?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, unless someone disagrees with my ruling.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: But your ruling was one of the most able rulings I have ever listened to.

The CHAIRMAN: The logical conclusion of the Committee's disagreeing to the Chairman's ruling, and the Council disagreeing with the President's ruling, would be that that part of the Bill which the Chairman has declared to be foreign to the Title will go into the Bill and remain there, because the House has so directed. Mr. Nicholson has asked, cannot we amend the Title? He should know that the Committee of this House never amends the Title unless it has first amended the Bill. The Committee could amend the Bill by striking out this

provision, but I have ruled that the Bill is improperly before the Council.

Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.

The Chief Secretary: I move—

That the Committee dissents from the Chairman's ruling.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: May I be permitted to reply to a remark by Mr. Harris, who has just said to me, "You asked for a ruling and you got it, and now you are not satisfied?" I asked for a ruling, and am satisfied with it. Bills should not be admitted into this or another place if they do not conform with the Title. Whether or not I am in favour of the referendum, does not affect the issue. My question is, "Does the Bill comply with the Title?" If we do not adhere to that principle, we might have a Bill to amend the Vernin Act, and find in it a clause to amend the Licensing Act. So I am always prepared to fight for the principle that the contents of a Bill must conform with the Title. That was my only reason for asking for a ruling.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Has not the Chief Secretary moved that the Committee dissents from your ruling? Is it competent for any member to speak now?

The Chairman: No. I will put the motion that the Committee dissents from my ruling.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	13

Majority against .. 4

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. G. A. Kempton	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. C. Frazer	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. E. H. Harris
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Debate resumed.

The CHAIRMAN: On my ruling now, Clause 6 is struck out of the Bill. It is for the Minister to decide whether he will report progress or consider the remainder of the Bill.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Standing Order 177 reads—

Every Bill not prepared pursuant to the order of leave, or according to the Standing Orders of the Council shall be withdrawn, and, when withdrawn a new Bill may forthwith be presented in lieu thereof under the same order of leave.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I want to discover how Clause 6 has got out of the Bill. The question before the Committee just now was whether the Committee should or should not dissent from the Chairman's ruling. I raised the point as to whether the second part of the clause conformed with the Title and the Chairman agreed that it did not. The question then was whether the Chairman's ruling should be dissented from. The Committee supported the Chairman's ruling, but that does not throw the clause out of the Bill. The first question was never raised. That is in accordance with the Title. It is the second question that is contrary to the Title and the ruling given by the Chairman was on the second question.

The CHAIRMAN: It is all in Clause 6.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: But the first part of Clause 6 complies with the Title.

The CHAIRMAN: Part of the clause is foreign to the Title. The Committee upheld my ruling and now the whole clause must go out of the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That progress be reported and leave asked to sit again at a later stage.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: May I say a few words? I ask the Committee to honour the procedure that has been adopted by this Chamber for many years past and that is not to pass the Appropriation Bill until—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question before the Committee is that progress be reported and nothing else may be debated.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Anyhow we should leave the Appropriation Bill until the very end.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can ask the Minister for an assurance to that effect.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—INSURANCE COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [10.58]: Some years ago there was a compulsory loan obtained from insurance companies representing, I think, something like £130,000 and on that money the Government have been paying 4½ per cent. to the companies for many years. At the same time the Government have been paying for other borrowed money, six per cent. Now that we have reached the stage when everyone must be cut down, it is provided that 22½ per cent. shall be taken off the 4½ per cent., which will bring the rate of interest down to about 3 per cent. If members are satisfied to conduct business along those lines, I shall have no objection to offer, except that I suppose the companies will take advantage of the position and increase their premiums, which are already quite high enough.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Remaining Stages.

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

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, Bill recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering Clause 4 (struck out by a previous Committee).

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

New clause:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That a new clause, to stand as Clause 4, be inserted as follows:—Any license or contract authorised by Section 3 or Section 4 of the principal Act, or by Section 2 of this Act may, with the consent of the Governor, be for a period in excess of 21 years but not in excess of 50 years.

New clause put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—
That the Bill be reported to the House.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Some members were out of the House endeavouring to find a way out of the difficulty in connection with another Bill, and in their absence this Bill has slipped through although we intended to discuss one point. I shall have to ask for the recommitment of the Bill.

Motion put and passed.

Bill again reported with a further amendment.

Further Recommitment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I move—

That the Bill be further recommitment for the purpose of reconsidering Clause 4.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: If the clause is restricted, the question of electric lighting and electric power will be done away with. The clause is reasonable, and I do not know what Mr. Holmes can object to.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest to the hon. member that it is very unusual for a member to object to the recommitment of a Bill, and any objection he may have to any proposed alteration can be raised more fittingly in Committee.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I will accept your suggestion.

Question put and passed; Bill recommitment.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Members were prepared to agree to a concession covering 21 years but not 50 years. We do not know what may happen within the next 21 years and in the circumstances I move an amendment—

That in line 4 the words "but not in excess of 50 years" be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: I would draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that in Clause 3 we have already provided for licenses not to exceed 21 years.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If a company undertook to supply electricity to a portion of the State, they would be under heavy expenditure. If the concession were restricted to 21 years, one of two things must happen. Either they must levy a heavy charge for current supplied in order to get back their money, or they must instal a very cheap plant. If companies are prepared to

invest money, time should be given to recoup the capital outlay. It would retard progress if the time were unduly limited. The Bill would give the Collie company the right to supply current to various areas, and more than 21 years would be required. I believe that the agreement between the Government and the Perth City Council for the supply of current was for a period of 48 years.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: One would imagine that the whole expenditure on plant was in question. The plant of the Collie company is situated at Collie, and the 21 years would be granted for the erection of poles and wires. That is a fairly long term. The cost of erecting the poles and wires would be very small compared with the expenditure on plant.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the Collie company had their head works established and intended to supply Bunbury, 98 miles distant, they would have to increase the capital expenditure on their head works.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not at all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The present head works could not supply the whole State. If the area to be served were increased, the cost of the head works would have to be increased. People who are prepared to invest their money in such companies should be met fairly.

Hon. G. FRASER: I think the Chief Secretary has an erroneous view. The Collie plant will need no extra overhead expense to supply whatever current is required in the south-western districts.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Oh, get out!

Hon. G. FRASER: At the opening of the station, visitors were informed that there was sufficient plant to supply the district within 100 miles radius of Collie. Consequently the only extra expense would be for poles and wires.

The Chief Secretary: And transformers.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. That expenditure would be a mere bagatelle. I am not prepared to give any company a period exceeding 21 years.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. member be prepared to give 30 years?

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: It is subject to the consent of the Governor.

Hon. G. FRASER: No, 21 years is sufficient.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Would the clause give a monopoly to any company or person?

