

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 20th March, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented," see "Votes and Proceedings."]

QUESTION — FREMANTLE WHARF, REGISTRATON OF EMPLOYEES.

Mr. MUNSIE (without notice) asked the Premier: Will he lay on the Table of the House the names of those men at present registered for work on the Fremantle wharf?

The PREMIER replied: In accordance with the undertaking given last evening, I have communicated with the Harbour Trust and the employers of labour at Fremantle, and asked for the information required. I will endeavour to procure a list of all those persons who are employed on the wharf and registered for employment.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.45]: I move—

"That for the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be passed through all their stages in one day, and Messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received; also, so far as to admit of the reporting and adopting of the resolutions of the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees."

In asking the House to agree to this motion, I am taking no unusual course. It is always customary in this House, when the session is drawing to a close, to ask hon. members to agree to the suspension of the Standing Orders. I am not desirous of taking that course with a view to preventing hon. members from discussing those Bills which are now on the Notice Paper, or of the introduction of which notice has been given. In fact, I have no right to do so; nor can I compel the House to take any course except such as the House itself may decide to adopt. As hon. members are aware, the Legislative Council has very little work to proceed with at present; and therefore it would be an advantage if, in cases where this House desires to do so, measures could be passed through all their stages on the same day, and thus be promptly transmitted to another place to be dealt with there. Again, as hon. members know, measures are transmitted to this House from another place, and when those Messages are received they cannot be dealt with at once, but must be placed on the Notice Paper for consideration on the next sitting day. At this stage it would, I think, be an advantage if we were in a position to deal with Messages on the day they are received, provided, of course, this House is prepared to do so. My motion represents merely what is the invari-

able practice after the House has sat for a considerable time. We have been sitting here, off and on, since last July; and this may be considered the third session we have had within 12 months, although, of course, it is really an adjournment of the second session. We have been discussing Estimates that represent money which for the most part is already spent; and I feel sure hon. members will recognise that it is not to the advantage of the country to prolong this session beyond the time necessary for the due consideration of the business before Parliament. Hon. members are constantly pointing out that administration is the principal work which Ministers should perform; and I myself consider administration to be the chief work of government. Although we sit here to make laws, yet the administration of the country is the principal function that is needed to bring advantage to the State and benefit to the people. As is known to hon. members who have sat on the Treasury bench, Ministers find it almost impossible to attend to their administrative duties while Parliament is sitting. Particularly is that the case during a session such as this, which has been characterised by a plethora of questions, which have taken up the time of Ministers and of many officers throughout the departments practically for the whole of each morning, on sitting days, in order that replies might be furnished to hon. members.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you think there have been more questions than usual this session?

The PREMIER: Considerably more this session.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Greater in quantity and less in quality.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There have been more questions addressed to the Premier, but fewer to other Ministers.

The PREMIER: Mr. Frank Wilson moved the suspension of the Standing Orders on the 1st March last year, and the session closed on the 21st March. Mr. Scaddan moved the suspension of the Standing Orders on the 25th November, 1913, and the session closed on the 18th December; so that the considerable period of four weeks elapsed between the suspension of the Standing Orders and the close of the session. Mr. Scaddan again moved the suspension on the 20th October, 1915, and the session continued until the 26th November, when there was an adjournment until the 25th January. Thus I am not asking the House to agree to anything unusual. The Government have no desire whatever to prevent hon. members from discussing the Bills now on the Notice Paper, nor have the Government any desire to drop any of those measures unless compelled to do so.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you desire to finish by Easter?

The PREMIER: I desire to finish as soon as possible, and I think hon. members will agree that in the interests of the country, if not in the interests of hon. members themselves, the session ought to close without unnecessary delay. Possibly hon. members enjoy being here; but they should sacrifice their own enjoyment when it is so important, in the interests of the country, that Ministers should

be placed in a position to endeavour to carry out all those reforms which hon. members generally have been suggesting to them during the course of the session. Many of these measures could be considered with perhaps less discussion than is sometimes given to them. Not that I wish to suggest in any way that hon. members should not give Bills full discussion; but let us deal in a businesslike way with the matters we now have in hand. The Treasurer gave notice of two Bills this afternoon—the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill, which hon. members know to be necessary, and also a Bill dealing with insurance companies, which measure he foreshadowed in his Budget speech. I shall be very pleased indeed if the leader of the Opposition will give me the benefit of a word with him in regard to these matters. Hon. members know that it is my duty, as leader of the Government, to conduct the business of the House; and I am very pleased at all times to consult with my hon. friend opposite, who, I am sure, is imbued with the same feelings as myself in this regard.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.56]: I regret that I cannot accept the Premier's statement as advancing sufficient reasons for the carrying of the motion. I am sorry, too, that the hon. gentleman has not seen fit to take the House more fully into his confidence regarding the intentions of the Government as to many important Bills now on the Notice Paper, and as to the time within which the Government consider the session should close. The Premier has said that in moving this motion at the present stage he is not taking any unusual course; and in support of that contention he has quoted the dates upon which the Standing Orders have been suspended in previous years, and also the dates upon which those past sessions have closed. But I would remind the Premier that the periods which elapsed between the two sets of dates in question do not at all represent the point at issue. The real point at issue relates to the business remaining to be done after the suspension of the Standing Orders. It may be that in the past the Standing Orders have been suspended for a period of three or four weeks before the close of the session; but never since I have been a member of this House—and I think hon. members, if they refer to the Votes and Proceedings, will find what I say borne out—has the leader of the House asked for the suspension of the Standing Orders without giving the House a clear statement of the Bills the Government intend to go on with and of the Bills they propose to drop.

Mr. Munsie: Mr. Wilson once dropped 10 Bills.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The invariable practice has been for the Premier to give a list of the Bills and other business which the Government propose to carry through the House. Moreover, the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders has generally been moved after the business on the Notice Paper has reached a considerable degree of progress through this Chamber. But never in the history of the House, so far as I know, has the suspension been asked for with a Notice Paper containing some 15

Bills of which not one has yet reached the second reading stage. As a fact, we have only just at this period reached the really important work of the session. For weeks past we have been dealing with business of a more or less inconsequential character.

Mr. Holman: We have not had some of these Bills yet.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will come to that. Now, when we are just about to enter into a debate upon the really important work of the session—that is, the second reading of all the taxation measures and also of other important Bills—it is proposed to suspend the Standing Orders. What does that mean? We have not even had an intimation from the Premier whether or not any more new Bills are to be brought down.

The Premier: No more.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Under the suspension of the Standing Orders we should have the position that in the case of any one or more of these important Bills the second reading may be moved and carried, the Committee stage passed through, and the Bill sent on to another place, all at one sitting. This might happen without hon. members even having an opportunity to make themselves acquainted with those measures. It is ridiculously impossible for the House to give anything like adequate consideration to even half the Bills now on the Notice Paper, if it is intended to close the session before Easter.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): We do not propose that.

Mr. Johnston: It is hoped to do so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Premier stated in yesterday morning's newspaper that that was the intention.

The Premier: No.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You do not take any notice of the newspapers, do you?

Hon. P. COLLIER: No; but I have never known the newspapers deliberately to attribute a statement to the leader of this House unless they had some justification for doing so; and I am not going to assume that the reporter responsible for that paragraph imagined the matter.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): The reporters have more imagination now than they used to have.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps. There was a note of complaint in the Premier's remarks as to the delay in getting through the business of the session. But I wish to remind the Premier that no private member of this House is responsible for that delay. Who is responsible for the fact that all this work yet remains to be done? Why, the members of the Government themselves. Even this afternoon we have had notice of the introduction of three more Bills, on the very day on which the House is asked to suspend the Standing Orders, a Minister comes down with notice of the introduction of three new Bills. If the House has not made any progress with the Bills on the Notice Paper it is because members have not been in possession of them and because the Government have been late in bringing them down. There has not been an excess-

sive amount of speaking. Certainly members have exercised their right to speak whenever they thought it necessary to do so. If the Government do not want to rush the Bills through, there is no need for the suspension of the Standing Orders, at least with regard to the introduction and passage of the new Bills. It will, I admit, facilitate the business of the session, if the Standing Orders are suspended, and it is possible to deal with Messages from another place on the day on which they are received, but that is a different matter from the introduction and passage of Bills through all their stages at the one sitting. Never within my experience has the leader of the House asked for the suspension of the Standing Orders with the Notice Paper so crowded with Bills as that which we have before us at the present time, and never has the suspension been asked for without the Premier giving some indication as to which measures it was proposed to drop. The Premier declares that the Government are anxious to close the session as soon as possible, but if that be the desire, why are the Government bringing down new measures every day? It is now approaching the end of March and the Estimates are not yet passed. Only yesterday notice of the introduction of a new Bill was given, and three more to-day. How can the Government expect to bring the session to a close before Easter when each day sees the introduction of important measures? Members have a duty to perform to themselves and to their constituents, and they must see that the Bills are properly discussed, and not rushed through at the close of the session with the Standing Orders suspended. Therefore, I intend to oppose the motion until the business on the Notice Paper has been further advanced than is the case to-day, or until the Premier gives us a definite intimation about the Bills he proposes to go on with and those he intends to abandon.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [5.4]: The House must have time to do its work thoroughly and it has to be remembered that there are many important measures yet to be considered, amongst them being those which deal with taxation. I hope it is not the intention of the Premier to rush through these Bills without giving members ample time for considering them. So far we do not know what they are, and it would be unfair to ask us to deal with them without giving us some days' notice. In addition to the taxation proposals, there are important measures such as the Health Bill and Criminal Code Amendment, which must be considered calmly and deliberately. If the Premier wants the Standing Orders suspended to-day he will have to give members an assurance that he will not endeavour to pass any of these Bills through at the one sitting. In past years we have always suspended the Standing Orders far too early.

Hon. P. Collier: But there has never been such a budget of Bills to consider.

Mr. Munsie: Mr. Wilson, when Parliament adjourned on the last occasion, discharged no fewer than ten Bills.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: At any rate I hope it is not the intention of the Premier to put through all the Bills which are on the Notice Paper. If that is his intention, we shall be here for the next three months. I want an assurance that no Bill will be rushed through at one sitting, but that on the contrary, members will be given ample time to give all the Bills proper consideration.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.5]: I agree with the leader of the Opposition and the member for Northam that it has always been the custom when asking the House to suspend the Standing Orders, to declare the business that it was proposed to go on with. We know that many of the privileges of hon. members are entirely taken away with the suspension of the Standing Orders. It is all very well to say that members are to be given every opportunity of discussing Bills, but in actual practice that has not been the case.

The Minister for Works: That can easily be done.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, if we stay here until June.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Amongst the Bills on the Notice Paper is the Stamp Act Amendment Bill. We do not know what that proposes to do. The taxation measures have been submitted, but we have no information in regard to them. The Treasurer has told us that the Income Tax Assessment Bill is to be amended to provide for an altered system of assessment. These and other measures will be presented and we shall not have an opportunity of consulting any section of our constituents in regard to them. It is a very common practice to bring down a Bill and put it through before we really know what it contains. That is why I am opposed to the suspension of the Standing Orders. We know that that will happen in the future just as it has happened in the past. The Premier should have told us definitely which Bills he intended to drop so far as this session was concerned. We are just as anxious as the Premier to bring the work of the session to a close. There are two ways of carrying on the business of Parliament, one is by talking and the other by remaining silent. If I want a Bill to go through, knowing it to be a measure which is important and necessary and in the best interests of the State, I keep quiet, but if I am opposed to a Bill I shall do my utmost to block it. In both instances I consider I am doing my duty. So far there has been no delay. Looking at the Notice Paper, we find amongst the measures there, the Health Bill, which in itself will take three months to deal with.

Mr. Harrison: You are evidently going to oppose it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Every clause of it.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): You are going to carry out what you have just said.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am, and I intend to do my best to defeat it. The time has not

yet arrived for the suspension of the Standing Orders, or at any rate if the Premier does desire the motion to be carried, he should tell us which measures he does not propose to proceed with. There are a number which cannot be urgent, for instance, the Interpretation Bill, the Apprentices Bill, Education Bill, the Friendly Societies Bill, and others yet to come from the Legislative Council. The Health Bill is not urgently necessary and there are others which could be struck off the Notice Paper. We know that the Government must carry through their taxation proposals and we should devote the remainder of our time to those. We are not to be gulled by the suspension of the Standing Orders, and we are not going to have our mouths closed. In the past the gag has been applied after the Standing Orders have been suspended.

The Premier: The gag can be applied without suspending the Standing Orders.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the position is made worse with the suspension of Standing Orders. It has been done in the past and it will be done again. I hope the House will not agree to the motion until we have been informed which measures the Government propose to abandon.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore—in reply) [4.57]: I have already intimated to the House in plain language that it is not the intention of the Government to drop any of the Bills on the Notice Paper unless compelled to do so. Hon. members opposite have been endeavouring to make the House believe that the suspension of the Standing Orders will prevent free discussion of the measures. It will do nothing of the kind.

Mr. Munsie: It will prevent the consideration of the Bills.

The PREMIER: A Bill need not be taken through all stages at one sitting; if the House considers it is necessary to carry it to the next sitting it can do so even though the Standing Orders are suspended. There is nothing to prevent hon. members discussing the Bills as fully as possible. The suspension of the Standing Orders is merely brought about for the purpose of giving the House the power, if it is required, of putting the measures through their various stages at one sitting, and in that way assisting the Legislative Council to carry on their work. The Government have no desire to drop any Bills unless they are compelled to do so. Some of the Bills, it may be found later on, are not considered necessary, and then I shall consult with the leader of the Opposition in regard to them. At the same time the Government have no Bills in their mind that they feel compelled to drop. The Government desire to expedite business as much as possible, and I hope members will assist in this.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	..	13
Majority for	..	..	..	..	12

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Brown	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Durack	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Foley	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Stewart
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Maley	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mitchell	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Collier	Mr. Roche
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Loghlin
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

BILL—GRAIN ELEVATORS AGREEMENT.

Motion to introduce.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [5.19]: I move—

“For leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to ratify and confirm an agreement with John S. Metcalf Company, Limited, relating to the construction of bulk handling grain elevators.”

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [5.20]: Before leave is given to introduce a Bill of this nature when the Standing Orders have been suspended, I think the House should be in possession of what the agreement is, knowing that it is quite possible to have this Bill brought down, after this motion is carried, and passed through all its stages in one sitting, without giving members an opportunity of discussing it. It gives us cause for grave consideration.

The Attorney General: There is no such intention.

Mr. HOLMAN: We are faced with a Government that have a majority who may be badly led and blindly driven. It is quite possible, when we see the nature of the business, that such tactics may be adopted. Some members are new to the business and, although innocent, they may be used for such purposes and they may become the means of passing these measures. This legislation may be detrimental to the best interests of the country. We saw in New South Wales something of a similar nature done, and in other countries, when members have not had an opportunity of discussing Bills at all, they have been carried. I am going to oppose this motion because I realise that the Standing Orders should be suspended only to allow the passage of business between the two Houses at the end of a session. It will be utterly impossible for us to protect the people of the country, for the people of the country do not know who Metcalf & Co. are. They do not know the purpose

for which the agreement is brought forward. We know that in this country big landed estates have been disposed of and we did not know how the purchases had been brought about.

Member: We did not know about the "Kangaroo" or Nevanas.

Mr. HOLMAN: This is not a question of the "Kangaroo." This may be the means of the people of the country having to expend a large amount of money before the business is over. It may be a sound agreement, it may be a good one, but if we pass measures of this sort, when we have not had an opportunity of discussing them, and when we have not seen the agreement even, it is wrong. The Attorney General is asking for leave to introduce a Bill that can be passed in one sitting.

The Premier: No, no.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, yes. I defy the Premier and the Attorney General to say it is not so. A Royal Commission can be appointed and sit in judgment on a man without this Royal Commission being gazetted, and God only knows what may take place if we allow business to go on like this. It is a revelation. I have been in the House for 18 years and I guarantee to say, without the shadow of a doubt, that never has a Bill been introduced in this House, covering an agreement like this. It is a revelation in politics, although it may be a perfectly sound matter. It may be good for the country, but let members have an opportunity of seeing it and discussing it.

