

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 12th December, 1935.

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

QUESTION—MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What amount of Development and Migration Scheme money was spent in the construction of—(a) the Norseman-Salmon Gums railway; (b) main and feeder roads between Norseman and Esperance; (c) the Macpherson Rocks and other water supplies in the localities named? 2, Was any of the Development and Migration Scheme money used for the development of the agricultural areas north of Dowak; if so, what was the amount? 3, Was any of the Development and Migration Scheme fund used for the development of the agricultural areas south of Dowak; if so, what was the amount?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) £229,154; (b) Nil; (c) £65,348. 2, Yes. Water Supplies £46,828. 3, Yes. Water supplies £18,520.

QUESTION—MEAT INSPECTION REGULATIONS.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: Will the Minister give an assurance that during the Parliamentary recess no amendment will be made to the regulations affecting the handling of meat carcasses at metropolitan sale rooms?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The Food Standards Advisory Committee has already recommended a further amendment

to the Food and Drug Regulations, which now awaits Executive Council approval. The amendment takes into account the fact that the bulk of the criticism offered previously to the regulations was that it would prevent dairy farmers from disposing of the carcasses of surplus calves. The amendment provides for the retention of the Perth and Fremantle meat inspection depots, but only in respect of carcasses of calves of a dressed weight of 125 lbs. or under. The regulation will, if it is approved by Executive Council, be gazetted and copies laid upon the Tables of the Houses, as required by law.

WHEATGROWERS, FEDERAL ASSISTANCE—SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes, the time for bringing up the select committee's report was extended until Tuesday, the 17th December.

BILL—BULK HANDLING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.35]: This Bill reached the House at a late hour last night, when the second reading was promptly moved by the Chief Secretary. Since then I have been making investigations into it. The Bill which will have a far-reaching effect, is a very difficult measure. In the last few days of Parliament it is going to be a very irksome job to make what should be a good workable measure from the standpoint of the Government, the growers and those who are responsible for bulk handling. Whilst, in common with other members, I should like to see the session close, for it has been dragging somewhat and has been a difficult session from many points of view, we as representatives of the electors should not sacrifice any measure for the sake of time, because we still have a few days left before the intervention of the holidays. If we are going to make this a workable measure it will take up a considerable amount of time, not only in the House itself, but in studying the Bill, finding out what is necessary in the way of amendments to some clauses, or agreeing to others. As laymen we are obliged to seek

for information on bulk handling from the experts. That takes time. A lot of money is invested in bulk handling. The question of handling wheat in bulk has been a source of much active propaganda for the last 25 years. Prior to that a large number of growers were constantly agitating for the inauguration of bulk handling. During the last 25 years a little band, some of whom are still in the throes of the business, worked very hard and are still working hard to bring bulk handling to fruition. Many schemes have been put before Government departments, the people, and Parliament. Royal Commissions, select committees and departmental committees galore have been appointed to inquire into the subject at huge expense. Some people associated with it have suffered politically because of it. A Bill was brought to this Chamber in 1918. It was rather unfortunate that it was defeated by one vote. The Bill provided for the orthodox system of bulk storage, and the State had a start in the way of a free grant from the Federal Government of £364,000. This was meant for the storage of wheat in bulk because of the war, and the probable necessity for storing it for a couple of seasons. There has been a lot of trouble since. One particular association evolved a scheme for the bulk storage of wheat, a scheme that has proved much more successful than I anticipated at the commencement of operations. That concern operated for a brief period. Then a company representing the growers came into being, and this company has been very successful in bulk handling. The head of it is a gentleman who for 25 years has worked hard to establish the system. I refer to Mr. A. J. Monger. The association at that time was known as the Farmers and Settlers' Association. It now goes by a different title. Representatives of the Country Party, including myself, were connected with the association, which was brought into being mainly because of the bulk handling question. At last we met with success. I cannot help being struck, on reading the Bill, by the tremendous difficulties that will have to be confronted by those who will have to do with bulk handling. Their task will be a tremendous one. Why it should be so I do not know. I have yet to hear any serious complaints concerning the handling of wheat in bulk in this State, notwithstanding that we have adopted a system that is new

to the world. No serious complaint has been made.