The Chief Secretary: Certainly not.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I cannot see that it would, but I desired to have a definite assurance on the point.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No monopoly would be given. The Government could instal an electric scheme at any time and serve any district.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: But possession is nine points of the law.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I hope members will not be side-tracked on the question of no monopoly. No monopoly is provided for in the Bill, but I can imagine members 25 years hence talking of vested interests and of the men who have put their money into the poles and wires. I know from experience that those astute gentlemen who are running the Collie company have made provision to supply Bunbury and other places. The poles would have to be renewed within 21 years. A point made by the Minister was that unless a longer period could be granted, Bunbury and such-like places would be loaded with a higher rate. I know something of the company in question. I know what the railways are paying for their coal. I have many times declared that we could never have dear coal and cheap railway freights. I know that whether they get 21 years or a longer period, they will charge a price that will pay. Knowing what has happened in the last 50 years, are we going to pledge the coming generation to a concession of this kind? I shall not support the granting of a longer period than 21 years.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Last evening this clause was struck out at my suggestion. Since then I have made an exhaustive inquiry into the matter, and have come to the conclusion that it has been wrongly and improperly explained. I understand the Collie power people are not much concerned about the Bill. They erected their station primarily for their own purposes. Representations have been made to the Government with the object of having current supplied to Bunbury. The municipality could have contracted for a supply for 21 years under existing legislation, but the transmission lines must go through other local authorities which do not want their own supplies. The company said that 21 years was not sufficient in the circumstances. If Bunbury wants to take current from Collie, and can come to an agreement with the company, with the consent of the Governor-in-Council they can enter into an agreement for a

longer period than 21 years. Seeing that ample safeguards have been inserted and that no license can be granted without the authority of the Governor-in-Council, I now withdraw my opposition to the clause.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I cannot understand Mr. Holmes's hostility towards this company. He seems to be annoyed because they have been so successful. They have had no concession of any kind. If the railways are paying a certain price for Collie coal, that is no fault of the suppliers. If the Bill is not passed, the company will not go any further in the matter. I say that as one of the directors. Unless the Bill is passed power cannot be taken through areas belonging to other local authorities. There is no under-current of business in this matter. The company do desire to take power to different parts of the district; but unless they get the rights for a sufficient number of years they will not entertain the business.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I have come to the conclusion that there has not been enough candour in this matter. Sir Edward Wittenoom says that if the company are not given a longer period than 21 years they will not consider the undertaking. What period in excess of that would they require?

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Would not the Governor-in-Council protect the State?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: We want to know what period to provide for in the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The period of 21 years has been in the Electric Lighting Act ever since 1892. Local governing bodies, before they can enter into a contract for a term of more than 21 years, have to obtain the concurrence of the Governor-in-Council. I fail to see where the danger is.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The consent of the Governor-in-Council having once been obtained, a contract can go on until doomsday. A term of 50 years would mean that our children's children would have to deal with the matter. This Bill has been put up especially for the Collie company.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Nothing of the kind!

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: A director of the company has told us that if they do not get more than 21 years, they will not go on with the proposal. Why do they not say in the Bill what period they want? The ele-

ment I do not like is the latter part of the clause.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: You are jealous of the success of the company.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am jealous of the rights of the State. I move an amendment—

That the words "in excess," in line 3, be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 3 already contains a 21-years license.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Then Clause 4 is unnecessary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the amendment is carried, the clause will be meaningless. Is it wise to have a Bill for every concern that starts? This is a general Bill.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The clause is merely a machinery clause to allow things to be done if the local governing bodies desire it. To the best of my knowledge, there is no agreement between the Collie company and the Bunbury municipality or any other local governing body. The Bunbury Municipality now have a fairly good plant, and I do not know that they intend to scrap it. Busselton also has a good plant, comparatively new, which there is no intention to scrap. Men of common sense will not give away any big monopolies by which they themselves may be seriously inconvenienced. I would be surprised if any local governing body bound itself for so long a period as 50 years.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I move—

That the Committee do now divide.

Motion put and passed.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	13

Majority against	4
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AYES.

Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. W. H. Kilson	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. F. W. Allsup	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. G. A. Kempton	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I move an amendment—

That the word "fifty," in the first line, be struck out with a view to the insertion of "thirty-five."

The amendment proposes to make the period 35 years instead of 50 years.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I object to this amendment, which is moved only out of jealousy.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is the hon. member in order in referring to me in that way?

The CHAIRMAN: I think Sir Edward Wittenoom is hardly in order in making such a personal reference.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The hon. member is annoyed because he could not carry the other amendment.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is a good thing for this country that some members are jealous to see that the State gets a fair deal.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am prepared to assist the Collie company, or any similar company, as far as I think I should go, but I also wish to protect individuals. I have knowledge of persons who had to suffer because of contracts of the kind here contemplated. After the agreement had been in operation for three years I pointed out to the body responsible for the signing of the contract that things were going to act harshly. They laughed at the idea, but some five years later they woke up to the fact that I had been talking sense. I know that an agreement extending beyond 21 years can act very harshly. Which of us can say what will happen within the next 21 years? How then can members agree to a contract for 50 years?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I ask the Committee to leave the clause as it stands. If they are prepared to give power for 21 years, why not make it 50 years?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why not a hundred years?

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the Governor in Council cannot protect the situation, I do not know that Parliament is likely to do so. I hold no brief for the Collie company, but at all events they are less interested than are the local authorities.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Bill means that the local authority cannot make a contract for 50 years except with the consent of the Government. It is a question of 21 years or 50 years. I will support the amendment.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I cannot accept the 35 years. When this matter was first mooted the question of 50 years was raised by some ratepayer. It was thought to be too long a time, but rather than show any hostility it was agreed to let it go.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: This refers to a local authority desiring to purchase electric current. The cost will be for posts and wires and transformers, and the local authority will have to consider what class of poles and of wire and transformers will serve 21 years without renewal. So the local authority will not gain much by a short contract. The maximum period in the clause would become the minimum, and so all contracts would be made on the basis of 50 years. The better plan would be to adopt the shorter period. I will support the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	..	11
					—
A tie	..	..	..	..	0
					—

AYES

Hon. F. W. Allsop
Hon. J. Ewing
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Harris
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. W. H. Kitson

Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. A. Thomson
(Teller.)

NOES

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. V. Hamersley

Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. T. Franklin
(Teller.)

The CHAIRMAN: The voting being equal, the question passes in the negative.

Clause put and passed.

Bill again reported without further amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

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

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading—Bill defeated.