The Premier: You can discuss it as long as you like.

Mr. HOLMAN: We know that when the Bill is introduced it is within the power of a blind following to pass it.

The Premier: There is no blind following.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister will find out before I have finished that there is too much blind following. An opportunity has been taken by the innocence of members of pushing things through this House already, because they did not know what they were doing. I merely rise on this occasion to point out to hon. members that grave consideration should be given to these matters; full inquiry should be made into them. Only last night we had the spectacle of an attempt to pass a Bill which would give 5,000 acres of this country away.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in referring to that Bill.

Mr. HOLMAN: I am pointing out how these things may occur. We have had an opportunity in the past of seeing private agreements brought into this House and measures passed through this Chamber involving the giving away of thousands of acres of land, of granting concessions, and allowing people to open up works, without members knowing what they were. We know that agreements can be brought forward. We had a great deal of criticism by the Minister for Works in regard to the Powellising agreement, and we know how that matter was brought on. I hope, now the Minister for Works is in the position of responsibility, he will let us know what these

agreements are. I do not know what they are.

The Premier: You will see it.

Mr. HOLMAN: But I shall not have an opportunity, if we carry this measure through in one sitting. We will not have an opportunity of reading the agreement or of studying it, and that is the reason why I am opposing this motion. I ask members on the Government side, who have recently come here, to realise what position they are in. They will be told that we are in opposition, but these are matters of vital interest to the country. Up to the present time the Opposition have not been opposing the Government. They have given every assistance they can to the Government in carrying their Estimates. We have helped them. Not a moment of time has been taken up that has not been fair and reasonable in drawing attention to facts that the Government should know, and in endeavouring to draw attention to reforms that ought to be carried out. Now, in what are known as the dying hours of the session, we have on the Notice Paper over 30 items and ten or a dozen Bills have yet to come from another place; and, when we do not know what new business is coming forward, surely members will not allow this Chamber to be flooded with business, without having an opportunity of reading that business, and in the number of hours at the disposal of members to the end of this session, there would not be an opportunity of even reading the Bills through. I merely rise to call attention to the danger which the country will be placed in by allowing Bills of this kind to be brought forward after the Standing Orders have been suspended. I do not intend to allow this to be done without lodging a protest against the introduction of new business of such a nature, involving the expenditure of a large sum of money.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [5.30]: I hope Ministers have more than one copy of the agreement, for I think members ought to see it.

The Attorney General: Every member shall have one; it is printed in the Bill. The matter will not be rushed through. The House, if it likes, can take three months in which to discuss it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am well aware of that. I merely rose to ask that we might have copies of the agreement. I had no means of knowing that it is embodied in the Bill. The agreement will have a far-reaching effect, and will mean probably the expenditure of a million of money.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Two millions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is all-important that we should know what we are doing, and that there should be no hurry whatever about the passing of the measure. However, seeing that the Attorney General has lost his temper, I will confine myself to this protest.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [5.31]: I desire to voice my opposition to the introduction of new business of this sort after the motion that has just been carried. There is

a most important proposal involved in this agreement with a new firm of whom we have no knowledge. The House should be guided by the experience of other States, where considerable difficulty has been found in negotiating agreements of this character. In New South Wales nothing has so tended to bring public life into contempt as the agreement between the Government and Norton Griffiths. Later on there was in that State the question of the bulk handling system, and the erection of a number of silos. This it was that brought about the recent crisis in the Cabinet, when for a period of four days two Ministers who had resigned refused to withdraw their resignations.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can hardly discuss the principles of the Bill on the first reading.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am opposing a motion which asks the House to consider a scheme involving us in the expenditure of a million of money. In New South Wales the estimated cost of the scheme was doubled. If this is a question of paramount urgency, why was it not brought down weeks ago? Why did not the Government bring it down instead of the fiddlywinking measures now on the Notice Paper?

The Minister for Works: It was only finalised within the last few days.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Whose fault was that? Negotiations with Metcalf and Company were opened up two years ago. Who is to blame for the matter having been so long delayed?

The Minister for Works: It is nobody's fault. It is only that an honest attempt has been made by the Government to save the interests of the State.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the interests of Western Australia are so much in need of salvation it was the duty of the Government to have brought down this measure before this late stage in the session.

The Attorney General: The Government could not have done so, because it was not finished.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Throughout the session there has been a desire on the part of this numerically weak Opposition to assist the Government. We now make the fair request that proposals of such magnitude as this, which in common with other proposals the Government could now pass through in one day, should not be brought down at this late stage. If this is more important than the Bills already on the Notice Paper, the Premier should have announced his intention of putting the others aside. If, on the other hand, those measures on the Notice Paper are of more importance than the agreement before us, the agreement should stand aside. Is it urgent and necessary?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then why has it hung fire for a period of over two years? The Scaddan Government were negotiating with this firm, so surely some finality could have been reached ere this. The system of silos, I understand, is to be similar throughout Australia; therefore, if similar schemes have been finalised in the Eastern States, why not here?

The Minister for Works: We have a better agreement than any of those in the Eastern States.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Of course, every Government, having made an agreement, will hold that it is the very best possible. The Scaddan Government persisted in believing that the agreements they negotiated were the best the ingenuity of man could devise. The Minister for Works did not agree with that. He said the State was fleeced right and left as the result of bad draftsmanship in those agreements.

The Minister for Works: That is quite correct.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then what a difference in the morning! When the hon. member becomes a Minister everything turned out by the Government factory is O.K. There is nothing wrong with it. It is impossible to find any fault with the agreements made by the present Government.

The Minister for Works: I did not say that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I claim that the taxpayers who elect the Assembly have a right to consider and discuss whether those agreements are as perfect as the Minister claims.

The Attorney General: This agreement is made particularly subject—it is the first one to be so treated—to the approval of Parliament.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: And I believe we have to thank the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) for that. He has given a great deal of attention to this matter, and he illustrated to the House the other night how particularly careful we require to be in dealing with Metcalf's or any other firm, because the estimate in New South Wales for similar works has been exceeded by hundreds of thousands of pounds. Another thing: have we the money to carry out this proposal? Or is it to be merely a pious resolution carried by the House? How many agreements have been similarly ratified by Parliament during the last three or four years—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss past agreements.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am opposing the motion on the ground that other agreements ratified by Parliament have never been pursued any further. Surely we have the right to ask for the details of the agreement.

The Attorney General: Certainly, when you come to the Committee stage.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I object to the passing of this motion this afternoon. If this agreement is of more importance than the Bills already on the Notice Paper the Premier should tell hon. members how far he proposes to go. If, on the other hand, he is going to stick to everything on the Notice Paper, the House should be told, so that it might know where it stands. I will record my vote against the motion, on the ground that there will not be sufficient time to consider the agreement. I protest against such an agreement being brought down at a time when it can be passed through in one day's sitting. Again, with a congested Notice Paper such as this, it is impossible for the House to give to the measure

the attention it deserves. Moreover, seeing that the business has hung fire for two years, I doubt whether it is as urgent as represented to us.

Mr. Johnston: Silos were never more urgently required than now.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I question that. It is unfair on the part of the Government to ask the House to agree to a motion that will enable the Government to bring down not only the proposal before us, but other new Bills, and request us to give attention to them all in the short time remaining. It is party Government methods. Party Government is just as rampant in Western Australia to-day as ever it was.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I claim that the Minister is not in order in bringing down a proposition like this at such a time. I am going to oppose it.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [5.40]: I am sorry the Attorney General should be bringing down so important a measure at this late stage in the session. We could well leave it over till next session, so as to give hon. members an opportunity of discussing the whole question of bulk handling. It seems that all we are to be asked to discuss this session is the question of entering into an agreement relative to the construction of silos.

Mr. SPEAKER: At this stage the hon. member can only discuss the question of leave to introduce the Bill. I am not going to allow any further discussion as to the merits or demerits of the agreement.

Mr. FOLEY: I have no desire to discuss them. I would like the Government to allow this particular agreement to remain over till next session, in order that we may have an opportunity of studying the whole question of bulk handling. If we agree to the motion, and afterwards to the Bill, we will be committed to bulk handling. For the present I am totally opposed to bulk handling.

Mr. STEWART (Claremont) [5.42]: The objections offered by those who have spoken are largely shared by myself. The principle of bulk handling has not yet been adopted in Western Australia.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing bulk handling under this motion.

Mr. STEWART: But the object of the proposed measure is to introduce that system.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion is for leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to ratify and confirm a certain agreement. When the Bill is before the House is principles may be discussed, but not at this stage.

Mr. STEWART: The phraseology used in the motion is somewhat misleading. Apparently one is to be debarred from advancing arguments in opposition to the introduction of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not so. The hon. member can give reasons why leave should not be granted, but he cannot go into the question of bulk handling, nor that of the principles in the Bill.

Mr. STEWART: My objection is based on the consideration that the Bill is altogether too comprehensive a measure to be brought down at the close of the session. A huge expenditure is contemplated in the establishment of what is intended by the Bill, and it seems to me that if the House is to be committed one way or the other without sufficient consideration of the principles involved, the usefulness of Parliamentary control will be gone altogether. I therefore offer my protest against the Bill being introduced, particularly when viewed in its relation to the motion previously carried by the House.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.45]: I rise to enter my protest against leave being granted to introduce this measure, because I realise the magnitude of this proposal in view of the motion which has just been carried. It is not fair to ask for leave to introduce a measure after a motion to suspend the Standing Orders has been carried. In the circumstances it is possible for the Government with their majority to put this Bill through in one sitting. This is not only unfair but unjust to hon. members. I would oppose leave being granted to introduce any Bill at all following on top of the suspension of the Standing Orders, and thus giving power to the Government to pass such measures through in one sitting. With the exception of one item on the Notice Paper, which deals with the life and health of the community, there is no Bill at present before us of as much importance as that for which leave to introduce is now being sought. I do not say that the Government will attempt to force this Bill through in one sitting, but it is the duty of hon. members who wish to see every measure that is brought down properly considered, to oppose the introduction of any further Bills after the Standing Orders have been suspended.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.47]: I oppose the motion, not only for the reason that the Bill which is sought to be introduced provides for an agreement being entered into, but on the ground that the Government are becoming the puppets of the Federal Ministry. The position to-day is that the State Government cannot help themselves in this matter. They have been told definitely and distinctly by the Prime Minister that they will have to do this whether they like it or not. The matter has been discussed previously in the Federal Parliament. An objection was lodged by South Australian members and the Prime Minister said, "I do not care what States object to it. They are going to get it whether they like it or not."

Mr. Munsie: The Minister in another place said exactly the same thing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We are going to be bluffed into the expenditure of a large sum of money whether the State is in favour of such expenditure or not.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can discuss that question later. He cannot do so now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know something about this matter, and wish to give my rea-

sons for objecting to this motion. As long as this State is working under the present constitution, I refuse to be told by the Commonwealth Government that we have to do as they desire. They have no right or power to say this to us, and I refuse to agree to the introduction of any Bill which is designed for the purpose of carrying out their instructions, not their requests. I am very much surprised that some of the members of the Country party are not opposing this motion. If the wheat pool is going to pay for this—

Mr. Johnston: It pays for everything.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss the merit or demerits of the Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am only giving reasons why I think this leave should not be granted. I am not discussing the merits of the Bill.

Mr. Holman: It has none.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will not go so far as to say that. The money in the first instance has to be obtained from the wheat pool, but Western Australia has to stand the racket. We have to provide the interest and sinking fund.

The Attorney General: You are now dealing with the merits of the Bill.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am not doing so. It seems that the State Government have to carry out whatever the Federal Government tell them to do. If we are to go on at this rate surely the Federal Government will have us body and soul. They are going to take the whole lot, because the State Government have not the backbone to tell them to mind their own business.

The Premier: What have they taken? They have taken nothing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They have instructed the Government to do this.

The Premier: They have done nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I can quote the very words used in the Federal Parliament by Mr. Hughes on this question.

The Premier: We have had no instructions.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He said definitely and distinctly, "I am not going to allow the States to say whether they will do this or not. I intend to do it and the States will have to agree." Mr. Foster said, "That is rough on South Australia, who do not require it." Thank God, there was one man who would stand up for his State. This is the outcome of the instructions that were issued, so that we shall send to America thousands of pounds by way of commission. I hope the House will think very carefully before they agree to the introduction of a measure of this sort.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.51]: I am amazed at the opposition to the introduction of this Bill. It appears to me that this opposition is of a very factious character, when a section of the House would prevent us from looking at the Bill and seeing whether the proposal in connection with Messrs. Metcalf & Co. is a good thing or not. I may say that I know nothing

of its details. For many years we have been endeavouring to get the system of the bulk handling of wheat introduced into Western Australia, and also to secure the erection of wheat elevators at our great ports and in our wheat centres, but when a definite and practical proposal comes before us—and I take it this is a definite and practical proposal, or else the Government would not introduce it—it is opposed.

Mr. Holman: It may be something definite for Metcalf & Co.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Hon. members of the Opposition wish to prevent us from considering it.

Mr. Munsie: Why was this not brought forward before the Standing Orders were suspended?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I cannot discuss that matter because I have nothing to do with the arrangement of the Notice Paper.

Mr. Munsie: You knew it was there.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I believe, if this motion had come forward immediately prior to the suspension of the Standing Orders, no opposition whatever would have been raised to it.

Mr. Munsie: There would have been none from me, at any rate.

Mr. JOHNSTON: It would have been passed as a formal matter. I hope the Government will carry this motion so that we can consider these proposals on their merits. If it is not the best proposal in the interests of the wheat grower and the people of the State, the House will then have an opportunity of rejecting it. I do not know what the proposal actually is.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: You never object to money being wasted so long as some of it is spent in your electorate.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Some measure providing for the introduction of the system of bulk handling of wheat is urgently required. I hope that this Bill will prove adequate for this purpose, and that the House will agree to the introduction of the measure so that hon. members can decide on the question of the bulk handling of wheat.

Mr. Holman: That can be discussed under an ordinary motion.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is possible. This, however, is something practical and definite, and more practical I hope than would be any ordinary motion dealing with the subject. I support the Government in this matter.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.54]: The hon. member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) could not, of course, let even this opportunity pass without saying a word to his electors.

Mr. Johnston: A word to the House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Because other hon. members have some regard for what they conceive to be their responsibilities and their duties concerning important matters of this kind, the member for Williams-Narrogin takes it upon himself to describe their attitude as that of factious opposition. We know that the hon. member is merely saying another word to the electors of Williams-Narrogin, perhaps in an

endeavour to regain some of the ground he has lost during recent months in that district. Because hon. members object to leave being granted for the introduction of this Bill, which will involve this country in the expenditure probably of a million to a million and a-half pounds, because we are protesting against the introduction, at the command of the Commonwealth, of this measure after the suspension of the Standing Orders, which suspension will permit of its passage through in one day, and because we have some sense of our responsibility to the people who sent us here, the hon. member must take it upon himself to chastise us.

Mr. Johnston: I want to see the Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We know that the hon. member does not care twopence for the Bill, even if it means the expenditure of 10 millions of money, so long as some of that money goes to his district, and benefits some of those responsible for his return to Parliament.

Mr. Johnston: That is not fair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in attributing motives to any other hon. member in the House.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not doing so. I am merely differing from the hon. member's attitude in the matter. I strongly protest against the introduction of this Bill at this stage in the session. Where is the consistency of the Government? The Premier earlier in the afternoon complained about the prolongation of the session, and said that Ministers were being kept here when they ought to be in their offices administering the affairs of State, but immediately after the Government are attempting to introduce a Bill which is going to further prolong the session. I object to the motion, because I say it is utterly and entirely impossible for members of this House to do their duty to the country at this late hour in the session, and to give consideration to this Bill in conjunction with the long list of Bills we already have on the Notice Paper. This House met on the 23rd November last, and met again on the 23rd January. Just two months have elapsed since we met in this year, and notwithstanding that fact, and that the House has been dawdling along on more or less unimportant matters, it is only during the last week that there has been introduced to the Chamber a budget of the most important Bills of the session. How can they receive adequate consideration, unless members deliberately make up their minds to remain here until they have been given ample time to fully consider every Bill, even if that consideration should involve our remaining here until June or July?