Hon. H. V. Piessie: Not from the buying merchants and shippers.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Nor by the growers, about whom I am chiefly concerned. I am rather grieved to find that during the past season, when there was an opportunity to extend the bulk handling system, the Government refused to grant any more sites so that that might be done. Perhaps I am the more sore about it because at present I have to pay for the cartage of my bulk wheat for seven miles, notwithstanding that I adjoin a siding at which the Government have declined to grant a site for the provision of bulk storage facilities.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: But it pays you better to cart the seven miles.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, because I am saving 6d. a bag irrespective of labour costs.

Hon. J. Cornell: In the South Province some settlers have to cart their wheat a hundred miles.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They receive the carting subsidy. The important stage for this Bill is in Committee. We who are representatives of the taxpayers have a tremendous task before us. We have the voluminous report of the Royal Commission, to which respect must be paid. I cannot look upon the Bill as a workable measure in its present state. It will have to be amended. Much time will be required to be spent upon it to make it workable. We must not make things difficult for any of the parties concerned. The Government will have not a penny invested in the business until terminal silos are erected. Those who are concerned in the operations have invested in the scheme about £150,000, either borrowed or belonging to the growers. That is a point we must keep in mind when dealing with the Bill. If we place on the statute book an Act that will make it impossible for Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. to operate, we shall really injure those people who have found the money for the establishment of a system of bulk storage of wheat and we will also hamper the interests of the wheatgrowers. The growers themselves have nothing but happy recollections of the system from the date of its introduction, apart from those who, like myself, have not been able to take advantage of the operations. I understand that the Government secured the services of Mr. Harris, a gentle-

man from New South Wales, to assist in framing the Bill. It might be quite all right to secure the services of such a gentleman if the bulk handling system in New South Wales were in any way comparable with the system in Western Australia; but it is by no means comparable.

Hon. J. Cornell: What is the difference?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In New South Wales the orthodox system was installed and it has proved a failure from every standpoint. It was over-capitalised from the start, has been badly worked and ineffectively managed. At any time in that State, farmers' wagons may be seen waiting all night to deliver their wheat. Farmers have to leave their holdings in order to be at the sidings early in the morning so that they may have a chance to get rid of their wheat.

Hon. J. Cornell: All those difficulties have been overcome now.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Certainly not.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, not by any means. The New South Wales system is not comparable with ours in any sense of the word. I should imagine that the best advisers for the Government would have been those who were connected with the bulk handling system in our own State. Were the Government guided in any way by those who have been associated with bulk handling here? It does not appear so. I presume they had the assistance of the Director of Agriculture, Mr. Sutton, but what does he know about bulk handling? He knows no more about it than I do. The Director of Agriculture is one of the finest wheat experts in the world, but he is not an expert in bulk handling. How could he be? He has had no experience. I warn members that it will take a considerable time to mould the Bill so as to make it workable from every standpoint.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The long list of amendments will take some time to consider.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Of course; a lot of time will have to be spent on them. The Bill has been hurried on and, as far as my memory serves me, the amendments that have been framed are not quite in order yet. I regret that the Chief Secretary may have been put to inconvenience, but it is not the fault of members, because they have not had sufficient time in which to consider the amendments they desire to move. If the Assembly had sat a few hours earlier yester-

day, we might have had more time. The other place did not sit yesterday until 7.30 p.m. and we received the Bill at a late hour. We had to frame our amendments hurriedly and the Clerk Assistant was working until a very late hour so that those amendments might be placed on the Notice Paper. On looking over them this morning, members found that many will have to be altered. No matter how keen we may be to end the session, we must do justice to this important measure and devote the necessary time so that the Bill and the amendments may be given adequate consideration.

Hon. J. Cornell: There is nothing to prevent our doing that.

The Chief Secretary: There will be no obstacle placed in the way so far as I know.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Chief Secretary has been generous, and he agrees that we should continue our deliberations next week. Naturally members have received the usual courtesy from the Leader of the House, and I appreciate his attitude. On the other hand, members themselves will recognise the wisdom of devoting adequate time to provisions of the Bill and more particularly to the Second Schedule. I do not know what those associated with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. think of it, but as I read the schedule, my experience as an advocate of bulk handling over a period of years suggests that it will be impossible for the company to operate in the light of such provisions. Then again, I do not know how that schedule can be amended to obviate that state of affairs, unless we reject it altogether. The Bill is a most difficult one and care and time—the Chief Secretary is agreeable to this—are necessary if we are to make it a workable measure. I support the second reading of the Bill with a view to endeavouring to secure amendments to it during the Committee stage.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [4.50]: I have listened carefully to Mr. Baxter and I agree with him that we should not rush this most important Bill through its various stages. At this period of the session our natural desires make us anxious to return to our homes and are apt to lead us to rushing business through.