Debate resumed from the previous sitting.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [12.18]: This is a short but a very important Bill because in it there is an attempt made to depart from a principle that was enunciated when we had the Arbitration Act before us on a former occasion. By the parent Act it was provided in Section 121, Subsection 3, that by leave of the court any party concerned could be represented and take part in any inquiry when the court was determining the basic wage. The idea was that any industrial union or union of employers that was registered would have an opportunity to take part in the proceedings when the basic wage was being fixed. Looking at the "Industrial Gazette" for the period ended 30th June, 1931, we find that the employers who were registered on that date numbered 33 and the employees' organisations numbered 126, or a total of 159. All these societies by the parent Act were entitled to full information and the right to contest any point at the inquiry. I would have thought when the Bill was introduced by a representative of the Labour movement that he would have provided that the same facilities should be adopted in the amending measure, but we find that by Clause 2, Sub-clause 4, the West Australian Employers' Federation and the State Executive of the Australian Labour Party, neither of which is registered in the Court of Arbitration, should be the organisations entitled to have representatives present to discuss the Statistician's figures when brought forward. I submit, as originally provided, every society that is registered should have the opportunity to be present if the society so desires, and be supplied with information and take part in the proceedings. I await with interest Mr. Kitson's viewpoint as to why the Employers' Federation and the State Executive of the Labour Party have been selected. There are many unions not affiliated with the Trades Hall, and they have as much right to be heard and to be supplied with information as either of the parties mentioned in the Bill. The Employers' Federation cover very few of the employers in Western Australia. There are many trade associations and chambers of commerce that deal with industrial matters and they are not affiliated with the Employers' Federation. There were 167 awards in force at the end of June last, and 266 industrial agreements. The items that the court may take into consideration are food, rent, clothing and miscellaneous, and when they fix the basic wage, the respective

amounts are set out that comprise the basic wage. The Government Statistician is a public officer, and it is provided by the Bill that on receipt of information which is confidentially supplied to him, the two organisations that I mentioned shall be supplied with a copy, and furthermore are to be heard before he makes his determination as provided by the clause, and each of the bodies shall be at liberty to make such representation as is deemed desirable touching the details set forth in the schedule, and the statistician shall take such statements into consideration before compiling the information. The statistician, as is known, obtains his information from his agents appointed under an Act passed in 1907 which provides that the statistician shall have the custody of the returns, and such information shall not by subpoena or otherwise be produced in any court. It is further provided that no officer shall, except as allowed by the Collection of Statistics Act, divulge the contents of any form filled up in pursuance of that Act, under a penalty of £50. The opening paragraph in the Bill reads—

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Statistics Act, 1907, the State Government Statistician shall, before compiling each statement to be supplied under this section, file in the court a schedule setting forth details of the average prices of commodities in each centre.

It is also expressly provided in the Bill that "notwithstanding the fact that the statistics may be of a private character, etc." That brings me to the point that by an amending Industrial Arbitration Act introduced in 1930 it was provided that the statistician, as soon as practicable after each quarter, should submit a statement indicating the price index figures. When that was introduced, the Collection of Statistics Act was in existence to provide for the compilation of statistics for public purposes. Therefore the position is that if anyone chooses to raise the point after this Bill has been passed, that Act can be declared null and void because there will be a statute in existence indicating that the registrar is not at liberty to disclose statistics he has received. I am surprised that that point has not been taken by representatives of Labour organisations who have contended in the court and elsewhere that it dealt a severe blow to the industrial workers of the State. Mr. Kitson said that the figure supplied by the State Statistician would be available, but that it

was not proposed to ask for the source of the information. By the Act under which the statistician receives his figures, a representative is chosen in each centre, and he, by Act of Parliament, is compelled to supply the necessary information. I submit that after that information has been sent in from any one centre, then as soon as the figures are made available, obviously anyone appearing before the court will have a knowledge as to who has supplied the information.

Hon. W. J. Mann: There will not be any secrecy.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: No. Ever since the Act was framed in 1907, the information supplied has always been treated confidentially. The Bill provides that the information shall be supplied to the representatives of two organisations neither of which is registered, and they should not be entitled to it. When we deal with the Bill in Committee it is my intention to move an amendment that the information shall be supplied to the representatives of every registered organisation of employers and employees, and that they shall be entitled to discuss it. That will not debar a representative of the Trades Hall or the Employers' Federation from being represented, but it will exclude them from the sole possession of the information.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [12.31]: In common with Mr. Holmes, I am somewhat surprised at the introduction of a Bill to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act at the present stage. If hon. members have read the "Daily News," they will have noticed that four vessels have left Fremantle without wool cargoes after waiting in port from five to 14 days. What is the use of this Chamber wasting time considering amendments to an Act, seeing that men, including some in another place, are not giving the parent Act fair and just consideration, particularly in view of the fact that they, as sponsors of this class of legislation, led people to believe that by it, disputes would be avoided? At present there is a dispute that is seriously affecting the people in the country districts and also the finances of the State. I am confident that among the workers are many who are compelled to be on strike at present, but if they were given their freedom, they would be only too pleased to be at work

earning a few pounds in order that they and their families might enjoy Christmas cheer. A loss of £300,000 has been incurred already, and it is deplorable that, by means of the injudicious action of the men or their leaders, the wool sales that were to be held at Fremantle this month have been cancelled. The position is so serious that it is not right for this Chamber to consider any amendment to the Arbitration Act when those who are supposed to obey awards issued under its provisions are refusing point blank to do so. The present strike has caused a great deal of ill-feeling in the country, for which I am sorry. We are suffering from the policy of centralisation that is prevalent at present. If wool sales were held—I blame the buyers and brokers for the present arrangement—at Geraldton and Albany, then I feel confident that Western Australia would not be facing the unfortunate position that exists to-day. It is positively tragic to realise that we have so many thousands of men in the State who are not permitted to earn enough to keep them in comfort at the present juncture. When the price of wool was much lower last year, the body of men now on strike had no interest in the welfare of the primary producers. There was no reduction in the wages paid at that time, nor was any help given to the industry. There was none of the hypocrisy manifest to-day when these men say that the advantage gained by the reduction of wages shall be passed on to the growers. I am suffering personally as the result of the hold-up of our wool. It is a remarkable coincidence that just about this time, when the primary producers may expect to receive some return for their year's labours, the present class of industrial dispute so frequently occurs. It is most regrettable and I am sure that Mr. Kitson and others with him regret it as much as anyone else. I will adopt the attitude of Mr. Kitson on a previous question dealt with in this House, and will move—

That the question be not now put.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	13
Noes	..	..	..	12
				—
Majority for	..			1
				—

AYES.

Hon. J. Ewing
Hon. J. T. Franklin
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. W. J. Mann

Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. W. Miles
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. F. W. Allisop
Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray

Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. E. H. Harris
Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. G. A. Kempton
(Teller.)

Motion thus passed; the Bill defeated.

BILL—APPROPRIATION (No. 2).