Mr. SPEAKER: There is only one matter under discussion at the present moment, namely, the motion for leave to introduce this Bill.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am going to illustrate my arguments if I can. I object to the introduction of this Bill because the time is insufficient in which to give it full consideration. In order to make good my argument as to the time being insufficient, I am of necessity compelled to point to other Bills which

are on the Notice Paper, and to the volume of work which remains to be done during the present session.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know where the question of insufficient time comes in. There is no limit to the time in which the House can sit.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not suppose there is a limit. The only limit that can arise is through the desire of members to close the session. We have been given to understand that this desire is universal amongst members, that it is general, and that it is in fact the feeling of the House that we should adjourn before Easter. Apparently, that has gone by the board this afternoon. The Government are not now anxious to adjourn before Easter, notwithstanding the fact that they frequently complain of the little time they are able to spend in their offices. They complain, even in petulant fashion, because members exercise their right to ask questions, thereby taking up the time of Ministers. There is nothing in that complaint, really. I know that during the period I was in office the time occupied in dealing with questions would be only a minute or two per day. As a fact, replies to questions are prepared by the departmental officers, and not by Ministers at all. So that the time occupied, or lost, in dealing with questions does not encroach upon the time which Ministers have available for the discharge of their duties, in any appreciable degree.

The Attorney General: The replies to questions have to be altered frequently.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But that does not take an hour or two. Of course, if the same method is employed by Ministers in dealing with that matter as we see them sometimes employ in this House, I can understand that the alteration of replies to questions does take up a good deal of their time.

Mr. O'Loughlin: But the reply may not be favourable to the Minister.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I object, too, to the introduction of this Bill because we do not yet know whether it is going to be followed by the introduction of other Bills to-morrow, or next week, or the week after.

The Premier: There are no more Bills to be introduced.

Mr. Holman: How many are in the Council?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I understand, then, that there are no more new Bills to be introduced, possibly, into this House.

Mr. Holman: Not to-night.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But there will be work coming from another place. However, even if there are to be no more new Bills, we have already had notice this afternoon of three which will come forward to-morrow. Those are additional to the budget of Bills we now have on the Notice Paper. I say again that it is utterly impossible for members to do justice to all those measures unless we make up our minds to remain here for the next three months. I have no doubt the Government will afford every possible opportunity for the consideration of this Bill as well as of the others. I am not insinuating that the Govern-

ment mean to take advantage of the suspension of the Standing Orders to bludgeon through a Bill in one sitting.

The Attorney General: Certainly not a Bill of this kind.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Nor any other Bill of importance either. I am not alleging that against the Government. I do not think they would do that. But I contend that the Government will not be able to help themselves as regards curtailing the time available for members to consider these measures if the session is to be closed within any reasonable time at all. If the Government are going to allow reasonable time, such time as I consider members need to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with these various Bills, then that of itself must carry the session over the next month or two. If the Government move the second reading of this Bill to-morrow, or to-day, as is possible with the Standing Orders suspended, and then get the debate adjourned—

The Attorney General: We have not even got the Bill printed.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Well, if the Government move the second reading of this Bill to-morrow, and then agree to the adjournment, and deal similarly on other days with the remainder of these Bills, adjourning the second reading debate to the next sitting day, the Government may consider that that proceeding affords ample time for members—a day, a full day—in which to consider the measures. That would be all very well if the number of Bills members have to consider were limited. But, taking into account the long list we have on the Notice Paper—some of them, in order that hon. members may do justice to them by examining them in conjunction with the principal Act, will require the best part of a day to master—this procedure would be utterly unreasonable. I have had some experience of the passage of Bills through this House with the Standing Orders suspended, and I assert here at once that we have on our statute book Acts which are a blot on the legislation of Western Australia, by reason of the fact that they were enacted in the dying hours of the session with the Standing Orders suspended.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Licensing law amendment Acts, for instance.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I could enumerate dozens of instances. As a matter of fact, we have simply been providing work for our lawyers and our law courts when passing here, in *hasty fashion and without proper consideration*, measures in the dying hours of the session. The very next motion on the Notice Paper, to which I shall have an opportunity of referring later, affords proof of that statement. I may remind the House that last year, when the Standing Orders were suspended, under exactly similar conditions to those obtaining now, a measure amending the Land Act was passed—I suppose one of the most important measures ever introduced into this House. What do we find? As a result of an amending Bill passed in the small hours of the morning—

Mr. Johnston: Under agreement.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Let us not trouble as to what agreement this was done under. The

Bill passed through in the small hours of the morning, with the Standing Orders suspended; and as a result the House will presently be engaged, possibly for the remainder of this sitting, in amending last year's amendment Act. And so we go on. As a result of this method of doing business, dawdling along in the early part of the session engaged in inconsequential work, and rushing through, in one volume, the important legislation of the session, we constantly find ourselves engaged for the greater part of our time during the succeeding session in trying to rectify the wrongs that we perpetrated in our haste.

Hon. T. Walker: And it is not always possible to do that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If leave is given to introduce this Bill, then, having regard to the limited time and opportunity for discussing it, no doubt next session we shall be engaged on a further amending Bill. By way of interjection, an intimation has been given to us that the Government could not introduce this Bill earlier because the agreement had not been finalised. As to that, I do not know. What I do know is that the matter was on the stocks about two and a half years ago. But possibly it has not been finalised because of a difference of opinion between Metcalf and the Government. It may be that. But, even if that argument be a sound one as regards this Bill—that is, that the late introduction of the measure was unavoidable—it is not a good and sound argument as applied to some of the other Bills on the Notice Paper; there is no reason in the world why at least half of these Bills should not have been disposed of by this time. Then there would have been no objection to the bringing in of the present Bill. I am going to exercise my right on the floor of this House to defend the rights of the electors of this country, and I say I am only doing justice to the people of this country when I protest against legislation of this kind being brought down during the last few days of the session, with the Standing Orders suspended. What are we sent here for? What sense of responsibility are we showing towards the people who sent us here? Is it any wonder that, go where one will, in the trams, on the trains, in the streets, one hears nothing but expressions of disgust and contempt for the Parliament of this and of every other State in Australia? It is by virtue of the fact that the Parliaments of Australia have drifted into the habit of conducting their business in this fashion, that even the humblest man in the street to-day, far from entertaining any respect for a member of Parliament, has nothing but contempt for him. It is just because we are doing our business in this fashion. Moreover, the contempt is well merited, in view of recent Parliamentary history in Australia. It is well justified, and it will be much intensified if we permit a whole budget of Bills to be brought down towards the end of March, within three months of the end of the financial year, and to be rushed through with the Standing Orders suspended. I care not how fair the Government may desire to be as regards time for the consideration of these Bills. I do not care twopence about that. I contend that in view of the recess being necessarily near, in view

of the stage to which the financial year has advanced, the Government will be unable to allow Parliament the time necessary for the consideration of these Bills. For that reason I intend to oppose the passage of this Bill, and of every other Bill, important or unimportant, that is brought down during the remaining days of this session.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [6.11]: The Opposition are most unfortunate in attacking a measure of this kind, since we know that the harvest which has already been garnered is going to suffer because of inadequate protection. This matter ought to have been taken in hand months ago.

Hon. P. Collier: That is why we are opposing the measure now.

Mr. HARRISON: The leader of the Opposition ought not to wish to delay the Bill for even an hour. What encouragement is there for the farmer to continue seeding—and we are on seeding time now—if he is to get no results from his labour? The only way to get results from primary industry is to give encouragement; and there is no such encouragement as that of protecting the asset when it has been created. It is disgusting to me to find the members of the Opposition opposing the introduction of this measure.

Opposition members: Oh!

Mr. HARRISON: We would not be observing our responsibility to our constituents if we permitted a matter of this kind to be delayed. The discussion that has taken place on the introduction of this Bill would never have occurred if hon. members opposite would consider the position of the agriculturist to-day, and the proportion of his assets that is lost because of the lack of adequate protection.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [6.13]: If any reason were needed to make a member who is determined to see justice done to this country, take a stand upon this motion, that reason is afforded by the remarks which have just been made by the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison). He tells the House that he is disgusted with the opposition which has been raised to this scheme.

Mr. Harrison: Disgusted with the delay.

Mr. GREEN: Apparently the hon. member presumes that there must be no delay in a matter of this kind, because he approves of it; that the scheme which is presented to us needs no consideration from the House because he is satisfied with it. He seems to say "This thing is brought in at the eleventh hour, but we do not care about that; this measure needs no consideration; it is something for us; let us snap it."

Mr. Holman: The hon. member is not responsible for his actions just now.

Mr. GREEN: It is because of that attitude the party on this side of the House have to be especially careful. If there is one thing that I intend to be particularly careful over, while I remain a member of this Chamber, it is that all contracts and agreements made by the Government with private firms shall receive the fullest and

widest discussion, and shall be given the utmost possible publicity, before being finally completed.

Mr. Harrison: Who has objected to that?

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member has objected, by his attitude, by his indicating that, so far as he is concerned, this business must go through, and the scheme, as presented here in the dying hours of the present session, must be accepted.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. GREEN: I was referring to the fact that if there was one thing in this House that was calculated to make one pause before permitting such a measure to be introduced, it was that there are several country members who are keenly interested in securing the bulk handling of wheat. That being the case, it would be unwise to ill-consider a measure, and that undoubtedly would happen if we did not have all the facts before us which we are entitled to have. I am not prepared to assist in hastily passing a measure, the object of which is to enter into an agreement with a firm like Metcalf & Co. for establishing elevators in this State. We have been accused by members opposite of being fractious, but it is only necessary to point out that no member on this side of the House spoke on the Address-in-reply. Our desire from the beginning was to facilitate the business by refraining from speaking on the Address-in-reply. We have received due credit for that but the Premier has spoken in a petulant manner about the great amount of talk indulged in on measures which have been before the Chamber. I would remind the House, however, that all the speaking has been done by members of the cross-benches. I have no fault to find with that, because those hon. members have only done their duty. We on this side, however, are determined that no measure, which is likely to be controversial, shall be rushed through, and it does seem strange that it should be proposed to introduce this Bill immediately after the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Mr. SPEAKER: The measure has not yet been introduced; the motion is only for leave to introduce.

Mr. GREEN: I am endeavouring to explain why the measure should not be introduced. The Premier, to facilitate the business going through, submitted a motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders, and he did not previously consult the leader of the Opposition. He altogether overlooked that. I admit that there was no obligation on the Premier's part to do so, but he is such a courteous gentleman that I am sure it was an oversight. Be that as it may, a measure of this kind, which has for its object the entering into a contract with an American firm, and a fairly slick firm, too, should not be considered, unless the House is in possession of all the information dealing with the subject. There is not sufficient time to deal with the question this session, and it could well be deferred until the

next session, which is comparatively close at hand. I am sorry that the member for York is not in his place because he has a sheaf of information from Canada dealing with this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not discussing that. I have no desire to prevent the hon. member speaking, but he must confine himself to the motion.

Mr. GREEN: I am endeavouring to indicate that we should not attempt to tackle a measure of this description without having at our disposal the information which the member for York has obtained from Canada. An important matter of this kind should be thoroughly inquired into, and that thorough inquiry cannot possibly take place at the end of the session. Unless I can get some of the information which the member for York possesses, I do not see how I am going to do justice to the measure. The member for York got his information from Canada, and our only chance is now to get it from him, because Canada is such a long distance away and we know that shipping facilities are not what they were before the war.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not speaking to the motion. If it is carried and the Bill is introduced, the hon. member will then have an opportunity of addressing the House on the lines he is following now. He cannot do so at this stage. He must confine his remarks to showing why leave should not be given to introduce the Bill.

Mr. GREEN: I am endeavouring to confine my remarks to showing why leave should not be given to introduce the Bill. It is only fair that members should have placed at their disposal all the information possible in regard to the bulk handling of wheat, and my point is that it is not desirable to proceed any further until we have that information. The member for York is the only member in the House from whom we can get it.

The Attorney General: He has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. GREEN: I have never before regretted that hon. member's absence from the Chamber so much.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not discussing the member for York.

Mr. GREEN: What is really required is that time should be given to consider the statistics which ought to be placed before us.

The Attorney General: That you can have.

Mr. GREEN: And the information that will follow it.

The Attorney General: That you can have.

Mr. GREEN: For my part I fail to see that we can possibly expect to discuss a matter of this kind together with important measures of taxation which are essential, and the completion of the Estimates, which is also essential, before the House again meets in July. I hope the hon. member will not press the motion for leave to introduce this Bill.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [7.45]: I should like to refute the statement made by the member for Hannans that the Country party are supporting for certain reasons the leave to introduce this Bill.

Mr. Munsie: I said you supported the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Mr. PICKERING: I take it that it was a privilege to allow the hon. member to discuss that matter, seeing that that was not the subject under discussion. The principle involved in the Bill is not under discussion at the present time. Mention has been made about the attitude of the Country party, and I say that the attitude is one that has been brought about by members opposite inasmuch as it is time, in the best interests of the industry and the best interests of the State, that such a measure should be introduced. I think I should be exonerated from having anything but an unbiassed view, because I do not represent that portion of the State which is concerned in the matter about which this Bill will be introduced. I am opposed to blocking discussion on any measure, more especially the measure which it is sought now to introduce. It is in the best interests of the State that every Bill should have the fullest possible discussion, and I hope that when permission is given for the introduction of this measure, the Government will see that every possible opportunity is given to discuss the subject.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have not been here very long.

Mr. PICKERING: No, but I trust there is not that gravity pertaining to this situation that has been imputed by hon. members. From past experience which the House had had in dealing with contracts of this nature, members are fully alive to the surroundings of Bills of this character, and we should not allow abuses to creep into Bills of this kind. I think I have shown very clearly that the Country party are no more interested in giving leave for the introduction of this Bill than are any other party in the State. Western Australia has been one of the foremost States in advocating this matter, and I think we should be very inconsistent if we attempted to block the introduction of such a measure as this. The subject is so important that it warrants the introduction of this Bill at this stage of the session.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [7.50]: I am not one who wishes to rush any measure through the House, but I regret that this Bill was not brought forward earlier. I cannot say the Opposition have been ungenerous during the debates this session. They have been kind, I think, to the Government for the way in which they have dealt with various measures brought before the House. Quite a number of members of the Opposition are interested in the passing of this Bill, as well as members sitting on the cross benches and on the Government side of the House. I feel rather inclined to support this motion, because time is the essence of the contract. If the measure is delayed until next session I think it will be too late to deal with the handling of the harvest next year. Therefore I am inclined to support the motion before the House. I do not know anything about Metcalf & Co., or if they have anything to do particularly with this matter. They are mentioned here as experts, I presume, in a busi-

ness of the nature that is being considered by the introduction of this Bill, and I think that members on all sides, without having any desire to rush the measure through without proper consideration, should consent to the tabling of the measure, and allow the House time to give that full consideration which is necessary, because on this measure depends the well-being, not only of the producers of the State, but the community generally. I do not wish to delay the House in discussing the matter. I merely wish to say that it is my intention to support the motion, and I trust members on the other side will give the matter reasonable consideration, so that it may be discussed in good time to have this business properly considered, so as to establish the bulk handling business for the next season.

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [7.53]: I feel that this question is of such an important character that I should be lacking in my duty if I did not emphasise the opposition to the motion which has already been made, even if in doing so I might have to repeat the reasons already given for opposing the motion. The question to my mind is not one of bulk handling, or of John Metcalf & Co., but one of principle, that cannot be replaced by expediency. If the motion had been brought on before the granting of the suspension of the Standing Orders it would have been quite a different matter, and perhaps have received more favourable consideration from this side, and as far as I am concerned I believe it would have.