Hon. J. Cornell: Some members get rid of their pet Bills and then leave.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The hon. member cannot accuse me of that.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: And he is not right.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The Bill is so important to the wheatgrowers that I would be perfectly satisfied to come back after the Christmas holidays in order to deal with it properly. We received the Bill from the Assembly at a late hour last night.

Hon. J. Cornell: We rose fairly early last night.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: But it was very late when some of us went to bed. When moving the second reading of the Bill, the Chief Secretary said he would like members to place their amendments on the Notice Paper so that he might have an opportunity to consider them.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Electoral Bill was not in it with this one.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Of course not, and we have not the hon. member's support. Members who are connected with farming pursuits decided to place the amendments that they regarded as necessary on the Notice Paper for to-day, and we went into the matter last night so as to give the Chief Secretary a chance to consider our proposals to-day. The Bill is really one for experts to deal with, and we must have expert advice to guide us. Although I have been associated practically all my life with wheat handling and wheat farming, I found it almost impossible when going through the Bill this morning to understand the effect of some of the clauses. In another place members were told that the Bill was not workable and we have had it stated on behalf of Bulk Handling Ltd. that if the Bill is passed in its entirety, it will be impossible for them to carry on because of its effect upon certain financial arrangements that they have entered into. The farmers have been looking forward to the enactment of legislation dealing with bulk handling. I would remind the House that a few years ago a joint select committee, representative of both Houses of Parliament, gave consideration to a Bill that had been introduced with a view to establishing a system of bulk handling in this State. The members of that joint select committee had one object in view, which was to assist in securing a bulk handling scheme that would be advantageous to the wheatgrowers. As a result of their work, the scheme now being operated by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. was adopted, one member only of the committee dissenting. The Bill that was introduced then was lost and in my opinion

it was defeated because the Mitchell Government, through the then Minister for Works (Mr. Lindsay), were anxious to have an orthodox scheme. In my opinion, that was the great mistake made at that time.

Hon. J. Cornell: Your scheme is orthodox to look at.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Appearances are not everything; if they were, I would not be looking at the hon. member. The joint select committee thoroughly overhauled the scheme that was before them for consideration. We took evidence from various interests, including the Fremantle Lumpers' Union, whose secretary, Mr. Fox, M.L.A., was examined, and from Government officials including the Director of Agriculture. We went into the whole matter thoroughly and I was glad to see that the Royal Commission appointed by the present Government practically adopted the same view in their findings as did the joint select committee. The bulk handling scheme in New South Wales has cost £5,000,000. While New South Wales is a much smaller State, their population is considerably greater than that of Western Australia and their production much greater too. To complete their orthodox scheme, and to put it in perfect order, will mean the expenditure of another £3,000,000. In Western Australia the bulk handling scheme in operation can serve the whole of the State and it has been inaugurated at a cost of about £750,000 including the expenditure necessary for the erection of terminal elevators at Fremantle. Another strong point in favour of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. and the present scheme is that last year a committee of investigation from South Australia visited this State to inspect our installation. No doubt the members of that committee travelled throughout Australia and naturally inspected the New South Wales system. The committee, after considering the systems adopted elsewhere, agreed to propose a scheme for South Australia of a description similar to our installation. The control of the system in that State is to be handed over to the South Australian Co-operative Union Ltd. When reading the South Australian "Hansard" I was struck by one statement that appealed to me. I think the Government in this State would have been well advised had they adopted a similar course. The statement in the South Australian "Hansard" showed that when the scheme was proposed, the Premier of South Australia, Mr. Butler,

approached the co-operative company I have mentioned and suggested that they should frame a measure to deal with this important undertaking. I may be wrong, but I understand that the Government here have not taken into their confidence those associated with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. Surely, after rendering actual service to the growers and the State for a period of four years, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. should have been the first to be approached by the Government with a view to securing their advice. Surely people in the best position to offer such advice are those who have carried out bulk handling operations so successfully. It may be asked if they have operated successfully; I claim that they have. Mr. Baxter said that the farmers are not complaining. I go further and say that neither the wheat buyers nor the wheat shippers have made any complaint about the treatment they have received from Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. On top of that, we find the Royal Commission appointed by the Government to go into this matter have given the company a clean sheet and offered congratulations on the way in which the work was carried out. Personally, I am in a dual position. I am a producer of wheat, although not in a large way, and the district in which I am situated I suppose will not have the bulk handling system because, perhaps, it is not necessary there.