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [12.42 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. W. H. KITSON (West) [12.43]:

I did not desire to speak on the Bill earlier in the evening, but, in view of what has happened since, I think it my duty to discuss a few questions that are involved. Statements have been made that conveyed somewhat of a reflection on members of this House, and of another place. In view of the unemployment that exists to-day, that problem is one of the most important we can discuss at the present stage, and it is perhaps as well that I should make a few remarks in reply to some of the criticism that appeared in the Press and the comments of Mr. Thomson this evening. It is unfortunate that there should be any industrial trouble at a time when we have so many men unemployed. I regret most sincerely that there should be anything in the nature of industrial trouble that affects primary industry, because I agree that upon that industry rests the prosperity of the State. On the other hand, there is one thing that the workers must do, and that is to look after their own interests. I am referring to the wool trade dispute at Fremantle. There is no doubt in my mind that what the workers are doing is to protest in the only way open to them against what they consider is a grave injustice. Mr. Thomson, in speaking on the previous measure, said that those workers were not abiding by the Arbitration Act, and for that reason he would take certain action. Those men are not protesting against the Arbitration Act, and

no one knows that better than does the hon. member. They are protesting against the operation of the Financial Emergency Act. They agreed to accept the reductions in the basic wage as declared by the Arbitration Court.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Why not do away with the basic wage and let them take what they can get?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The hon. member may advocate that, but I hope we shall never reach that stage. A great majority of the men engaged in the dispute are purely casual workers, a fact that the general public do not seem to appreciate. This is the only State in the Commonwealth where the Financial Emergency Act has been made to apply to private industry. It is not in accord with the Premiers' Plan, although we have been told it was part and parcel of that Plan. As a matter of fact it is quite opposed to the Premiers' Plan.

Hon. G. Fraser: An attempt was made to introduce it and was defeated at the Premiers' Conference.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That is so. The Financial Emergency Act gives private employers the right to apply for a reduction of wages over and above that determined by the Arbitration Court. To the wool trade workers that means 8s. 2d. a week if they get a full week's work. Of the men employed in the wool stores not more than 10 per cent. are employed full time. That is a conservative estimate.

Hon. G. Fraser: Three per cent. would be nearer the mark.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: When I say that 25 per cent. are not employed for more than a month or two in the whole year, and that 60 per cent. are not employed for more than a few days during each sale, I am still on the safe side. This means that although a man is employed only three or four days at a time and may get three weeks or a month's work out of the whole of the wool sales, he has to suffer this additional reduction on top of the basic wage reduction. Is it a fair thing that men relying on casual work should have to submit to such a reduction on top of a reduction of 13s. 6d. per week in the basic wage since June, 1930? Those men are probably as loyal as any other workers. I know many of the men personally; I know the type. If they did not feel deep in their hearts that the time had arrived to protest, the present trouble would not have arisen. Mr. Thomson said if the men were given the

right to decide for themselves, there would be no more trouble. That shows clearly that the hon. member knows very little about the position. The men have, without any intimidation, determined on their course of action. More than one of them has said it is a good thing for the growers that they took such action. When the growers realise the position they will be more sympathetic. Mr. Thomson is not the only one suffering as a result of the dispute. Many others, including members of Parliament, are suffering. I should not like to do anything to aggravate the position, but if I allowed Mr. Thomson's remarks to pass without saying a word on behalf of the men, a wrong impression would probably be created among the people he represents and among the men I represent.

Hon. A. Thomson: The trouble is that four boats have left, and we have lost the December sale.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I realise that. I believe that four firms are involved in the dispute, and I have not yet heard of any representations being made by Mr. Thomson or the people he represents to those firms. They are as much concerned as are the men on strike. Those four firms have inflicted their will on other sections of workers without referring the matter to the Arbitration Court. They have reduced the payments for carting wool from the wharf to the stores by no less than 20 per cent. in one case and 25 per cent. in another case, and they have done it quite arbitrarily.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Quite right.

[The Deputy President took the Chair.]

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I am advised that even that reduction has not been passed on to the growers. If there is one thing that should be passed on to the growers, it is that saving. There has been no reduction in the commission rate charged by the firms or in the handling charges. Every bale of wool going into those stores is charged for at the same rate as it was four or five years ago. The same commission is levied irrespective of the price of the wool. The amount involved in the dispute is very small. It can total only a few hundred pounds. That sum is neither here nor there to those firms. I venture the assertion that the saving on cartage plus the increased commission as a result of the increased price of wool would more than cover it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Are they disobeying the law of the country or not?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I suppose I must admit that they are not obeying the strict law of the country.

Hon. A. Thomson: That was my point.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The Financial Emergency Act is one of our statutes, but had I happened to be one of those casual employees called upon to work as they are and accept a reduction under the emergency measure on top of the reduction of the basic wage, I would have been one of the first to protest. Admittedly a large amount of money is involved as a result of the dispute. Money that ordinarily would have been paid to the growers is held up until the wool has been despatched. I understand that is one of the conditions of sale.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And the next sale has been postponed indefinitely.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Something over 29,000 bales of wool were sold at the November sales and from newspaper reports it is apparent that wool advanced over £2 per bale at the November sale as compared with other sales. That represents an increase of at least £58,000 in the amount of money that will eventually be distributed amongst the growers. The increased commission plus the saving on cartage will be considerably more than the amount of money involved in granting the men's request. All they ask is that the additional amount involved under the Financial Emergency Act shall not be charged against them but that the firms shall be satisfied with the reduction of the basic wage made by the Arbitration Court. I do not know that I need say much more.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No, you had better leave it alone.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: When people understand the position I think they will agree that the men have every justification for taking the stand they did. They may have broken the law. I understand summonses have been issued against them, and I do not wish to complicate matters more than they have been complicated.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Did I understand you to say you would have done the same thing and broken the law?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I believe I would have been one of the first to protest against the reduction under the Financial Emergency Act.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is a legitimate way of doing it, without breaking the law.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: That way seems to constitute an appeal from Caesar to Caesar.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Act should be abolished if you do not obey the laws of your own court.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: These people are protesting against the Financial Emergency Act.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They are disobeying the order of the court.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I remember the discussion in this Chamber on the financial emergency measure.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That has nothing to do with the breaking of the law. You are talking to the gallery.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member should, I think, follow Mr. Kitson's remarks.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I pointed out then what the inclusion of the words "at the rate of" would mean, that they would lead to trouble sooner or later, and unfortunately that time has arrived. It was agreed that the Act should apply to Government servants. When an officer received less than £185 a year, it would not apply. The words "at the rate of" were subsequently inserted. When an officer was paid at a rate of less than £185 a year the Act would not apply to him, and furthermore every civil servant is employed on a yearly contract. The measure was then made to apply to private employment, and the insertion of the words I have referred to was agreed upon. It does not matter whether a private employee is working for a day, a week or a month; so long as his rate of pay is not at a lesser rate than £185 a year the legislation must apply. When I pointed that out, Mr. Miles said we must have equality of sacrifice, and that this reduction should apply to all. Is it fair that a man who gets only three or four weeks' work should suffer the same percentage of reduction as a man who is engaged all the year round?