Mr. Thomson: Are you opposed to bulk handling?

Mr. ROCKE: Certainly not.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You do not know anything about it.

Mr. Thomson: Quite as much as you do.

Mr. ROCKE: I have said it is my intention to help the Government all I can towards doing that which is right, and in the best interests of the country, but I think I would not be right in supporting this motion for the simple reason that there is a danger; this measure, which is of so great importance, may be rushed through without the House giving the consideration to it which is necessary. We have the assurance of the Government that every opportunity will be given to members to discuss it, but members who have been here for many years have warned us against accepting too seriously any such promise. The Government may be never so sincere as they are in this instance. I am not imputing ulterior motives or political dishonesty, but time is necessary for the consideration of the measure, and for that reason I intend to oppose the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [7.55]: It has been represented that the objection to the motion is that it has been brought forward at this stage when the Standing Orders have been suspended. I may say the Standing Orders are only suspended so far as they relate to the passing of Bills through all stages in one day in this House, that is all. I would like to point out that it is not unusual for Bills to be introduced after

the Standing Orders have been suspended, and moreover, it is not unusual for a large number of Bills to be on the Notice Paper when the Standing Orders are suspended. Also I know very frequently when the Standing Orders have been suspended we have had a whole column of Bills on the Notice Paper. On looking at the proceedings of the House—

Hon. P. Collier: I protest against the Premier discussing the suspension of the Standing Orders. He is now replying to the arguments used on the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Mr. SPEAKER: Unfortunately I allowed other members to discuss the suspension of the Standing Orders on this motion, and therefore I must allow the Premier to reply.

The PREMIER: The suspension of the Standing Orders has been discussed so much that I hope I shall be allowed to say a few words. The reason given for objecting to the introduction of this measure is that it is sought to be introduced after the Standing Orders have been suspended; that is the principal reason. But it is no unusual thing to introduce Bills after the Standing Orders have been suspended.

Hon. P. Collier: Bills of importance.

The PREMIER: On looking back through the proceedings of the House I notice that many Bills have been introduced after the Standing Orders have been suspended. In 1915 I find that five Bills were introduced after such a motion had been passed in this House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not for the expenditure of money.

The PREMIER: Hon. members argue that they have not seen this measure. I maintain that members do not see any measure until leave has been given to introduce it. The agreement forms part of the Bill itself, and when leave has been given to introduce the Bill the House will be in possession of the Bill, and the agreement. The Government have also been charged with not having brought the Bill down earlier. The Government were desirous of bringing the Bill forward at the earliest possible date because it was necessary that our wheat shall be protected. We do not know how long we shall have to hold our wheat in Western Australia, and if it is not protected and the Government are not in a position to bring forward some scheme for protecting the wheat crop, the farmers will not produce wheat in Western Australia. And if the farmers do not produce wheat the country will be in a sorry plight, and those engaged in the production of wheat will be in a sorry plight indeed. This Bill is being introduced for the purpose of protecting the wheat crop in the future. Within a few weeks of the Government assuming office the Minister in charge of this matter took hold of this question and endeavoured to bring it to some finality. Mr. Baxter when in Melbourne a month or two back, was engaged with Mr. Metcalf for some considerable time discussing the agreement, and it was only after a month or two we were able to come to an understanding which we considered in the best interests of the country.

Mr. Munsie: I hope he has not ended the file as he did that other file—"I concur."

The PREMIER: The Government must protect the country in every possible way in making agreements, recognising that the agreement was worth nothing until it had been ratified by the House. The agreement cannot be signed by the Government until the House has ratified it. This Bill is to be brought before hon. members so that they will have an opportunity not only of perusing it, but of discussing it in all its phases. The Government have no desire in any way to attempt to burke discussion in the House, no desire whatever. The Government will not attempt to prevent hon. members discussing the Bill at as great a length as they desire. Indeed, the Government cannot control hon. members in this respect. The Bill will be brought in, and hon. members will then be free to discuss it. I do not wish the idea to be entertained that the Government through any fault of their own have neglected to bring down this measure at an earlier date; they have simply been delayed by a natural anxiety to do the best for the State. We have to see that the interests of the country are protected in every way. I hope the House will agree to the introduction of the measure.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning—in reply) [S.I.]: The principal point made by hon. members in discussing the motion is that delay has taken place, that the Bill should have been brought down sooner. When eventually the Bill does come before the House, it will be seen that the delay has taken place by reason of the law officers of the Crown endeavouring to protect the resources of the State and to see that Western Australia in this case had an absolutely fair deal, and that the contract contained all the clauses which the law officers are accustomed to see in such documents. It was only two days ago that finality was reached in respect of those clauses. It was impossible therefore to give notice of the introduction of the Bill any earlier than to-day.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How long has the Minister had it in hand?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Since about July of last year.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You must belong to the I.W.W.; you have been slowing down.

Mr. Holman: Will you place the file on the Table and give us an opportunity of perusing it?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know of anything in the file which hon. members would wish to see.

Mr. Holman: Will you promise to put it on the Table?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I will not promise anything at this stage.

Mr. Holman: You are trying to bluff us out.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not familiar with bluff; I do not know anything about the game. I can assure hon. members that they will receive from me all the information in my possession. I do not wish to keep back anything concerning the Bill. The House is entitled to know all the negotiations.

Mr. Holman: Why not lay the file on the Table?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Because no purpose would be served by doing so. I propose to lay the Bill before the House and explain it fully. Then hon. members will have to consider the agreement, which is the main thing, the Bill containing only one clause. The question the House will have to consider is whether it is a proper agreement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And whether it is advisable to enter into an agreement.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: True. That is why there is in the Bill a clause dealing with—

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister must not discuss the clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is very difficult to answer the hon. member without covering some of the ground. Apparently some hon. members have thought we were discussing the introduction of the Bill. This is a mere motion for leave to introduce, a mere desire on the part of the Government to place a deal of information before members so that those members might decide whether the transaction is a proper one for the Government to enter into on behalf of the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I think your own State officers should do the work involved.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When the Bill comes to be discussed and my friend goes into the question of the merits of the proposal, he will see that the question has been thoroughly gone into already. There will be the statement of the Engineer-in-Chief that it is impossible to have the work done here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not think so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow any discussion on that point.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The motion is merely for leave to introduce the Bill, and I repeat that if hon. members desire to know something of the agreement, to know whether it is a proper one to be entered into, to know the facts leading up to it, to know anything about it at all, they must give the Government power to place those facts before them so that they may intelligently exercise their judgment. The question is one of leave. I was personally surprised that hon. members should object to leave being given. I could, perhaps, understand hon. members opposite objecting to some of the details of the scheme and saying, "We will not have wheat marketing," or "We will not have this agreement," or "We will not have some of the clauses in it." But to say, "We will not listen to you at all"—

Mr. O'Loughlen: Shocking!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is shocking.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is a common thing for leave to be refused in the Old Country.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It may be, but in this country it is not a common thing. I have not had anything like the Parliamentary experience of some of my friends opposite, but so far as I am aware leave to introduce a Bill has never been refused in Western Australia.

Hon. P. Collier: It has been frequently opposed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It has never even been opposed during the short time I have been connected with Parliamentary life.

Mr. Holman: They always gave us a fair chance with the Bills.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member will have a fair chance of discussing the Bill when it comes before the House, as long as he seeks to apply his mind intelligently to it; and no one will be more delighted than I to listen to the hon. member when he gets into a proper argumentative frame of mind, because I like crossing swords argumentative, although not otherwise.

Mr. Holman: You would not have need to chastise me.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The motion is one for leave. It has been brought before the House at the earliest possible moment. All the information is proposed to be given to the House and, as my leader has said, the House can have any reasonable time for the consideration of the Bill. It is a fair proposition to put to the House, and I hope that hon. members, having heard that, will be satisfied to let the motion go.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	12

Majority for .. 13

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Money
Mr. Davies	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Durack	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Plesse
Mr. George	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Smith
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Roche
Mr. Collier	Mr. Stewart
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Jones	(Teller.)
Mr. Lutey	

Question thus passed; leave given.

Bill introduced.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [S.13]: I move—

“That the Bill be now read a first time.”

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

Ayes	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	12

Majority for .. 13

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Money
Mr. Davies	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Durack	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Plesse
Mr. George	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Smith
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Roche
Mr. Collier	Mr. Stewart
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Jones	(Teller.)
Mr. Lutey	

Question thus passed.

Bill read a first time.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [S.17]: I move—

“That the Bill be printed and the second reading be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.”

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

Ayes	..	..	..	26
Noes	..	..	..	11

Majority for .. 15

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Money
Mr. Brown	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Davies	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Durack	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Stewart
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Maley	(Teller.)
Mr. Mitchell	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Roche
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Jones	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th March.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [S.20]: This is a comparatively small Bill, of one clause, but nevertheless it is a very important one.

I do not know whether the reasons advanced on the matter we have been discussing this afternoon, as to the justification for the late introduction of other Bills, also hold good in respect to this measure. Whilst it may be true that there were obstacles in the way of introducing another important Bill on the Notice Paper, I can scarcely conceive of any reason why we should not have had an important amendment to the Act of last year at a much earlier stage in the session. In any case, it is an illustration of the arguments which I have been advancing to-day with regard to the passage of important legislation in the early hours of the morning with the Standing Orders suspended. I recollect that in March of last year, after an all night sitting, the House finally agreed to amend the Land Act of that year, but nevertheless the inevitable result has been that we have a further amendment before us this session. In order to recall to mind the Bill of last year and the reason for the introduction of the present one, it may not be inopportune for me to remind hon. members of the clauses in the measure brought forward last year dealing with pastoral leases. That particular measure was a very comprehensive amendment of the Land Act, and gave pastoral lessees the right to a renewal of their leases, providing that these leases which would expire in 1923 could be surrendered, and application made for new leases which would extend to the year 1948. I remember at that time there was a very considerable and vigorous protest on the part of the public, and particularly in the columns of the "West Australian" against the late introduction of such an important measure. I do not know whether it is merely a coincidence or not, but it strikes me that the arguments which have been advanced from this side of the House this evening are justified when we recall the incidents connected with that Bill, that is to say we are experiencing this session a procedure similar to that which we experienced last session, the most important Bills being left to within the last few days of the session when the Standing Orders are suspended, and, as in the case with the measure now before us, at such a time when the public have no opportunity of knowing the general principles of it. The Bill of last year became law before its general provisions were known throughout the length and breadth of the State. These provisions should have been made known, because of the enormous pastoral areas that were being dealt with in such a manner as to secure the right to the holders of such leases to a further term of 20 years, and because the existing leases at that time had 11 years further to run. It was contended on that occasion that there was no need to provide legislative facilities or opportunities for our leaseholders to secure the right to a renewal of their leases so many years prior to the expiration of the existing leases. That view was strongly held, I think, both in this Chamber and out of it, and this Bill affords proof of the contention which was raised on that occasion.

Leaseholders were given 12 months in which to surrender their existing leases, and to apply for the new leases under the amending Act. That year of grace expires on the 28th March, eight days from to-day. Why have the Government left the matter till within eight days of the expiration of the period allowed for renewal before introducing this Bill? It is argued that time must be given to the leaseholders to reduce their holdings to the million acres provided by the Act, that is in cases where they hold an acreage in excess of a million acres.

Mr. Troy: The amendment provides for that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I mean the amending Act of last year. It provides that the maximum amount to be held by one person shall be one million acres.

Mr. Troy: That was not the intention of the Government, but the House insisted upon it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am dealing with what the Act provides. The Government say that there are men holding an acreage in excess of a million acres, but that because of the war and other difficulties, the twelve months' grace provided has not been sufficient to permit of their deciding what portion of their holdings they would dispose of in order to bring them down to the maximum allowed under the amending Act. It is also contended, I believe, that some of the pastoralists are in the Old Country, and that it is not easy for them to come out here at present, or has not been easy for them to do so during the past year, to attend to this matter which so vitally affects their interests. In reply to that I would point out that there is no condition existing to-day which did not exist 12 months ago when the Act was passed. We were then at war, and precisely the same conditions prevailed with regard to the difficulties of disposing of their holdings that prevail now, and any other conditions which might be attributable to a state of war were present when the Act was passed last year just as they are present to-day. So, I say, the matter ought to have been foreseen, but inasmuch as it has evidently not been foreseen, I contend that the Government have no right to leave this Bill to within eight days of the expiration of that period before they bring it up for consideration by this House. Is it seriously contended that the holders of pastoral areas in this country have not taken the necessary steps to surrender their existing leases, and to apply for fresh leases? I refer, of course, to those who intend to take advantage of the Act of last year. Is it seriously contended that they have not already taken steps to do it? That cannot be maintained, because no man having such important interests involved would refrain from taking action in this connection until within a week of the expiration of the time allowed. If these pastoralists have not taken the necessary steps to surrender their existing leases, it could only be because they anticipated the passage of this Bill through Parliament; and I do not see how any body of men concerned could

come to such a conclusion as that. It clearly shows, if we are going to extend the time during which they may apply under last year's Act to 12 months after the proclamation of peace—which may be a year, or may be several years, off—that there was no need for Parliament to take the action which it took last year. If the pastoralists' interests are not in any way detrimentally affected by their not securing new leases, for it may be a year or two or three years hence, it clearly shows that, similarly, their interests would not have been detrimentally affected had last year's measure not been enacted. So that, in my opinion, this Bill confers upon pastoralists a consideration to which they are not entitled, although, of course, the Government are going to make them pay double rent for that consideration—the Bill provides that, in consideration of the extension of time, the pastoralist will pay double rent for that period. But, even so, I am quite unable to understand why the men concerned, even if they were resident in the Old Country, or elsewhere outside Australia, having representatives here under power of attorney, or managers, or others to look after their interests, have not been able to take advantage of the provisions of last year's amendment Act during the 12 months just expiring. Further, I do not see how they can take advantage of that Act within the further time which this Bill proposes to allow. If this Bill secures passage through this House at the earliest possible moment, which would be to-night, and then secures the sanction of the Governor, these pastoralists will be allowed only a very few days in which to take advantage of the extension to comply with the provisions of last year's measure. I wish again to offer my protest against the introduction of an important Bill such as this at the end of the session, with the Standing Orders suspended, when surely it could have been introduced a few weeks ago. The Premier will not seriously argue that this matter of the need for extension of time was not brought under the notice of the Government until the last week or two. The Bill, consisting as it does of only one clause, is not one requiring time for drafting or for consideration. It is safe to say that the men interested in the pastoral areas of this country have made representations to the Government in this connection some time ago. At least, one would think so, as they are not a class neglectful of their own interests. If I am right in assuming that this matter was brought under the notice of the Government some time ago, then I am doubly justified in offering a protest against the introduction of the Bill at this late hour. But again I wish to point out that this Bill merely serves to show the absolute lack of justification for the passage of last year's measure. Even now I would suggest that the best way out of the difficulty would be, not to extend the time, as proposed, for a year after the war, but to repeal Subsection 4 of Section 30 of last year's Act. It is that section which gives the pastoralist the right to surrender his existing lease, and to apply for a new lease. If the pastoralists find it inconvenient to take advantage of that subsection, the best way would

be to repeal that subsection altogether; and then the matter can come up afresh for consideration after the war. The pastoralists would then remain in the same position as at present, and Parliament would have an opportunity of reconsidering the matter in the light of circumstances as they will exist at that time. I am inclined to move in Committee that Subsection 4 of Section 30 be deleted, and then the position with regard to pastoral leases would stand as it stood prior to the enactment of last year's measure.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [\$35]: I merely desire to point out that considerable curiosity was expressed last year, when the amending Bill was introduced, as to the reason for its introduction. It will be remembered that the leading newspaper of this State published at that time some stringent articles commenting on the undue haste with which the Government of the day brought in a measure conferring certain concessions on the pastoralists of this country.