Hon. L. Craig: Why not?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Because we do not produce such a large quantity of wheat. I am talking of Katanning.

Hon. L. Craig: Not your district.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The Province I represent is another matter. In it there are such wheatgrowing centres as Corrigin, Kondinin, Borden, and the districts through from Lake Grace. These are all very heavy producers of wheat. In my opinion, it is essential for the farmers there to receive the benefit of bulk handling. Surely, if we can save them 2½d. a bushel by installing this plant at a reasonable cost, we should do so. Speaking as a miller, and I have been associated for many years with the milling business, I say definitely that I do not favour bulk handling; but I am not representing the millers only in this House. I represent also the farmers in my electorate. I realise that the introduction of bulk handling has increased the cost to the miller, because he does not now get the bags, while he has

still to pay for wheat of the same weight. I must add that our personal dealings with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. have been most satisfactory, and I have not heard of any complaints by other millers in the State concerning the service they receive from this company. The question for this House to decide is whether we shall accept the Bill or reject it. The matter is very serious and we should not rush the Bill through. We should take time to consider it. It is impossible to study the Bill and give an unbiassed opinion on it in a day. I realise, however, that the Government are desirous of assisting the farmer and consequently have brought this Bill down. Although many of their supporters are opposed to the measure, I feel the Government are to be congratulated upon having introduced it. Our duty in this Chamber is to see that we pass it as a workable measure. Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., as has been stated by Mr. Baxter, is controlled by men of vast experience in wheat handling. We have heard that those controlling the company are associated with Westralian Farmers Ltd., the Wheat Pool and other companies dealing in wheat. A common expression heard to-day when you meet some people is "Have you seen Wellington-street yet?" Wellington-street is where Westralian Farmers' office is situated. We have often heard disparaging remarks passed about the companies that are controlled in Wellington-street. Now, evidence was given before the Bulk Handling Commission as to the operations of all those companies, and it was disclosed that there was no connection between the buying agencies of that company and the Wheat Pool, and I am certain there is no connection with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. If the Bill is rejected, the company will be able to continue operations at 53 sidings, as I think they have a lease of the sidings for seven years, but the system will not be extended to assist the farmers in other parts of the State. Are the farmers at those 53 sidings to receive the benefit of 2½d. a bushel, while farmers in other large centres are languishing for a similar advantage?

Hon. J. Cornell: Is not the first essential a terminal elevator?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: No. Let me inform the hon. member that Co-operative

Bulk Handling Ltd. have never held up ships, and there have been no complaints from the shippers of wheat in that connection. In this country it is most important that we should store our wheat in the dry areas, rather than bring it down to the seaboard and store it there. I am fully aware of that, because I have myself controlled mills at Kellerberrin, Katanning and Cottesloe. We could not store our wheat right throughout the year at Cottesloe, unless at a big disadvantage. Although terminal elevators must eventually be erected by the Government in order that the scheme may be successfully carried out, if we extend the silos and receiving bins throughout Western Australia, in my opinion there will not be need for a large storage elevator.

Hon. J. Cornell: Whose job is it to put up the elevator under this Bill?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Under this Bill it is the Government's job. If the Harbour Trust are to control the terminal elevators, they might like to receive rent for them while the wheat is stored at Fremantle. It is preferable, and also cheaper, to retain the wheat in the country districts. We must eventually have terminal elevators; they have been recommended by both the parliamentary committee and the Royal Commission. They are essential if we are eventually to have effective bulk handling in Western Australia. It has been suggested that the Harbour Trust should have a representative on the board.

Member: Would you like to have a representative from Bunbury as well?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes, and from Albany.