Hon. G. W. Miles: That has nothing to do with the dispute.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I am sure Mr. Miles himself would admit the unfairness of the position.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [1.4]: In my opinion Mr. Kitson's speech has done nothing to bring about a settlement of this unseemly action on the part of the men at

Fremantle. Rather has he incited them to continue the strike and break the law of the land.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must not impute motives.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am not doing so. When the public read Mr. Kitson's speech, they must regard it as inciting the men to continue to strike. He said he would do the same thing himself. Leaders of the Labour movement should be the first to obey the law of the land. The Arbitration Court was constituted by their own party and they should obey its awards.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: We are obeying them.

Hon. G. W. MILES: You are not; you are striking. The Government should take charge of the situation at once. It is the fault of the Mitchell Government, because they accepted the amendments of the Leader of the Opposition. That is the cause of the strike. If they had put through their emergency legislation as it was brought down, with a 22½ per cent. cut to apply to all sections of the community, we should have avoided this trouble. Each section would then have had to go to the court. The weakness of the Government lay in their having pandered to the other side. That is the cause of the trouble. The Government should put on voluntary labour at once, and see that the ships are loaded.

Hon. V. Hamersley: The ships have gone.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is time we had a leader who will maintain law and order. As it is we have men holding up not only the wool, but future wool sales so long as the dispute goes on. I understand that at the beginning of the strike the men wanted to continue work, but their leaders advised them not to.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is not true.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! The proper procedure for Mr. Gray to adopt is to say that Mr. Miles's statement is incorrect.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I hope the Government will take a firm hand, and see that these workers, who are aided and abetted by the leaders, are at once put in their place.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [1.7]: Mr. Kitson has admitted that the men are disobeying the law, but I am sorry to think his

remarks will certainly not have the effect of getting them back to work. I would point out that a Bill was introduced by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to extend the provisions of the Arbitration Act. It takes long enough to get a decision from the court as it is. He created a position that will hamper the court in arriving at a decision. The measure was supported by agricultural members of this Chamber who are now asking their constituents, the people who sent them here, to provide means whereby the wool shall be handled. Their attitude is incomprehensible. I cannot understand anyone wanting to pass a law giving greater powers than are now given by the Industrial Arbitration Act. I take no notice of Mr. Kitson's speech. All I am concerned about is the effect it will have upon the people he represents. It certainly will incite them to maintain their present attitude. He should have told them to obey the law, and the decisions of the court which was established at the instance of the Labour Party.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [1.10]: A lot of incorrect information has been given to the public on this matter, and the debate to-night should clear it up. Mr. Kitson has dealt with the question of the men disobeying the law of the land. I wish to touch upon another point. It is said that these men are kicking against the Arbitration Court. It is the emergency legislation to which the men are objecting. I refer to that portion of the Financial Emergency Act which governs this question. The representatives from Western Australia attempted to have that portion included in the Premier's Plan, but they were unsuccessful. When the legislation was being brought up a measure covering that phase of the matter was introduced. We endeavoured to inform the public that certain legislation was being introduced and that this phase of the matter had not been given proper publicity.

Hon. A. Thomson: Is it not unfortunate that this should come about just when we were getting our wool away?

Hon. G. FRASER: It is unfortunate that the men should have to live on two or three days' work in the week. We endeavoured to point out to members what position would be created by this legislation. It was said that this phase of it had to be carried, as it was one of the results of the emergency

plan. I have here a copy of the Premiers' Conference, when the Attorney General attempted to introduce that phase of the question. I will read the following extracts from the conference:—

Mr. Davy: On the second page, paragraph 7 deals with reductions of salaries.

Mr. Hill: Do you say that, in order to get a reduction of 20 per cent. in salaries, these Acts would have to be amended?

Mr. Davy: That is what the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor says. What he endeavoured to do was to set forth the Acts which he must consider before he can finalise the matter. These are the Acts which we think, on a quick survey, may need to be considered.

Mr. Hogan: The last paragraph refers to the reduction of wages of people employed privately, but that is outside the scope. We are not dealing with them at all. The report is based on the fact that there has been a reduction of 20 per cent. in outside salaries.

Mr. Davy: Only in the salaries of those workers who come under the Arbitration Courts.

Mr. Hogan: This conference has not constituted itself a wage-fixing tribunal for outside employees. That is outside the scope of our work.

Mr. Davy: Are you not emphasising the equality of sacrifice and the necessity of the salaries of both private and public employees being cut?

Mr. Hogan: There are tribunals which deal with the private employees. We have enough problems of our own, without dealing with those that other bodies deal with. I suggest that the item be dropped.

Mr. Davy: The proposal is that there should be a 20 per cent. slide in interest, wages and salaries.

Mr. Hogan: In Government expenditure.

And so the debate goes on, till eventually we find the Conference refusing to accept Mr. Davy's proposal. Notwithstanding the endeavour of our Attorney General, the Premiers decided they were not there to discuss that phase. When the emergency legislation was introduced here, however, the Government were not content with the reductions agreed upon at the Premiers' Conference, but took the step which that Conference refused to take. At that time members of this party tried to impress upon other hon. members that if Parliament took the action proposed, serious trouble would result. Hon. members refused to heed our warnings, and the measure was passed. The result is the present strike at Fremantle. Hon. members must be corrected when they say it is a strike against the Arbitration Court. The employees are not objecting to the cut made by that court. They are prepared to accept the decisions given since July of 1930, by

which they lose 13s. 6d. per week; but they do take exception to being singled out as the only private employees in Australia to carry an extra burden. These men are employed for only a few days at a time, and they are carrying more than their share of the general burden. Because of those few words in the Act, "paid at the rate of," men not being paid anything near the basic wage for the whole twelve months, are compelled to bear a burden from which even civil servants are excused. I am pleased at the opportunity to correct some of the misstatements made during the past few months, and support the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and passed.

BILL—SECESSION REFERENDUM.

In Committee.

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting; Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair, the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 7 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Scrutineers:

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: What is the object in providing that scrutineers shall be appointed only by the Chief Electoral Officer? It is customary, in Commonwealth referenda at least, that either of the interested parties shall have the right to appoint scrutineers to watch the interests of their particular organisation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I see nothing in the Bill to prevent the appointment of other scrutineers.