Mr. Smith: Last year's measure was brought in for the purpose of providing money.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It may have been brought in for the purpose of providing revenue, but that was not apparent.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That was not the reason why the Bill was brought in.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The main argument used in the endeavour to secure the passage of the Bill through the House was the pastoralists' lack of security, owing to the short tenure. The pastoralists, we were told, having only 10 or 11 years of their leases to run, could not obtain loans sufficient to enable them to stock to the full capacity of their areas, and to effect certain improvements. I think the member for North Perth (Mr. Smith) will agree with me that that was the main argument used.

The Attorney General: That was one argument.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That was the argument on which most stress was laid.

Mr. Smith: The main reason was that the passage of the Bill would enable the pastoralists to raise money.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I contend that that was not the main reason. I listened to the debate, and I read the comments upon it. However, if the main reason was to enable the Government to secure more revenue, I doubt if there is an industry of Western Australia from which the Government could more equitably raise additional revenue than the pastoral industry. The pastoral industry has been enjoying prosperous times; and when a certain section of the community are enjoying a period of prosperity, what is to prevent the Government from securing more revenue from that section by additional taxation? The Government always have that remedy, and they have it under any proposal which the Treasurer may bring down in order to secure more revenue. The Treasurer has to get the money from the men who have it; and it has been demonstrated that of late years the pastoralists have had, at any rate, a somewhat more prosperous time than the rest of the community.

Mr. Smith: They have had a few lean years, you know.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: So has every section of the community had lean years.

Mr. Teesdale: The rents of the pastoralists are being doubled.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, and the pastoralists were very pleased to pay double rents, so long as they had good seasons. With good seasons the pastoralist does not mind what revenue he pays to the Government. Every trade and industry has its lean years, and no other trade or industry receives redress or consideration on that account. I wanted to know at the time, and I ask now, where is the necessity for legislating for posterity? We have extended the lives of these pastoral leases by the Amendment Act.

Mr. Smith: What has posterity done for us?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is a fair thing that we should do our utmost for posterity. Perhaps, as the hon. member does not follow that line of reasoning, posterity may have very little thought for him, when posterity is facing the problems which will confront it. I want to know, is it a fair proposition—and the "West Australian" wanted to know this last year—to extend the pastoral leases in that fashion? The "West Australian" demanded of the Government last year that they should postpone the Bill, should drop it, in order that further evidence might be collected and analysed as to the exact position of the pastoral industry. Let hon. members note that we are extending these leases away into 1948, by which time very few of the members sitting here and passing this legislation will be interested in the pastoral industry, I take it. Possibly they will be grappling with other problems.

The Attorney General: We shall all be on the same side of the House then.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Possibly. But let us not anticipate what side of the House we shall be on; some of us will be fortunate if we get into the House at all. The Amendment Act of last year conferred enormous privileges on the pastoralists of this State; and now, when this further extension is brought down, we are not informed how many pastoralists have taken advantage of the provision. The Premier the other night, in his characteristic style, dilated on the great productivity of the industry, and on the multiplicity of the flocks and herds of the country, on the improved breed of sheep, and on the industry's enormous possibilities of expansion. But I should like to have from the Premier—and surely his departmental officers can supply the information—the number of pastoral lessees who have applied to come under the Amendment Act; the number of lessees, and also who they are.

Hon. J. Mitchell: They have until the 28th of this month.

The Premier: I gave that information when introducing the Bill.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In my opinion, the Premier did not give us any valid reason why the other pastoralists did not take advantage of

the provision contained in the Amendment Act.

The Premier: I gave you the number who applied.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: As the leader of the Opposition has said, we may take it for granted that the pastoralists are shrewd business men, and do not delay to attend to such matters as this until the time is up.

Mr. Johnston: They can pay the back rent at any time.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Any pastoralist who intends to take advantage of that provision has taken advantage of it already.

The Premier: It is the people with over a million acres who do not know what to do.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: How many of those are there? Was it they who made representations to the Premier asking for relief in this direction?

The Premier: They asked for extension, certainly.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Was that a universal request from those pastoralists who had not taken advantage of the provision?

The Premier: I had many representations made to me.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I was opposed to last year's amending measure. It was certainly fixed up at a conference.

The Premier: The people I refer to do not know what to do with their surplus area.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I certainly do not think we should be continually amending the Land Act and extending provisions such as this. We do not do that kind of thing for other sections of the community. The pastoralists, when they stood behind last year's measure, stood behind it with their representatives, with what object in view? So far as I can gather from the debate, the object was to obtain better security, as they had only 10 or 11 years to go. The representation they put up to Parliament was that unless they could get the extended term, taking them away on beyond the period when most of us will have ceased to be here, they would be financially crippled. As a result, we have extended the terms of their leases to the time of future generations, to a time when none of us can say what will be the position of the pastoralist. We have no idea whether, in 1948, the pastoral areas of Western Australia will be in process of development by white men or by black men. We have no notion as to what the drift of population will be at that future date, or to what extent it will be diverted to the North-West. Consequently, I believe, most opinion holds that in extending the leases to 1948, Parliament was taking too much on its shoulders. The argument advanced was that this extension would enable the pastoralists to borrow money for the purpose of stocking up their areas and effecting certain improvements. If that was a faulty argument—and I believe it was the main argument—the amendment Act of last year was very particularly a class measure. It conferred upon one section of the community of Western Australia benefits which no other section of the community has had conferred upon it. No

people operating in any other Western Australian industry can come to Parliament and obtain a guarantee of security of tenure to 1948.

Mr. Teesdale: There is no other section of the community in the same position as the pastoralists.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Are there no mining lessees?

Mr. Foley: The mining leases were renewed under conditions infinitely better than these.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: For what period?

Mr. Foley: The mining lessees got their renewals for nothing.

Hon. P. Collier: Quite right, too.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In my opinion there is no other section of the community could obtain such favourable terms as were granted to the pastoral lessees under last year's measure. The "West Australian" at the time put up a vigorous opposition, saying that advantage was being taken of the party in power to secure the passage of the measure. That measure has gone through, and certain lessees have taken advantage of its provisions. I personally object to the passage of the present Bill until such time as the Premier is able to show us reasons why these other pastoralists have not been able to take advantage of the provision under the amendment Act. We are told that some of them reside in England. But that cannot be a large percentage.

Mr. Munsie: And those that do reside in England have representatives here.

Mr. Johnston: Nearly all absentees.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Then their representatives are here. Surely they know the legislation of the country, and they know that Parliament in its generosity last year conferred a boon on the lucky occupants of the territory in the North-West. I hope they will continue to prosper, but if the amending Bill is only to secure more revenue for the Government that revenue can be obtained at any time.

Mr. Teesdale: Do not forget that some of those pastoralists have furnished hospitals in England.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I understand that one of them has done so; that is a laudable action.

Mr. Teesdale: Two.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: But what about the others? Judging by the price of wool and the period in which they will be able to negotiate, namely, twelve months after the passing of this measure—

The Premier: Some have been killed at the Front.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In those cases, then, Parliament could allow the utmost latitude. But there are some who have not taken advantage of these provisions, and they should be asked to give a valid reason why they have not done so. If the reason was the same as that given last year, namely, that they could not get money from the banks with which to carry on operations, I would refuse to believe it. If there is one industry which will get the backing of the banks it is that connected with wool. The Premier

may be able to supply information regarding the number of applicants who have failed to come under the provisions of the Act. I cannot believe that they have such great difficulty in disposing of their surplus areas. We know in the conduct of business that if a man has a surplus area and it is good country, it is often an easy matter to dispose of it by making a family arrangement to do so.

Mr. Foley: The Bill will not allow that to be done.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: What will prevent a pastoralist transferring an area to his son? I know there are provisions against dummying, but if a squatter or a big leaseholder has sons who want to embark on squatting pursuits, Parliament will not stand in the way.

The Attorney General: The son would have to conduct the place independently of the father.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Attorney General knows that where it is a case of the distribution of assets, and particularly pastoral areas, it is quite an easy matter to overcome the difficulty. If it is a question of taking advantage of the provisions of the Act to dispose of a surplus area, it is a difficult matter, and I venture to say that the pastoralists are wide awake and sufficiently keen to do so.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [S.49]: I trust that the opposition to the Bill will not be very serious. No one in the Chamber can accuse me of having worked in the interests of those who were getting preference in the way of trade or in connection with any industry.

Mr. Munsie: The Government gave preference in the last measure.

Mr. FOLEY: And the hon. member assisted to get that preference.

Mr. Munsie: That is absolutely incorrect, and the hon. member knows it. I ask that the statement be withdrawn.

Mr. FOLEY: If the hon. member takes exception to the statement I will withdraw it.

Mr. Munsie: I do, because it is untrue, and you know it.

Mr. FOLEY: I will withdraw it, and say that he was a party to it, because he was connected with those who absolutely concurred in giving the concession.

Mr. Munsie: That statement also is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Someone else tried to make an agreement and we opposed it.

Mr. Munsie: There were only three of you at that conference, you and two others, out of the party of 21.

Mr. FOLEY: When that measure was before the Chamber last session there was a clause in it to which the majority of members objected. A conference was arranged between the Attorney General and hon. members holding opposite views. The House adjourned while the conference took place.

Mr. O'Loghlen: The majority who objected were on your side.

Mr. FOLEY: The members at that conference were the Attorney General, Mr. W. D. Johnson, then member for Guildford—

Hon. P. Collier: They were not representing us; you appointed them yourselves.

Mr. FOLEY: It is a good job sometimes that hon. members of the Opposition have not the power to make appointments. If they had I would not be here.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must discuss the question before the House.

Mr. FOLEY: All that is provided in the amending Bill before hon. members is to give the pastoralists holding over a million acres the opportunity to sell out their areas over and above the million acres, and then to give them until the period stipulated after the war to send in their returns to show where the million acres are situated.

Hon. P. Collier: The Bill applies to all areas, under a million as well as over a million acres.

Mr. Munsie: The member for Leonora has not read the Bill.

Mr. FOLEY: I believe that a majority of those who hold under a million acres have already come within the provisions of the Act, and have complied with it regarding the double rent sections. All that it means is that the State will not lose one penny, because, if a man who has this land still holds it, he will have to pay double rent if he wants to come in under the new conditions. The payment will have to be made, no matter to whom the area is transferred; double rental will be paid until the appraisal is made. Most of us know that some pastoralists have cut up their blocks, and have excised from those blocks sufficient land to bring them within the million acres, but they have not had the opportunity of making the best possible sale at the present time. They cannot sell out just now because of the fact that if they sell portion of their land they cannot improve the remainder to the extent they might desire to do. Where are the pastoralists, or anyone else for that matter, at the present time, going to obtain wire with which to effect improvements, if they sell out any portion of an area which is already improved. So far as security of tenure is concerned, we are not altering that; we are not altering any one provision in the Bill which will allow anyone or a body of pastoralists to get out of any obligation they are subjected to. The State will get the ordinary rent, and on top of that the double rent, which they must pay to comply with the 1948 conditions. The point has been raised that it is not possible for a pastoralist to hold more than a million acres. Not only is it not possible to do that, but the existing Act prevents the holder from being interested in any other million acres in the one division. If a pastoralist made over any portion of his land above a million acres say to his son, and that son was not 21 years of age, what is going to happen?

Mr. Munsie: Suppose the son is 21?

Mr. FOLEY: Then the Minister has the final say as to whether there is any collusion between the pastoralist and that son. On the Minister's recommendation only can approval be given.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you think the Minister will object?

Mr. FOLEY: Absolutely.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is a business transaction.

Mr. FOLEY: But when it becomes a matter of policy it is only right that Cabinet should have the final say. If it can be shown that the sale is legitimate, no Government would object. I contend that it is a fair measure and I trust it will go through. If I thought for a moment that it would give any section of the community a pull over any other section, I would be just as firm in my opposition to it as any other member.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.1]: So far as I can gather, this measure affects only two pastoralists in my district. I desire to put up an appeal on behalf of those pastoralists.

Mr. Munsie: How can it affect only two in your district?

Mr. ANGELO: I mean in regard to the provision dealing with areas of above one million acres. In other parts of the State, of course, other pastoralists are affected, and no doubt many will have the same claims for consideration as have the two in the Gascoyne district. I am quite in accord with the Bill of last year, for I believe that one million acres is sufficient for any man to hold. But there are certain conditions applying which render the carrying out of the provision of last year's measure well-nigh impossible to a large number of pastoralists, including the two whose cases I shall put before the House. Both of those men have spent nearly the whole of their lives in the Gascoyne district. They were two of the pioneers of the district. They came out here from England, one 30 years ago and the other 10 years earlier; both brought a little money with them which they spent in the Gascoyne district. They decided to make their homes in Western Australia, and for many years both worked very hard indeed. They had their ups and downs; probably more downs than ups. I know that for two years one of them did not smoke, for the simple reason that he could not afford it. Less than 20 years ago the other one was so hard up that he approached his financiers and offered to leave the station. However, they saw that they had in their client a man with the heart of a bullock, and they urged him to remain on the station. He did so, and not only did he pull through the drought years we have since had, and so fully confirm the confidence reposed in him, but he is now in a prosperous way. Just before the outbreak of war both those pastoralists decided to take a holiday in the Old Country amongst their people, from whom they had been so long separated. Shortly after they reached England, war broke out. One of them immediately converted into a hospital for wounded soldiers his magnificent residence in England, where he had hoped to spend a time of rest after his arduous toil in Western Australia. From that day to this he has been maintaining that huge establishment at a cost of from £7,000 to £10,000 per annum for wounded Australian soldiers, and indeed for any wounded soldiers of the Allies. His wife acts as matron of the hospital, and he himself is

often to be seen with his coat off assisting in the menial work of the establishment. The other gentleman, as soon as war broke out, tore himself away from wife and family and, taking his motor-car to France, threw himself actively into war work. Right up to the present time he has been carrying on that work in France in an honorary capacity. Those are two of the pastoralists who, we are told, should have made arrangements for the transfer of their leases.

Hon. P. Collier: But surely someone is attending to their business while they are away.

Mr. ANGELO: I understand that they relied upon the war being over shortly, when they would be able to come out and look after things themselves. A man who has selected his own lease and pioneered his own station would prefer to personally superintend any enforced subdivision of his holding.

Hon. P. Collier: Do they hold more than a million acres?

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. Both would like to be here to personally superintend the subdivisions. It has been said that those gentlemen could have returned here and attended to this business as soon as the Bill was passed, last year. But they were playing their part in the war and they were determined to see it through. They said that even if it meant the loss of their stations they would stick to their posts and carry on the good work. They are now asking of the House an extension of the period during which they can make their subdivisions. But in return for the concession they are willing to pay double rent. In these circumstances, surely no hon. member will hesitate to admit that theirs is a just and reasonable request.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [9.9]: I am sorry that the member for Gascoyne should have confined his attention to the cases of only two squatters. I take a broader view; I speak for the whole of the squatters affected by the Bill. It will not require any lengthy speech to ask for a little generous treatment at the hands of hon. members opposite, who extended a certain amount of support to the Bill when first it came into the House. I think that if they go into the matter, they will agree that it is not a great concession which is asked for. The extension may prove to be for a couple of years, but we hope and trust that it will be for not more than 12 months. In any case, it is no great concession to make when we consider the position those pastoralists at Home are in. They were informed by cable of the passing of the Bill, but they had to wait for their mails before they could get the details of the measure from their managers. Again, we must bear in mind the difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of getting fencing wire at present. Of course, the pastoralists generally have enjoyed a good time lately, but previously they went through a very bad time. I have seen very many lean years in the North. Hon. members must not run away with the idea that the present prosperity is any criterion as to the general average condition of the pastoral industry.

Mr. Green: Have you ever met a squatter who could not afford to smoke?