Hon. E. H. Harris: But there is no provision to that effect.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In a case like this would it be necessary to have additional scrutineers? I am now in a position to give some information asked for earlier in the sitting: there will be 50 returning officers for each district, making a total, with presiding officers, of 800; and the grand total of officials, including clerks, will be 1,400.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—agreed to

Clause 13—Method of voting:

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Subclause 2 provides that a separate ballot paper for each

question shall be supplied to every elector desiring to vote. The Committee have struck out the clause dealing with the two questions to be submitted.

The CHAIRMAN: An opportunity will be given later to re-instate Clause 6. If it is not re-instated, the Bill will be gone.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14, 15, 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Regulations:

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: This clause certainly gives the Minister every power he can possibly require for the purposes of the referendum.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 18—agreed to.

New Clause:

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: In another place it was agreed that the poll should be on a compulsory basis. A provision to that effect is valueless unless the Bill includes the necessary machinery compelling every person to record a vote, subject to a penalty. My new clause is taken from Commonwealth electoral legislation, and represents a provision inserted for the purpose of making voting compulsory. I have made the necessary alteration as to additional returning officers. I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 19:—

(1.) It shall be the duty of every elector to record his vote at the ballot.

(2.) It shall be the duty of each Returning Officer, at the close of the ballot, to prepare a list (in duplicate) of the names and descriptions of the electors enrolled for his district, who have not voted at the ballot, and to certify the list by statutory declaration under his hand.

(3.) The list so certified shall in all proceedings be *prima facie* evidence of the contents thereof, and of the fact that the electors whose names appear therein did not vote at the ballot.

(4.) Within the prescribed period after the close of each election the Chief Electoral Officer shall send by post to each elector whose name appears on the list prepared in accordance with Subsections (1) and (2) of this section, at the address mentioned in that list, a notice in the prescribed form, notifying the elector that he appears to have failed to vote at the ballot, and calling upon him to give a valid truthful and sufficient reason why he failed so to vote.

(5.) Before sending any such notice, the Chief Electoral Officer shall insert therein a date, not being less than twenty-one days after the date of posting of the notice, on

which the form attached to the notice, duly filled up and signed by the elector, is to be in the hands of the Chief Electoral Officer.

(6.) Every elector to whom a notice under this section has been sent shall fill up the form at the foot of the notice by stating in it the true reason why he failed so to vote, sign the form, and post it so as to reach the Chief Electoral Officer not later than the date inserted in the notice.

(7.) If any elector is unable, by reason of absence from his place of living or physical incapacity to fill up, sign, and post the form within the time allowed under Subsection (5) of this section, any other elector who has personal knowledge of the facts may, subject to the regulations, fill up, sign, and post the form, duly witnessed, within that time, and the filling up, signing, and posting of the form may be treated as compliance by the first-mentioned elector with the provisions of Subsection (6) of this section.

(8.) Upon receipt of a form referred to in either of the last two preceding subsections, the Chief Electoral Officer shall indorse on both copies of the list prepared in accordance with Subsection (2) of this section, opposite the name of the elector, his opinion whether or not the reason contained in the form is a valid and sufficient reason for the failure of the elector to vote.

(9.) The Chief Electoral Officer shall also indorse on both copies of the list, opposite the name of each elector to whom a notice under this section has been sent, and from or on behalf of whom a form properly filled up, signed, and witnessed has not been received by him a note to that effect.

(12.) Every elector who—

(a) fails to vote at the ballot without a valid and sufficient reason for such failure; or

(b) on receipt of a notice in accordance with Subsection (4) of this section, fails to fill up, sign, and post within the time allowed under Subsection (5) of this section, the form (duly witnessed) which is attached to the notice; or

(c) states in such form a false reason for not having voted or, in the case of an elector filling up, or purporting to fill up, a form on behalf of any other elector, in pursuance of Subsection (7) of this section, states in such form a false reason why that other elector did not vote,

shall be guilty of an offence.

Penalty: Two pounds.

(13.) Proceedings for an offence against this section shall not be instituted, except by the Chief Electoral Officer or an officer thereto authorised in writing by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I propose to move an amendment on the amendment, that in line 1 of Subclause 4 the words "within the prescribed period" be struck out; and that in line 2 the word "election" be struck out and "ballot" be inserted in lieu.

The CHAIRMAN: If it be agreeable to the Committee, that will be done by the clerk.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering a new clause to stand as Clause 6, and the Schedule.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Consequential amendments will be required in Clauses 10, 13, 14 and 16, so the Minister had better extend the order of leave.

The Chief Secretary: Very well.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 6—Questions to be submitted to the electors:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That Clause 6, deleted from the Bill, be re-inserted.

I feel that some members were not fully aware of the effect of striking out this clause when they supported its deletion.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That after the words "shall be," in line 1, the following be inserted:—"Failing a convention of an equal number of representatives from each of the Australian States being summoned before the 30th day of June, 1932, for the purpose of proposing such alterations in the Constitution of the Commonwealth as may appear necessary to such convention."

The effect of this will be to combine the two questions appearing in Clause 6. It simplifies the position and is a distinct improvement on having the two separate questions. Later I will move to strike out the second question appearing in the clause.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This does not amount to even a pious resolution. The amendment on the amendment will get us nowhere, for it is of no value whatever.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is the Bill of any value?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill does say something, whereas the amendment on the amendment does not amount to so much as a pious hope.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Mr. Hamersley's amendment will not get us anywhere. Will the Bill ever get us anywhere?

Hon. J. M. DREW: Mr. Hamersley's amendment has been inspired with the object of saving the face of the Dominion League. The league issued a circular and the amendment is word for word with part of the contents of that circular. There is a threat in the amendment which reads, "Failing a convention . . . are you in favour, etc."

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Those who are behind this agitation want to give the people of the State an opportunity to express themselves as to whether they are or are not in favour of secession. I am definitely against Mr. Hamersley's amendment.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: My amendment incorporates the two clauses the Minister wishes to re-insert. In my amendment there is the alternative as required in the two questions. If the two questions are submitted to the electors, confusion will result.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw Mr. Hamersley's attention to the fact that the words in his amendment amount to pure assumption. Suppose the amendment be carried, and the Committee throws out the other question, there will be nothing in the Bill to indicate that there is ever going to be a Federal Convention.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There are two questions to be submitted and in a referendum of this sort it oftentimes happens that two questions create confusion. The taking of the referendum will do the State a great amount of good.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Whatever the result?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: So long as the result is as one would like to see it. I want to do what I can for Western Australia. The simpler the question to be submitted to the people the better it will be for everyone. We should look at this matter from the standpoint of Western Australia and what is the best for the State. I suggest that Mr. Hamersley withdraw the amendment and that we then strike out the second question altogether.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I am quite prepared to withdraw my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The simplest way would be to take a vote on it.

Amendment on the amendment put and negatived.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That all the words after "Imperial" at the end of the first question be struck out.