Mr. TEESDALE: I have met scores of squatters who had not sufficient money to come into the local race meeting, which costs very little to attend, after all. Perhaps they could always raise the price of a smoke, but they have had positively bad years, which would have broken the hearts of ordinary people. They have had to spend their lives in circumstances very little better than those of blackfellows. Yet all we are asking on their behalf is what the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) rightly described as "no great concession." If hon. members can see their way clear to supporting the concession, their action will be very much appreciated. If hon. members will but take into consideration the many difficulties in the way of the immediate subdivision of the holdings, I have no doubt they will grant the concession asked for.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [9.13]: The conditions of to-day existed when the Bill of last year became law. It was then pointed out very clearly by members on this side that there was no urgent necessity for the Bill, seeing that there were 11 or 12 years to go before the leases ran out, thus leaving plenty of time for the Government to classify the areas and deal with the land on a proper system of rent fixing. I am sorry that the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) has forgotten his position in the House to-night. Apparently, he thought he was still on this side of the House. He said that members "opposite" had agreed to put the Bill through.

Hon. P. Collier: Which was absolutely incorrect.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He said that members on this side agreed with the provisions in the Bill of last year and supported them. The hon. member has changed sides since then, and so has become somewhat confused. Last year I moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, and on a division being taken the following were found in support of my motion:—Mr. Angwin, Mr. Cheson, Mr. Foley, Mr. Green, Mr. W. D. Johnson, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Mullany, Mr. Munsie, Mr. Scaddan, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Underwood, and Mr. O'Loughlen.

Hon. P. Collier: Yet the hon. member said that the Labour party supported the Bill.

Mr. Foley: I believe they did, too.

Mr. Munsie: The hon. member said he would move an amendment to every word.

Mr. Foley: That is right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There was a little stone-walling at the time.

Mr. Foley: I assisted all I could.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am showing that the statement of the hon. member that we rendered every assistance we could to get the Bill through was incorrect. When he made it he forgot which side of the House he was sitting on. His mind was running in the same direction as it has always done. He realised that he was on the wrong side of the Chamber, and his conscience was pricking him. He said in effect, "I ought to be with you fellows, but unfortunately I am not." Later on some other hon. members got into a kind of "wongi" with the Attorney General. I do

not think anyone was more surprised than the Attorney General, after an agreement had been fixed up in his office between two or three hon. members, when the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley), who was one of the party, later on opposed the action he had taken in the Attorney General's office. There was no understanding so far as hon. members on this side of the House were concerned. I was not aware when I left the Chamber that night of the intention to hold a conference. I was given to understand that the matter would have further consideration, and was not going to be pushed through that session. I was therefore surprised when I found from the newspaper the following morning that the matter had been allowed to stand over until the following day. It was I who moved that the area should be reduced from two million acres to one million acres. We had another division on that.

Mr. Foley: I voted for the one million acres.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Those who voted for the one million acres were—Mr. Angwin, Mr. Carpenter, Mr. Chesson, Mr. Collier, Mr. Foley, Mr. Green, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Mullany, Mr. Munzie, Mr. Nairn, Mr. Scaddan, Mr. S. Stubbs, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Troy, Mr. Walker, and Mr. O'Loughlen, the division being 20 to 13. We pointed out very clearly at that time that the matter was not one of urgency. I recollect an interjection made by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston), who said, "Perhaps it will be now or never." In other words, he thought there might be a change of Government and that consequently the Bill would not go through. We are not opposed to the system that is asked for in this Bill, but I agree with the leader of the Opposition that it is better for us to go back to where we were before, and to repeal the clauses of the Act, extending the time of the leases. We could then deal with the whole question in a proper manner. We could have a classification of the areas and report upon them, and could ascertain the value of the land. The pastoralists, who are undoubtedly doing good work in connection with the War, would thus be given an opportunity, if Parliament should decide later to increase the period for which the leases are now being held, to choose those areas which they think are desirable for the carrying on of their business. In my opinion it is better in the interests of the State that the Government should make a subdivision of the areas rather than that the squatter should do so. After all, we are only human. I am not saying that the squatters are not doing what any other people would do in the circumstances. For my part I should pick out the best bit of land I had, select the best water supplies and the best frontages I could get for the carrying on of my lease.

Mr. Teesdale: Quite right, too. The squatters made these places.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no doubt that everyone would do that. They would subdivide their areas, however, in such a way that it would be difficult to dispose of the land that was remaining and do justice to

those who were to come after them. We know what has happened around the town of Wyndham, where it is a difficult matter to get stock through owing to the land being privately held.

Mr. Teesdale: What about the men who created the value of this land and redeemed it from the desert?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Those who created the value of these leases had them for the full term. They knew the position that existed when they began to create that value, and that the term of the leases expired in 1928. After that time they knew they had no right to them.

Mr. Teesdale: Perhaps not legally, but they have a moral right.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not say that they should be deprived of their leases, and am only putting the position as it exists to-day. The Government should be able, in dealing with the new leases, to say which area should constitute a lease. They could then go to the squatter, if he was there—I do not advocate turning him out—and say, "Which area will you take? We will give you the first chance." The Bill before us is not a very important one. Perhaps, however, if we intend to leave the clauses in the present Act as they stand it is justified. It is only fair at a time like this, when we have men in England and in other parts of the world doing their best for the Empire, that we should see that their interests are protected whilst they are away, but it would be far better to throw the whole thing into the melting pot, to strike out the clauses already in existence, and give the Government an opportunity of subdividing the leases into new holdings.

Mr. Pickering: You mean to cut out Sections 30 and 31 of the Act?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: To go back to where we were before, and leave the expiration of the leases to take place in 1928, until such time as the Government have had an opportunity of reviewing the position. When he introduced the Bill of last year the Premier, who was then in charge of it, could not give us any information about the areas, though he knew they could carry more stock. As to how these leases should be subdivided in the best interests of the State, or as to how they should be utilised for the settlement of more people, he could give no information at all. He said he could not get the information and that time would not permit him to do so. Now, 12 months afterwards, it has been proved that the Bill was introduced 12 months too soon. It has also been proved that the pastoralists, who are away now, cannot select those parts of their leases which will be best suited for their business. I trust that in Committee we will be able to go back to where we were before so as to give the Government ample opportunity for reviewing these areas, classifying them, and re-distributing them in the best interests of the State.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [9.25]: One would imagine from the remarks which have fallen from hon. members this evening that the pastoralists had put this measure before us, and that the amending Act which

provides for the extension of the leases had been brought forward at the instigation of those people. It was thought that we should have more stringent improvement and stocking conditions and greater production in regard to these broad acres. It is believed, and I think rightly so, that we should have more revenue from these pastoral leases, at a time when more revenue is needed. We could not increase the rent, except of course by the consent of those who held their leases until 1928. The Government submitted the amending Act of last year to Parliament, and Parliament approved of it. I do not say I agree with all that is contained in the Act, but I do say the advantage lay with the people of the State. It is true that the pastoralist benefited, that the leases became more valuable because of the greater security of tenure, and it is also true that the stock became more valuable as a result of this security of tenure, but the arrangement was a fair one both for the State and the pastoralist, for both parties derived a benefit. It was provided that application should be made by the 28th March of this year for the renewal of these leases. At the time I thought this period was too long. I believed if the pastoralists wished to come under the Act that they should submit to the improvement conditions and the stocking conditions, which are fairly stringent under the amending Act. I believed, too, that we should get increased revenue and get it at once. I do not think it is necessary to grant any single pastoralist more than one million acres of land. Under the Act it was provided that he might take one million acres in each of the six divisions of the State. I see now that we made a mistake in not granting to the pastoralists the right to their present holdings until the expiration of the leases in 1928. We did an injustice to the pastoralist without benefiting anyone at all.

Mr. Munsie: You did an injustice to the State when you forced the last Bill through.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We injured the pastoralist when we told him that he must come under the Act by the 28th March of this year, and in the meantime must get rid of the surplus over and above a million acres.

Mr. Smith: He was getting certain concessions and an extension of his tenure.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: True, but if we had given the pastoralists until 1928 in which to get rid of their surplus areas, we should not have done them an injustice, but they would have had to pay an increased rent for the double area in the meantime. It was not kind of the State to say to the pastoralists, "You must disgorge now on a bad market."

Mr. Smith: They were compelled.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, if they wished to get a renewal.

Mr. Smith: You do not maintain that this is a bad market.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not know that it is a good market. In any event we could, I think, have given the increased time, and if we had done so there would have been no question of a Bill at all. All they ask, I understand, is that a pastoralist holding more than a million acres should be granted fur-

ther time in which to dispose of the surplus over and above that area.

Mr. Munsie: The man who holds less than a million acres can still go on?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes. The Bill applies to everybody, but, of course, as regards the people holding less than a million acres, there would be no necessity whatever for it. I consider, however, that the better course would be to amend the existing Act, so as to give the lessee the right to his area, whatever it may be, up to 1928.

The Attorney General: He has that now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But, in respect of his surplus area, he has not the right of renewal beyond 1928. We should not have been doing the State a great injustice if we had said, "We will recognise a renewal of the present leases as they now exist." It would have been better to do that than to limit all leases to one million acres. It has to be remembered that the pastoral lessee, no matter what his area may be, has to meet the increased stocking provisions and the increased improvement conditions of the 1917 Act. What do we propose now? We propose that all may come under the amendment Act, extending the time until one year after peace has been declared. In the meantime the rent is to be doubled. Under the Act of 1917 the pastoralist who has applied to renew his lease, and who has paid more under the double rent system than he will be eventually assessed at, will be entitled to refund of rents over-paid. Under this Bill we are asked to provide that there shall be no refund in such cases. That appears to me absolutely unfair. Further, if a pastoral lessee happens to hold land which will be assessed at more than £1 per 1,000 acres, say at 30s. or £2 per 1,000 acres, he will, in the meantime, enjoy the right to his holding at the rate of 20s. per 1,000 acres, and when applying for a renewal of his lease he will not be called upon to pay the difference between what he has been paying and the amount he may be assessed at. That does not seem to me at all a fair arrangement. I repeat that I agree, so far as the Bill provides that the pastoral lessee may retain his present acreage until 12 months after peace has been declared, because I do not see that that will make any real difference to anybody. But when I am asked to agree to the other conditions in regard to rents, which will penalise the man with poor land, while giving an advantage to the man with good land, I must refuse.

Mr. Munsie: Where are all the philanthropists who were going to rush to come under your 1917 measure?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I believe a good number of them have already applied. Further, I believe that had not this Bill been submitted to Parliament, a good many more would have applied. At all events, they can apply up to the 28th March. The effect of the introduction of this Bill will not be to hurry such applications. The man with land likely to be assessed at under £1 per 1,000 acres will apply, but the man with land likely to be assessed at over £1 per 1,000 acres will stay out, because he would be foolish to come in—it means a pretty big cheque annually to him. We should not have been justified in dealing with this matter 10

years before the leases expire, were it not for the increased stocking conditions, and the increased rentals, and also the provision that the State is entitled further to raise the rentals after 15 years. I do not think anyone can maintain that the pastoralist has had all the best of the deal. Under the system of assessing values, it will not, as has been suggested, be to the benefit of the pastoralist to cut out his worst country. Under the new system of assessment the rent will be assessed according to the value of the land. There is not a fixed rental under the amendment Act, but the rent will be assessed by assessors, one of whom will be the Surveyor General.

Mr. Green: When will the first assessment take place?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It ought to take place as soon as possible; and all rents should be fixed at the same time, as otherwise one man will be paying £2 per thousand and another man, with equally good land, perhaps only paying £1 per thousand. We should do away with the provision that the man who overpays is not to get a refund. In this connection I have drafted an amendment. I do not think the State ought to lose by the transaction; the State should get the increased rental and the additional improvements should be effected. But there can be no harm in allowing the man who holds more than one million acres to continue to hold that area temporarily; and that is all that is to be provided by this amending Bill. The conditions have somewhat changed since 1917, although, of course, the war was then in progress. No doubt every pastoralist has a representative in Western Australia; but it might be said, with equal force, that he has at home a map of his property in Western Australia and from that map can judge the value of every acre. There are 30,000 men fighting for us at the Front, and every one of those 30,000 men is entitled to consideration, and even greater consideration than should be extended to the pastoralists. Nevertheless, I desire to show the pastoralists every consideration, and that can be done without any hurt to the State whatever, and certainly with advantage to all concerned. I wish the Government could see their way to amend the existing legislation so as to give present lessees the right to their present holdings during the currency of existing leases—that is, until 1928.

The Attorney General: They have that now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No.

The Premier: Yes, they have. We cannot interfere with existing leases.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier has said that before. But these lessees have no right to renewal after 1928.

The Premier: You want to give them the right of renewal till 1948, no matter what their areas may be.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have not said that. I have said that I do not know very much harm would result to the State from that, because we have the increased stocking conditions and the increased rentals. But I wish the Premier to understand that I consider we have no right to interfere with existing leases until their expiration in 1928.

Mr. Munsie: Why did you bring in the Bill last year?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did not bring it in. Mr. Munsie: Your Government did.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Yes; and you supported it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I believe an injustice was done.

Mr. Munsie: An injustice to this State, unquestionably.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I certainly contend that, so long as no injustice is done to the people of the State, or to the revenue, we would be perfectly right in providing that present leases may be renewed to the extent of one million acres beyond 1928. All the pastoralists do not make fortunes. I remember the time—only a few years ago—when some of the pastoralists who are now wealthy were in sore straits. I know of squatters who had 20 years of severe trouble until they became prosperous, a few years ago. I quite agree that the present lessee should have the first right to renewal of the lease. I shall support the Bill amended as I have suggested.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But you do not like it too well?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not like it, because of the provisions to which I have alluded. What we have to consider is the good of the whole State, and the amendment Act of 1917 certainly promoted that. It provided a great improvement on the old system. It will mean increased production, increased revenue, and increased wealth. By the way, the fact that the term for new leases has been extended to 1948 has resulted in 12 million acres of pastoral land being selected during the past few months. We still have 300 or 400 million acres of pastoral lands unoccupied, and I hope that during the next 12 months a great deal more of our pastoral country will be selected. It is true that the world will want wool and wheat, and that these things will become more valuable year by year. It is true, also, that if we want revenue this is the one way of getting it. I hope all that can be done will be done to put this measure into operation speedily. If the Minister will agree to the amendments I have suggested we shall make a good measure of it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. T. Robinson—Canning) [9.47]: The question is a simple one; we are asked to extend the time in which the pastoral lessees may make application to come under the Act. Hon. members who were in the House when the 1916 Act was passed will remember that during the Committee stage I was in favour of giving the pastoral lessees two years in which to make this application. Hon. members opposite moved to reduce the period to twelve months. I was not disposed to haggle with them as to whether it should be two years or twelve months, because they said to me, "If the war is not over at the end of twelve months or there are other good reasons why Parliament should extend the term, the matter can again be considered." Here we are now; the war is not over, and conditions have arisen where many pastoral lessees are unable to take advantage of the Act owing to absence from the State. It would be unreasonable to expect these men to come back and deal with the matter, and it is proposed to extend the

time for the making of applications to one year after the end of the war, and the penalty or price they will have to pay for that privilege is doubled.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not a penalty at all; if they had taken advantage of this provision and surrendered, they would have had to pay double rent just the same.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is a penalty in this way, that no one will have to pay double rent until an application is made under the Act.

Hon. P. Collier: A lessee would have to pay double rent from the 28th of this month if this Bill did not pass.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If we merely extended the time the position would not be clear at all.

Hon. P. Collier: It would be giving a privilege.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, over and above the other man who had made his application, whereas now he will have no privilege over the other man; he will have to pay double rent. I submit that is quite fair.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [9.52]: I propose to vote against the Bill. I voted against the introduction of the measure which was introduced during the last Parliament. My objection to the Bill is not because of any particular clause contained in it, but because I hold there never was any warrant for the Government to introduce a measure to provide for the continuance of leasehold rights when those rights still existed for ten or twelve years. It is anticipating events when experience has shown we are not in a position to judge of the results of such legislation in the future. Whereas the last measure was only passed some twelve months ago, the Government have already seen the necessity for amending it. This same party brought in legislation during last Parliament to provide for conditions ten years hence without any knowledge of what might arise within the period. I contend that we have no right to jeopardise the interests of posterity, and particularly the right of those who may be looking for land within the next ten or twelve years. Like the member for North-East Fremantle, I have not the slightest desire to injure the legitimate rights of any of the present leaseholders. I admit all that has been said about the hard times they have had. I know that many of them to-day are men of affluence, though they have had years of hard struggles, and some have become broken in health. Still, their reward has come. But are there not many who are struggling in other occupations without getting any reward? No provision is made for them in the direction of giving them certain rights ten years hence. There is only one class of the community, the wealthy and influential, whose interests are being considered, and they are getting advantages out of their due proportion. Has any such legislation been proposed for any other section of the community? Times have changed in this country, and the proof of it is here; whereas 15 years ago not one man in a thousand

and would take up agricultural land in the eastern belt, within five years there was a rush for it, with the result that thousands of acres were applied for and are now in occupation. That demand for land occurred in a few years, but it has eased off now, and people are finding out what the land is capable of producing. The pastoral areas are in a similar position to the agricultural areas. By the improvements which have taken place it has been found that the pastoral lands are much more valuable than they were ten or twenty years ago; it has been found they have a greater carrying capacity. I have seen evidence of it in my constituency, and the Government are wanting in foresight if they do not realise that the pastoral leases to-day which may be carrying one family should carry ten families in reasonable comfort; and that would be a very important thing along our existing railway lines. I was in Carnarvon a few years ago, and there was a clamour there on the part of a number of young men for an opportunity to get a portion of the pastoral leases held up in large areas, and which were in proximity to the boundaries of Carnarvon. Ten families may exist easily where only one family exists to-day. But this Bill absolutely puts an end to that possibility, and creates an obstacle to the prosperity and industry of the people. In my district one million acres adjacent to Mt. Magnet are held by one man. I know that this area would carry six or seven stations of reasonable size. The people of Mt. Magnet want that land badly. With additional wells and fencing, it would carry as many sheep again as it is carrying now, but the Bill before us will shut out everyone except the present holder until 1948. Our railways run through large areas of lands on which at the present time there are only a few mining camps, and pastoral leases, but by enabling other people to take up portions of existing leases these big properties would be carrying ten times the population, and there would be ten times the production.

Mr. Teesdale: Let them go into back country.

Mr. TROY: Why do the Government repurchase large estates? Why do they not let the people go into the back country instead of repurchasing estates? There was a time in this country when it was a good thing to give an original settler a large area on easy conditions, but with the poet Lovell I hold that—

New occasions teach new duties,

Present evil makes ancient good uncouth.

What was good years ago is an evil to-day. It may have been a good thing to give squatters a million acres years ago, but it is not so to-day when the people are clamouring for the land. That is my objection to the Bill. Last year, when the Bill was introduced in Parliament, I was unfortunately absent, on the Murchison. I told hon. members the objection I had to the measure, and without desiring to injure the existing rights of leaseholders, I declared that if we were going to hand over these leases to the existing holders because they happened to have taken

them up 20 years ago, the House would not be acting in the interests of the people in the State now, and certainly not in the interests of the 30,000 soldiers who will return to the State, and who may want the land. Neither will we attract that population who may reasonably be expected to come here later to assist our development and help to pay our taxes. We did not allow the aborigines to hold the land, because it was not being utilised. They held the land, but because they did not make the best use of it we took it from them. Wherever pastoral leases adjoining railways are capable of carrying four times the population they are carrying to-day, these should be cut up, and the owners should be compensated for the improvements made on them. The people later on will insist that this be done. I do not say this or the last Government are wanting in honesty, but they lack wisdom and foresight when by introducing such special legislation as this they take away from the people and future citizens of the State the right to occupy these lands in certainly smaller areas but with the knowledge to increase the production tenfold. On these grounds I strongly oppose the Bill.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. MUNSIE* (Hannans) [10.1]: At the outset I wish to say members on this side of the House are placed in rather an awkward position inasmuch as every member now sitting on this side opposed the measure which this Bill is brought forward to amend; and I do want to say a great harm to this side was done when the original Bill was passed. I oppose the Bill for this reason: I believe if we can succeed in defeating the present amending Bill, the pastoralists will not apply to come under the new Act until the expiration of the time given for them to do so, which will mean that they will have reverted to the old lease and remain until 1928, which is quite long enough for them to have secured the tenure under existing circumstances. I was pleased with the speech of the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Troy). There is no doubt I can pick in this State 10 pastoralists who have holdings that at least 200 families could make fortunes on if they can get the land. I go further and say so far as this legislation is concerned, irrespective of whether the amendment is carried or not, wherever it is possible to raise my voice, between this and the next election, I will absolutely stomp this country against the iniquitous measure that was passed in this House; and if ever we get back with a majority before 1928, it will be altered.

Mr. Green: And we will get back.

Mr. Teesdale: That is a threat.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am issuing it as a threat.

Mr. Teesdale: It is a harmless one.

Mr. MUNSIE: I tell the hon. member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) there are holdings in his electorate that are an absolute disgrace under this Act. I used an argument

here before and it is worth repeating for the edification of the hon. member, that there are nearly 2½ million acres of land held in the hon. member's electorate, in absolutely the picked portion of it, the pastoral country, and I have travelled right through it from one end to the other, and there is not a solitary white man or woman in it. The hon. member says he wants to do something for the repatriation of soldiers and I say that 50 returned soldiers could well make £500 a year if the land was subdivided and they were given an opportunity to get there before 1928.

Mr. Teesdale: Nonsense!

Mr. MUNSIE: The hon. member may think so. If he does go over the Minderoo and Globe Hill estates, he will admit that I am right and he is wrong. The hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), when the Land Bill was before the House last year, gave as the principal reason why the Bill should be passed that it would mean at least a quarter of a million extra revenue to the State and I at that time wanted to know how he was going to get it. He worked it out that the pastoralists would immediately apply to come under the Act. There was then no provision by which they could come under it in one year in two years or 10 years. The Bill provided for extending the leases to 1948, but after the supposed conference of the different bodies, the two years' term was altered by reducing it to one year. The hon. member said the squatters were going to flock to come under the new Act. The Premier was a little lacking in the information which he supplied to the House when he did not state how many pastoralists, and the area they held, had already applied to come under the Act.

The Premier: I gave it.

Mr. MUNSIE: I listened to the hon. member and it has slipped my memory if he gave the information.

The Premier: I did not give the individual acres but I gave the area applied for.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is unfortunate for us in this way. Under the new arrangement we have not yet got the Premier's speech in "Hansard" as it was only delivered last week and we do not get the "Hansard" until to-morrow. The member for Northam also stated in his speech to-night that he believed the House had done the pastoralists an injustice when they passed the 1917 Act inasmuch as they should not have limited the time but should have allowed them to hold their present holdings until 1928. I want to say personally I believe we did do an injustice but not to the pastoralists. It was done to the State. There is not the slightest doubt about that. For years in this State there has been an agitation for something to be done to reduce the term of the pastoral leases in the North-West, the enormous areas they hold, and then a Bill is introduced without notification to the public that extends the leases for another 20 years; and then we have another Bill introduced, amending that Act, allowing those who have got over a million acres the right to extend the time to come under the new Act until 12 months after the

war. And as has been stated by the hon. member in this House and by an hon. member in another place who moved a motion there, that the squatters would pay double rent. I want to disabuse the minds of members that the squatters are paying anything extra. They are not paying twopence extra. All that is being done is to extend the time from the 28th of this month for them to come under the Bill—extending the time to 12 months after the declaration of peace, without one penny piece extra being obtained by the State. Because if the lessees do come in by the 28th, they have to pay double rent. The only penalty they are paying, if it is a penalty, is that they are paying double rent if they keep above the million acres.

The Premier: If they do not come in they pay double rent.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope and trust the majority of members in this House will disallow the provision so that the lessees will be compelled to remain under the old Act and they have got until 1928. Instead of having 19 or 20 squatters in the North-West, then we shall have 500. So far as those who went up North in the early days and did the pioneering work are concerned, I want to be absolutely fair to them. I do not care who the Government were, I do not believe we can pick out a set of men anywhere in Australia who would not give the original holders the right of renewing any portion of their present holdings at the end of 1928; I would give those men that right. But I object to them having to the detriment of the State the holdings which they have to-day. In some portions of the North-West a million acres is not enough, but in many cases a million acres is far too much. If ever we wish to get population, we do not want anyone to hold up a million acres for pastoral purposes. Now I want to say a word to the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley). He was not speaking long but when he rose I took exception to the hon. member's remarks. He said that members on this side concurred with the Act when it went through last year.

Hon. P. Collier: That is his usual recklessness.

Mr. MUNSIE: Unfortunately for the hon. member we have "Hansard." I want to say that not only were the members on this side opposed to the Bill, but no member in the House or outside made as vindictive a statement against the Bill as the member for Leonora did. I intend to read portions of his speech. I am sorry he is not in the Chamber so that I might refresh his memory and see what explanation he can give later on. After speaking a little time the hon. member went on as follows:—

I will fight this Bill through the Committee stage, line by line and clause by clause, until the Government is forced to leave the matter over until after recess, and then between June and November—

Mr. Thomson: You will have the same trouble over again.

Mr. Foley: After the election the House may not have the trouble of listening to some of us. The measure should be dropped and if it is not dropped—

The Premier: It is not going to be dropped.

Mr. Foley: Then the Premier can take it from me that every line and clause will be fought, and he will be here a little longer even than next week discussing this Bill. Every member on the opposition side is anxious that this session shall be closed. They are sincere, and not one of them is more sincere to-day than the Premier was last week in his endeavour to get into recess. We wish to help him. We were told a little while ago that a broad national patriotic spirit was going to permeate this House. This Bill, the most contentious that a Liberal Government could bring into this Chamber, where the pronounced policy of the Labour party has been known for years on this question, shows that the Government are not sincere in their expressed desire to help the nation in this present time of stress.

A little later on the hon. member continued—

This Bill cannot help the nation; it cannot help the State or the Empire, and it cannot do anything except to bring out the bitterest of party spirit and spleen.

Mr. Butcher: It is not a party measure.

Mr. Foley: I contend it is a party measure.

Mr. Butcher: You will make it a party measure.

Mr. Foley: Does the hon. member think a man is going to lie down and allow others to walk over him when the best of his principles are being attacked?

Mr. Nairn: What are the principles?

Mr. Foley: There is leasehold against freehold, and a blank cheque is being given to the Minister, which is a very big principle.

Mr. Thomson: Has he not already got it?

Mr. Foley: The Bill provides that the Government may do these things.

Mr. Underwood: The Minister absolutely fixes the price, not Parliament.

Mr. Foley: He has the opportunity of doing so.

Mr. Underwood: He has to do it under the Bill.

Mr. Foley: The only clause in the Bill which does not say that the Governor may do this or that is in connection with pastoral leases. If the Government had been sincere in their desire to do only those things which were going to assist the country from a national standpoint, they would not have introduced it, and, having fanned into flame that which it was intended should lie dormant, namely, our principles, which I contend we were willing to sink, the Liberal party must expect this opposition if they press the Bill forward.

The hon. member went on a great deal further than that. Just now the Attorney General interjected that this was prior to the conference being held. I admit that the statements made by the member for Leonora, which I have just read, were made prior to that conference. That is why I take exception to the hon. member stating that members on this side agreed to the Bill.

The Attorney General: But you did all agree afterwards.

Mr. Munsie: We did nothing of the kind.

Hon. P. Collier: We had all tried to defeat the Bill.

Mr. MUNSIE: Let me tell hon. members what did happen. The first intimation I got was this: when coming through the lobby I saw half a dozen members in the Assistant Clerk's room. The member for Leonora beckoned to me, and I went in. There were in the room the member for Leonora (Mr. Foley), the member for Pilbarra (Hon. R. H. Underwood), and the then member for Guildford (Mr. W. D. Johnson), together with the Attorney General and some others. I have forgotten who those others were. I entered the room, but on discovering what was being discussed I walked out again. After that stage the members on this side were never consulted. We were not even told by Mr. Foley, Mr. Johnson, or Mr. Underwood what was being done.

The Attorney General: Those hon. members left the committee room to go and consult with their party, whilst I left to consult with my party. We all met again afterwards and said that our leaders were agreeable.

Mr. MUNSIE: As a matter of fact, when the Bill again came before the House, the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), the late member for Guildford (Mr. W. D. Johnson), and myself held up the Bill for three hours opposing one clause.

Mr. Troy: I helped in that myself.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, but on another clause. Members on this side opposed it right through. Not one of us agreed to it, even as amended.

The Attorney General: The speech of the member for Pilbarra laid the foundation for a compromise.

Mr. MUNSIE: I admit that. The hon. member said he had got one concession, which I admit he did get. I give the conference credit for improving the Bill, inasmuch as when the Bill was introduced it did not provide for a board of reappraisement.

The Attorney General: And they altered the acreage.

Mr. MUNSIE: But even then the Bill still provided for two million acres, the pastoralist to hold a million, and his wife another million. The member for North-East Fremantle moved to reduce that to one million, and the amendment was carried. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) to-night again urged the necessity for passing the Bill, giving as a reason that the new stocking provisions of the Act of 1917 were sufficient warrant for the passing of that measure. I remember the hon. member making that statement when the House was discussing the Bill last year, and I also remember several questions being asked as to what quantity of stock was then held on the leases. The hon. member did not supply us with that information, but merely repeated the information contained in the Bill as to what stock the Bill would compel the pastoralists to hold. When, later, we got the returns from the stock department, we discovered that the leases were already carrying

eight per cent. more stock than prescribed in the Bill. Where, then, is the logic of the hon. member's contention that the stocking provisions of the Act of 1917 constitute sufficient justification for passing the Bill? I hope the House will not agree to the second reading of the Bill, if only for the reason that it will compel the leaseholders either to apply before the 28th of this month to come under the Act, or to go on under their old conditions till 1928. I believe that more than two-thirds of the pastoralists would prefer to go on under the old conditions till 1928. That would give hon. members an opportunity of dealing more justly by all concerned, by the pastoralists and by the people of Western Australia, when the leases fall due.

Mr. JONES (Fremantle) [10.25]: In the interests not only of the State to-day, but also of posterity, I consider members have no alternative to opposing the Bill. When the previous Bill passed, under, I believe, the same bludgeoning method as the Government have introduced to-day by the suspension of the Standing Orders, it became a matter of speculation to many as to whether the idea of the Government was to establish a landed aristocracy in Western Australia. I must confess that in listening to the speeches of the hon. members for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) and for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale), I felt my heart bleed for the sufferings of the poor, afflicted squatters. When I consider those poor men out there without the means to afford a plug of dark Derby tobacco, I feel that perhaps after all they are entitled to some little consideration from hon. members. Certainly the information which the member for Roebourne gave us has been of great advantage to me in my study of economics. I had always considered that in the development of a large estate, or any large enterprise, a certain amount of labour was necessary. But the member for Roebourne informed the House that the success of the pastoralists of Western Australia has been due solely to the wondrous efforts they have made by the strength of their muscles and the sweat of their brows. I have put in a little time amongst those poor, afflicted squatters who are unable to afford a smoke. I have had the privilege, which I wish the member for Roebourne had shared with me, of carrying my swag through the whole of his electorate and through the electorate of the member for Gascoyne. I have seen a little of the affliction of those poor, hard-up squatters who cannot afford smokes, and I must say that I have never yet observed one of them in a state of violent perspiration.

Mr. Teesdale: You went up there too late. You should have been there thirty years ago.

Mr. JONES: No doubt the early struggles of those men deserved a large measure of success. But to-day the very members who may be regarded as the apostles of intense culture, of banana growing in the North-West, advocate that the beautiful river flats of the North-West should still be held in perpetual lease until 1928, with the fervent hope that a Liberal Government will then be in power to grant a further extension.

The Premier: Those leases can be resumed at any time.