If my amendment be agreed to, it will mean that the one question regarding secession will be submitted to the people. We should not include any references to anything else.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am opposed to the amendment. While it may be desirable to get an expression of opinion on the question of secession, it is equally important to get the opinion of the people regarding the holding of a convention to consider the whole of the relationship between the State and the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: How many of the electors are qualified to express an opinion on the latter question?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Many people are convinced that the time is long overdue for a revision of State and Commonwealth relationship.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: How many voters know what a convention is?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Many people remember the earlier conventions that were held. If a majority expressed a view in favour of a convention, it would give the Government a powerful lever with which to approach the Federal Government and other State Governments with a view to holding referenda elsewhere. The second question is just as important as the first.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I am in favour of the amendment on the amendment, which will place the referendum on the basis originally desired. The second question was inserted in another place as a side-track, and will tend to complicate matters.

Hon. F. H. H. HALL: What action has been taken towards the question of a convention going before the public? None at all.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Mr. Hall is constantly reminding us that he is a new member and does not know what has happened in the past. I have been in politics long enough to know that if the majority of the people voted for a convention, those in authority would recognise the value of votes, and something would have to be done. By that means something will be accomplished. Hence the advantage of the second question.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not know whether the introduction of the second question was meant to cloud the issue, but it will

have that effect. I prefer a straight-out issue with one question.

Hon. H. SEDDON: On former occasions several questions have been referred to the people by way of referenda, and the argument regarding confusion has not been borne out by experience. There is no reason why confusion should arise. The people are intelligent enough to answer the questions. A favourable vote for a convention will advance the objective of the secessionists, and it will provide the Government with an important lever with which to approach the other States to have the question of a convention discussed.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The best way is to put one question before the people. If we complicate it with references to conventions and so on the people will not know which way to vote.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is difficult to follow the attitude of some hon. members. I voted for the second reading of the Bill because I thought the people were intelligent enough to answer one or two or more questions. In the opinion of Mr. Yelland and Sir Edward Wittenoom, the people have not enough intelligence to answer two questions. If I were of that opinion, I would vote against the Bill. To be consistent, Mr. Yelland and Sir Edward Wittenoom should deem it their duty to vote against the Bill because they do not think the people have sufficient intelligence.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The very fact that two questions are to be submitted will tend to cloud the issue, and the effect of the vote. Every secessionist will vote in favour of the first question, and, if he votes according to his conscience, will have to vote in favour of the second question. The anti-secessionist will vote against the first question and will vote in the affirmative on the second. Later on an unfair deduction may be drawn from the result of the voting.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I think the better plan would be to get back to the original question and let the people say whether they favour secession.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: The two questions are not alternatives. I cannot see that any complication would arise with people of average intelligence. I endorse every word Mr. Holmes has said. If a person has not the intelligence to understand the second question, the first question should not be submitted to him.

Hon. G. FRASER : It would be quite possible for an elector who voted for secession to vote for a convention. Those who support the movement appear to want secession and nothing else.

Hon. A. Thomson: Does not the Constitution provide for a convention?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, and a vote in favour of it would emphasise the point. If the question were confined to secession, I think those who are advocating the referendum would regret the result. Only the secession side has been publicly discussed. The small skirmish in which the A.N.A. was involved represents the only attempt to present the other side.

Amendment on the amendment put, and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: I give my deliberative vote with the Noes.

The division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	..	14

Majority against .. 3

AYES.

Hon. J. Ewing
Hon. J. T. Franklin
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. W. J. Mann

Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop
Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. Harris

Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. Sir C. Nathan
(Teller.)

Amendment on the amendment thus negatived.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That the following words be added:—“And are you in favour of dividing that portion of the State of Western Australia east of the 119th meridian of East longitude extending north to the 29th parallel of south latitude, and that portion of Western Australia north of the 29th parallel of south latitude from the remaining portion of the State of Western Australia with the object of allowing the electors resident in those portions of the State remaining as a State under the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (Imperial)?”

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Those members who were in Western Australia 31 years

ago can carry their minds back to what happened then. One of the greatest levers to force this State into Federation was the threat of the goldfields to separate from Federation. This amendment is brought forward by a representative of the goldfields. Naturally the Government cannot accept it and I do not think the Committee will. It would confuse the issue. It would be useless to put too many questions before the people.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It would not be as many as will be put to them on the 19th December.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Such a vote would be futile. We have got away from the feeling that existed 31 years ago and do not want to revive it.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You have not been to the goldfields.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Ninety per cent. of the people then on the goldfields did not intend to stay there. They had come from the Eastern States, and intended to return there, and they tied this place to the Eastern States. Now when they are settled on the goldfields as part and parcel of the State, this amendment is brought forward.

Hon. A. Thomson: They would probably get one representative in the Federal Parliament if they separated.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They would not enjoy the wonderful services provided now. Mention has been made of their paying for the water service.

Hon. Sir Charles Nathan: I have heard Federal members using similar arguments regarding Western Australia.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Federal bond has taken more out of Western Australia than we are ever likely to get back. We get a little under the road grant, but that is only a small portion of what is taken from us through the Customs. •

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot permit the Minister to discuss those questions.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have a fairly long memory and I intend to support the amendment. I have waited 31 years to catch those goldfields people for running us into this mess and I think the opportunity has come. They ran us into Federation, much to my disgust and annoyance. As soon as they separated from us, I would begin by cutting off their supply of water. Since the inception of the scheme the taxpayers of the State have provided £100,000 a year to keep it going.

Hon. E. H. Harris: We will pay you 12 gold.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I would charge compound interest extending over the 31 years in addition to charging for the water. I support the amendment in order to get square with those people who ran us into this difficulty.

Hon. G. FRASER: Apparently, because a mistake was made 31 years ago, in the taking of a referendum of the whole of the people in the State we should continue the mistake. I am surprised at the arguments of the Chief Secretary. This matter will, after all, be decided by the whole of the people of the State and not by the residents of the goldfields.

Hon. A. THOMSON: If this amendment is passed, I shall propose that the Great Southern should also be given the opportunity to secede. We have suffered great disabilities by reason of Federation, and all the traffic which used to go to Albany has now been transferred to Fremantle. Let us divide the State up into as many parts as possible, and be as absurd as we can.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: Whilst we may joke over these amendments, they have a serious side. They show to what lengths people are prepared to go. If there are parts of the State which consider they are being unduly burdened, they should have a right to separate from the rest of the State. If the Great Southern separated, they would have to take over the group settlements. People in the North-West have suffered many disabilities owing to the neglect of Governments, and are also entitled to have their say on the question. When we talk of putting questions like these to an uninformed public, it shows how Parliament is setting to work to disintegrate the State. I would make the Bill as grotesque as possible, if only to ensure that the people realised the effect of the whole thing. For that reason I will support Mr. Seddon's amendment.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Those members who are opposed to secession have spoken about dismembering Western Australia. We now have a member, who wants Australia to remain intact, bringing forward this absurd amendment. Why should not Fremantle separate from Perth? Those who are opposed to secession are trying to make the Bill ridiculous.