Mr. JONES: I am certain that no hon. member would be a party to putting such an infliction upon the hard-up squatters. I suggest that the shameful way in which the first Land Act Amendment Bill was put through the House, the shameful way in which posterity was robbed of a large proportion of the lands of the State, does not reflect very much credit upon the Administration in power when the Bill of 1917 was passed. It is proposed to alienate—the leasehold country it is true—practically the whole of the north-west of the State. It is true that what were feared at one time, namely, the freezing works of the American Meat Trust have not, up to the present, been frightened off the soil of Western Australia, but they have plenty of time between now and 1928 to get their octopus tentacles tighter and firmer upon Western Australia. A rather important factor in the development of our pastoral lands appears to have been overlooked. In our careful consideration for the sufferings and the poverty of our squatters, we have forgotten, and the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) forgot this also, that a certain amount of labour power is necessary in the development of these vast assets in their possession. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) knows, as I know, that one of the principal lessors for whom he is so pathetically pleading, owns about 100 miles of an exceptionally fertile river flat.

Mr. Angelo: It is well up the river.

Mr. JONES: I admit that, but the hon. member will agree with me that this squatter is so exceptionally and favourably situated that it has not been necessary for him to spend more than, say, half a million pounds in sinking for water along the river. In point of fact, a few feet of sinking will provide all the water necessary for the 100,000 sheep he manages to run on his station. The point has been emphasised by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) that it is a hard matter to discover any white man working on most of these stations.

Mr. Angelo: You cannot say that of the Gascoyne.

Mr. JONES: I have carried my swag whilst looking for work on these stations. I have seen the Malay and the Chinese, and representatives of the other yellow races on these stations. One gentleman said, when he visited another station on the Gascoyne—

When I got to Doorawarra.

I was filled with pain and horror,

For I met the Munro doctrine face to face.

May the Lord enlarge the liver

Of this squatter on the river,

For the light of Asia's shining o'er the place.

The right to shine seems to be disseminated through these great pastoral leases. No doubt many white men could be found to develop this country. Members will surely agree with me that at certain times of the year white men are necessary on these stations. During shearing time since black

men cannot shear and Chinamen are difficult to obtain, the squatter is forced to employ white men. Although in 1912 a Shearing Hut Accommodation Act was passed, in order that the white men who went up to help to create the wealth with which the squatter could buy his tobacco, and in order that the shearers might be provided with shelter and accommodation, which is little better than that which one would give to a dog, I have yet to learn that any effort has been made to administer that Act. It is too much trouble for these poor men, with whom I have the greatest sympathy, to provide a little lint or boracic acid with which to dress the cuts or injuries sustained by the shearers who are getting the wool off their sheep. When we consider that it is proposed to again amend this Act, to introduce clauses which will still further strengthen the hands of this small squatting population, it behoves us to be very careful what we do. The amending Act was introduced hurriedly before members of this Assembly. It was bludgeoned through the House, for what reason no one knew. Now that it is placed on the statute-book the Government have begun to discover little discrepancies which cause it to work not as smoothly as they would like it to do for the benefit of their squatter friends. The Government have now come along with what is probably the first of a long string of amending Bills, which will help to oil the machinery and make the lives of these people a little smoother. I trust that hon. members will not accept the amendment. We cannot afford to do anything which will countenance the giving away of the rights of posterity. We cannot afford to countenance the extension of the Act till 1948. To prevent this is a duty we owe to ourselves and to posterity. We are establishing the most dangerous of all precedents, alienating the land which should belong to our children. In view of what we have heard, particularly from the member for Gascoyne, as to the fertility of this marvellous arcadia which lies between the Gascoyne and the Ashburton, I am satisfied that this House should not support the amending Bill, especially when it gives away this beautiful land for another 30 years into the hands of the squatting community of the State.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [10.38]: There are one or two matters with which I would like the Minister to deal in the course of his reply. In speaking on the amending Bill the Premier told the House that the number of resumptions applied for on that date was 76, and that the pastoral leases in the State up to June, 1917, not including the South-West division, represented in round figures 182 million acres. We find that 76 squatters—

The Premier: Not 76.

Mr. GREEN: The Premier can question my figures in his reply.

The Premier: You are quite right, 76.

Mr. GREEN: We find that 76 squatters have applied for 11 million acres, in round figures, out of a total of 182 million acres. The presumption is that the squatters themselves were not ripe for the amendment which was passed last year. That being so,

I see no necessity for passing this amending Bill. Only eight days remain during which squatters can apply to come under the amendment Act of last year. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the squatters would have made application prior to this time if they had intended to come under the amendment Act. For the life of me I am unable to follow several members on the other side in their expressions of solicitude for the oppressed and hard-working squatter, who, in some instances, has had to go without tobacco in order to overcome the difficulties of making a hard living.

Mr. Teesdale: Nobody has said that.

Mr. GREEN: Oh, yes; and no one more so than the hon. member interjecting, who painted a pathetic picture of the position of the squatters in his electorate.

Mr. Jones: He said the squatters' daughters had to live in tin huts.

Mr. Teesdale: I never said such a thing, and the member for Fremantle knows it.

Mr. GREEN: I recollect the member for Roebourne saying something very like that. No one in this Chamber has been a greater friend, or a truer advocate, or a more ardent supporter of the squatter than that hon. member, who has given moving expositions of the squatter's woes.

Mr. Teesdale: The squatter worked like a slave when he first went north, 30 years ago. That is when those stations were made.

Mr. GREEN: Probably, Providence and the rest of the community had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Jones: And neither had the niggers.

Mr. GREEN: But the squatter's position at the present day, while he may regard himself as hard up against it, is not what members on this side of the House would consider precarious. Taking the last returns of the Commissioner of Taxation, I find that for the year 1914 10,117 salary and wage earners of this State—that is, those eligible to pay income tax—paid on an average income of £86. For the same year the doctors paid on an average income of £528. The lawyers were slightly better, with an average of £615 10s. But these oppressed pioneers, these fellows who have borne the heat and burden of the day, these fellows upon whose behalf we have heard such pathetic appeals from hon. members opposite, had to struggle along on an average assessment of £1,175. I consider that whilst hon. members opposite have made out a good case for the squatter, whilst we have heard that these gentlemen averaging £1,175 per annum for taxation purposes—and we do not know what exemptions they have been granted—

Mr. Angelo: One of them is spending £10,000 a year on a hospital in London.

Mr. GREEN: One of them is spending £10,000 a year on a hospital in London, and another one is not even able to buy a smoke. What a vast difference in conditions! I thought that London presented the utmost extremes of wealth and want—the dweller in a West end palace on the one hand, and the slum dweller of the East end on the other. But in the electorate of the member for Gas-

coyne (Mr. Angelo)—an electorate which distinguished itself among all the electorates of Western Australia by asking for an increase in the number of hotels, thus indicating, through the desire for more drink, that poverty exists there—exhibits even more widely separated extremes. On the one hand we have the humble squatter-toiler unable to supply himself with tobacco—

Mr. Angelo: That was 30 years ago.

Mr. GREEN: The tobacco that even Billy the blackfellow of to-day enjoys on most occasions—a smoke of "Starlight" or of "Two Seas"—while his fellow-squatter is spending £10,000 per annum on a hospital in the Old Country. I know of no other occupation in this country or elsewhere which will allow a man in the space of a short lifetime to rise from the depths of poverty that prevents him from not being able to have a smoke, to the heights of spending £10,000 per annum on a hospital.

Mr. Angelo: Come up North and start yourself.

Mr. GREEN: The position as disclosed by the income tax returns is that these gentlemen are on a particularly good wicket. They are in a better position than are any professional men in this State, as a class.

Mr. Angelo: The business is open to you.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member wants to send me away into the backblocks, to get me out among the wild blacks. But I decline to go. My present desire is to see that these gentlemen who have amassed huge fortunes, and are in a better position than any professional gentlemen in this State, shall not obtain undue advantages from this Chamber at this particular time. I have pleasure in opposing the motion.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore—in reply) [10.47]: The last speaker stated that he intended to ask me certain questions, but he really asked me only one—was it reasonable to suppose that these lessees would not have come in before now, if they had intended to take advantage of the Amendment Act? I think it is only reasonable to suppose that they would not come in until the last moment, seeing that the Act allows them until the 28th March of this year to come under it, and that when they apply to come under the Act they have to pay double rent. Is it likely that anyone who has this special privilege extended to him, subject to payment of double rent, would be likely to ask to be allowed to pay double rent until the time limit for applying for the benefit is reached?

Mr. Green: They would not pay before that date if they applied before that date.

The PREMIER: Hon. members when asked to pay a tax do not rush in and pay it directly it is due.

Mr. Green: These squatters would not pay double rent before the 28th March even if they applied now.

The PREMIER: Yes; they would have to pay immediately on application. But the hon.

member's figures are quite right, and I apologise for having disputed them in the first instance. There were 76 applications for about 11 million acres.

Mr. Green: Which is one-seventeenth of the whole.

The PREMIER: About that. The area was stated as approximately 182 million acres. I think it is only reasonable to believe that these lessees would not come under the Act until the last moment. I believe that a great many of those who hold under one million acres will now come under the Act; I believe they are only waiting till the last week to bring their leases under the amendment Act.

Mr. Green: Do you think they have held back anticipating this amending Bill?

The PREMIER: No; I do not think so. The amending Bill would be of no service whatever to those who own less than a million acres and who do not apply before the 28th of this month. The Bill will assist these lessees but double rent must be paid. But it has been pointed out that a number of people hold more than one million acres, and that these people have been unable, owing to financial considerations and also owing to the war, to dispose of their additional areas. Therefore they asked for the extended time, but the Government considered that if the extended time were granted the lessees should pay double rent forthwith, and moreover that when their land became appraised later on they should have no refund made to them should the appraisal bring the value of the rental below what they had been paying during that period. I consider that if those people who had a million acres were allowed to have this privilege, it should be allowed to all leaseholders. There may be some who through neglect or want of knowledge had not brought their leases under the Act before the 28th March of this year, and it was only right that those people should be given the same privilege as those who owned a million acres. There is a good deal of difference of opinion with regard to allowing lessees to hold such large areas of country, but there is a doubt as to whether, if these leases were cut up, they would carry a larger number of sheep, though they might carry more families. It is not possible to improve this country by intense culture as can be done with agricultural land. If some of the holdings in the agricultural areas were cut up and thoroughly improved they would carry a lot more stock and produce a great deal more, but it is not possible to improve pastoral land by cultivation, though the carrying capacity of it might be increased by fencing and obtaining water. Moreover, all these pastoral areas are subject to droughts and at any time the stock may be lost in consequence. It is not possible to grow hay to cut into chaff for the benefit of the sheep in the dry seasons except, as the member for Mt. Magnet will know, in the neighbourhood of Mullewa.

Mr. Troy: South of Yalgoo they produce the best chaff in the country.

The PREMIER: In certain seasons, but not in every season. But north of the railway system in those parts they cannot produce

chaff, and it is in those parts where the greater number of pastoral holdings are. The Bill does not grant any new privileges, neither does it give any fresh powers; it is simply proposed to extend the same privilege which the House granted last session. The matter was dealt with last session even without a division, and there was hardly any discussion. I know from the files in the Lands Department that the Labour Government desired to show reasonableness and justice in extending these leases, or at any rate putting the leaseholders in the position of knowing exactly how they would stand after 1928. The lessees, for several years past, have been asking that their position after 1928 might be defined; no leaseholder would spend money on improvements if he knew that the property was to be taken from him. The leaseholders approached Mr. Bath when that gentleman was Minister for Lands, and Mr. Bath submitted the matter to Cabinet when it was agreed that something should be done for the lessees. I suppose that more pressing matters had to be dealt with and the subject was held over, and it was only last session when it came before Parliament. It is in the interests of the country that this privilege—I call it such—should be granted. The country will not suffer by it and we shall be extending to a large and worthy body of men who are doing good, an indulgence, I think I may call it, to which they are entitled.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2, Extension of time for applications under Subsection 4 of Section 30 of Act No. 19 of 1917:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Will the Premier explain the meaning of Subclause 2 which reads—

The fifth paragraph of the said subsection 4 shall not apply so far as it is thereby provided that rent paid in excess of that reserved by an original lease is repayable if a lessee declares his refusal of a new lease at the rent to be thereby reserved.

This really applies to the preceding paragraph of Subsection 4, that is to say, the fourth paragraph of the subsection instead of the fifth. The fourth paragraph really deals with the matter which Subclause 2 purports to deal with. He shall have the right to a refund of the excess rents he may have paid if he does not accept the new lease. The subclause does not seem to cover the ground it is intended to cover.

The PREMIER: If the lease is refused under the present Act the lessee shall retain the original lease, and the application for a new lease shall be annulled, and any additional rent paid by the lessee shall be repaid on demand. We give them the option. If they do not take advantage of the privileges conferred by the Bill they shall not be entitled to any refund.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But this says, "The fifth paragraph." I think it should be the fourth paragraph.

The Attorney General: It is the fifth paragraph of Subsection 4.

The Premier: That is so. I have the Act before me.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 11.5 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 21st March, 1918.

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

[For "Question on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced and read a first time.

BILL—GENERAL LOAN AND INSCRIBED STOCK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to amend the provisions of the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act of 1910 regarding the rate of interest which may be paid on loans raised under that Act. The State gives three classes of security for its loans. First of all there are the Treasury bills, the currency of which is limited to five years and which, according to the amending Act of 1916, may be issued up to the amount of any loan authorisation granted by Parliament and at such rate of interest as may be determined upon by the Colonial Treasurer.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: That is during war time.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is in regard to Treasury Bills: There are Bonds issued under the Treasury Bonds Deficiency Act passed in 1916. Under this Act the Treasurer may issue bonds with a currency not exceeding 30 years at a rate of interest not exceeding six per cent. and an amount not

exceeding that specifically authorised by Parliament under the Treasury Bonds Deficiency Act. The third class is the security of the loans under the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act of 1910, which this Bill proposes to amend. Under that Act the Treasurer may issue inscribed stock domiciled in London, local inscribed stock domiciled in Australia, and debentures without domicile. The currency of any of these stocks may be determined at the time of issue. The rate of interest fixed under the original Act was four per cent., and this was increased to five per cent. by the Act passed in 1915. The purpose of the present Bill is to alter the rate of interest, prescribed in the original Act at four per cent. and amended by the Act of 1915 to five per cent., to six and a half per cent. if it is necessary to pay that amount of interest. The immediate necessity for this arises from the fact that in 1907 a loan of £250,000 was floated with a ten years' currency. About £120,000 of this was redeemed by debentures at five per cent. and the remaining £130,000 will be renewed at some higher rate. It is not possible to renew the amount at the rate of five per cent., and it is not permissible to issue Treasury bills for this purpose because Treasury bills do not carry any sinking fund. In order to observe the continuity of the sinking fund it is desirable that this new stock should be issued under the General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act. Since it is impossible to raise money under that Act as the rate of interest is limited, this Bill proposes to increase the interest rate to 6½ per cent., instead of four per cent. as it was originally or five per cent. as it was fixed in 1915. This is the entire object of the Bill. I move—

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

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.38]: In one sense this may be considered a Committee Bill, and therefore one might reasonably be asked, possibly, to postpone all comment or criticism until the Committee stage, but in another sense it opens up the whole financial position of the country. I hope hon. members will not be alarmed, for I am not going to embrace that great subject at present, but as I have taken the responsibility on more than one occasion when these financial measures have come before us, of making a protest—that is all I am able to do—against the methods of the Colonial Treasurer, I feel I must make some observations. It would seem that the susceptibilities of Ministers in this House are so tender, and the methods of defence are so extraordinary, that possibly it is better to leave them alone altogether. It will be within your recollection, Sir, that a few remarks and comments that I made on a similar matter were received in a very curious spirit, and the Honorary Minister defended himself by abandoning his colleagues, quite a novel method of Parliamentary Government as we have hitherto known it. So anxious am I to avoid any personal wrangling and to avoid hurting the susceptibilities of the tenderest Minister, that on this occasion he, and possibly his colleague, can hardly be surprised if I practically ignore them. My remarks are