The CHAIRMAN: You are not referring to members of this Chamber?

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is disorderly in using that expression in that way.

Hon. H. Seddon: The Bill cannot be more grotesque than it is.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: The amendment is designed to make the Bill ridiculous so that it will be of no use. The second question was inserted only to make it impossible decently to answer the first question.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: In my opinion this amendment is foreign to the Bill. The measure was brought forward solely for the purpose of giving the public an opportunity to say "yes" or "no" on the question of secession.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The people of the goldfields are quite consistent in asking that this amendment should be brought forward. They do not want to be identified with the movement that will take them out of the Federation. For that reason they are prepared to follow the same tactics as the secessionists. They are paying their full charges on the goldfields water scheme, but the trouble is that Governments have been compounding the charges that have been paid on the main and putting the money into revenue. We are prepared to assume our own responsibilities if we should ever be called upon to do so.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: This amendment is a question of tactics. It is designed to obstruct the Government in their desire to submit the secession question to the people. I am opposed to secession but I support the idea of a referendum. If a large vote is given in favour of secession it will help us to bring about a better consideration of the disabilities from which we are suffering. The amendment is designed to stir up the goldfields as they were stirred up 31 years ago. If Kalgoorlie is stirred up to a little excitement the hero of the piece will be the mover of this amendment when he returns to Kalgoorlie. I believe that we can in time overcome the difficulties occasioned by the extravagant manner in which the Federation has been run. I also hold that the secessionists have good cause for their complaints. The referendum would make the rest of Australia sit up and take notice. The other States would be given a

lead, and we should then have a much better state of affairs under Federation.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I fail to understand the opposition to the amendment. The whole object of the Bill is to enable the Western Australian people to declare whether they desire to secede from the Commonwealth. Suppose the referendum were held and the decision was in favour of secession. The people of the goldfields would be greatly upset, and there would be an agitation on their part for a referendum to decide whether or not they should remain associated with the Commonwealth. The goldfields people should have the right of self-determination. I support the amendment.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I thank the mover of the amendment for altering the 20th parallel of South latitude to the 29th parallel. This alteration gives the North-West an opportunity of deciding whether it wishes to remain joined to the South-West. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If Mr. Miles reflects for a minute, he will realise the absolute futility of a referendum on such a question as now proposed for incorporation in the Bill. The amendment is utterly inconsistent with the Title of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Title can be amended in conformity with the amendment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This Bill was introduced to deal with questions between the State and the Commonwealth, not with the separation of one part of Western Australia from the rest. Sections 61, 62 and 63 of the Constitution Act, 1889, deal with the matter of dividing Western Australia into separate States.

The CHAIRMAN: Was that before Federation?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Undoubtedly, but it applies to-day.

The CHAIRMAN: Under the Commonwealth Constitution new States can be created.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The amendment has no relevancy to the Bill. It merely seeks to draw a red herring across the trail.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Mr. Kempton yesterday elaborated on the potentialities of a district near Geraldton which has wonderful coal. That district is in the part which Mr. Seddon desires should be separated from the rest of Western Australia. All the auriferous

areas are within the boundaries outlined by the hon member. The people of the North-West have very little to thank the Commonwealth for and less to thank the State Government for. A North-West referendum would show nine-tenths of the people there standing firm. The goldfields have never taken trade away from Albany, but the metropolitan area has pinched all the trade from Esperance. Given a port at Esperance, the trade that would flow through the goldfields would stagger the rest of the State. But unfortunately the Government are unable, for lack of funds, to build what is necessary to open up that portion of the State. If we were to put the question to the people, I feel sure we should be surprised to find the number who would approve of dividing the State into two parts. I will support the amendment.

Amendment on the amendment put, and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: I intimate that I will give my deliberative vote with the ayes.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	13
					—
Majority against	..	..	..	..	1

Ayes.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Seddon

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	

(Teller.)

Amendment on the amendment thus negatived.

Amendment (to re-insert Clause 6) put and passed.

Clauses 10 and 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Informal ballot paper:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Earlier in the evening there was before the Chair an amendment limiting the expenditure on the referendum. I understood you, Sir, to say it would be taken at a later stage.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid that cannot be done. Money would have to be appropriated for the purpose, and we cannot interfere with that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16—agreed to.

Schedules A, B, C and D—agreed to.

Bill again reported with a further amendment, and the reports adopted.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [3.10]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [3.11]: I wish to make a final appeal to the House at this stage. The whole position has been well canvassed, and I think everybody now knows what is involved. Personally, I would not be responsible for the futility of submitting a question like this to the people of Western Australia. Therefore I will oppose the third reading.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	..	11
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	3

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. H. J. Yelland
(Teller.)	

NOES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

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

Sitting suspended from 3.20 to 4 a.m.

BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILLS (2)—RECEIVED FROM THE ASSEMBLY.

- 1, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
 - 2, Hospital Fund Act Amendment.
- Read a first time.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.3]: I wish to make a short explanation. I had intended to proceed with the two Bills which have just reached us from another place, but have decided that it would be very conflicting to place them before members until they have been put into such a form that the amendments that were made to them are embodied in their right places. We shall be meeting again at 2.30 this afternoon, when both these matters can be proceeded with.

House adjourned at 4.5 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1931.

	PAGE
Questions: Agriculture, farmers' disabilities—1,	5684
Government proposals for help; 2, Machinery and oil merchants	5684-5
Coal supplies, importations	5685
State Trading Concerns, price reductions	5685
Sustenance workers, railway transport	5685
Wool trade dispute, effect on sale and shipping	5685
Public Service Commissioner, mission to Eastern States	5685
King Edward Memorial Hospital	5686
Assent to Bills	5686
Motions: Forest Regulations, to disallow, negatived	5686, 5729
Federal Tariff	5730
Bills: Bills of Sale Act Amendment, 2R.	5691
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 2R., Com.	5695
Land Act Amendment (No. 2), returned	5722
Insurance Companies Act Amendment, returned	5722
Hospital Fund Act Amendment, Com., etc.	5723
Appropriation (No. 2), returned	5722
Electric Lighting Act Amendment, Council's amendments	5728
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, Com. report, 3R.	5729
Secession Referendum, Council's amendments	5729
Adjournment, special	5730

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

QUESTIONS (2)—AGRICULTURE, FARMERS' DISABILITIES.

Government Proposals for Help.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: 1. Did he mean in his reply to the member for