Hon. J. Cornell: And Esperance?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: We cannot have one from Esperance, because the "Kybra" calls there and lifts the wheat. I think members will agree with me that it may be necessary for a representative of the Harbour Trust to be on the board, because, when all is said and done, arrangements have to be made for shipping. At the same time, when one takes into consideration the evidence that has been given, we must be very careful as to the charges that will be made to the scheme when the terminal elevators are installed. I intend moving later on, in connection with Clause 28, which deals

with the board, that there should be on the board a representative of the wheat-growers, the Harbour Trust, the shippers and Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. The railways, in my opinion, are common carriers.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is so.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: They are absolutely common carriers who can be employed to take the goods from one place to another.

Hon. J. Cornell: Without the railways would the bulk handling of wheat be possible?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: It is all very well for you to talk. If I went down the street and said to Moullins, the carriers, "Take my furniture to such-and-such a place," they being common carriers, would take it. If they refused I could get someone else. I admit that we cannot get a substitute for the railways. At the same time, why should we bring the railways into the bulk handling scheme?

Hon. A. Thomson: To exploit it.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes. My transport colleague can always give me the right word. We should not have any interference whatever by the railways in the scheme. Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. in the past have had a shipping board. This board has proved very serviceable. It consists of representatives of the buying merchants, the shippers of wheat, and Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. The clause dealing with the board is, in my opinion, too arbitrary. It lays down too many conditions as to how this co-operative movement, which is owned by the farmer, shall be controlled. I think members will agree with me that eventually, when the tenure of office of those controlling Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. terminates, the scheme will be handed back to the producers of wheat in Western Australia.

Member: You are an optimist.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: All my life I have been considered an optimist.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It will be handed back, unless the Government confiscate it.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Another point I wish to bring forward is that during the past five years Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. has made a splendid name for itself among the lenders of money. The people who have advanced the company money have every confidence in the company.

Hon. T. Moore: Is it cheap money?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes, of course.

Hon. T. Moore: What interest is the company paying?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I could not tell you.

Hon. T. Moore: It is cheap money?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I know it is cheap money, because Mr. Monger and those associated with him would consider dear money to be to the detriment of the producer.

Hon. T. Moore: They are paying a very high interest rate for debentures. We know that.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: The interest rates years ago were very high, but cheap money is now available, and advantage has been taken of it. In fact, the administration of the company has been so successful that lenders are now more inclined to compete for this business. At the outset, it was the good name of the directors of the Western Australian Wheat Pool that enabled the money to be borrowed.

Hon. J. Cornell: You said just now there was no connection between these various concerns.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: If you go back over ancient history, you will find that it was never possible to start anything without capital.

Hon. J. Cornell: But you said there was no connection.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Of course there is not. There was a loan from the Pool to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., and Westralian Farmers Ltd. provided certain capital for this purpose. We know that Westralian Farmers Ltd. carried on this work before it was taken over by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. They could get cheaper money now if they wanted it, but if the conditions of this Bill are to be forced upon the company, perhaps the company will not be able to carry on, because certain trust conditions have to be performed. We have often heard it said that bulk handling represents a saving only in regard to bags. However, when normal times return, Western Australia will again be one of the largest wheat producers in Australasia. Upon that stage having been reached, we must have markets, and must be able to compete with the rest of the world. Without bulk handling and without bulk cargoes we shall be at a great disadvantage in competing with other countries. Statements have been made that in Japan bagged wheat is more valuable; but I remember that before the Parliamentary Select Committee on bulk

handling there appeared a Japanese merchant who stated in evidence that it mattered not whether wheat was bagged or in bulk, labour being so cheap in Japan that it was easy to put the grain into containers. It is not my desire, assuredly, to see men thrown out of work. I have here a special note relating to members of Parliament representing such centres as Fremantle. It is asserted that large numbers of men would lose their employment upon the installation of bulk handling, but surely something is due to farmers who have been struggling over the period of depression as our wheatgrowers have struggled during the last four or five years. Though the Fremantle lumpers have met with adversity in the way of short time and so forth, unless Western Australia remains a primary producing State those men had better leave our shores and join the crowd in New South Wales. I shall support the second reading of the Bill. A serious duty to-day rests upon members of this Chamber. The Government have sent the Bill to us in all good faith. The ideas of Ministers may be different from those held in this Chamber by men who have been concerned with the wheat business. We can amend the Bill so as to render it suitable for our growers. If only we are allowed sufficient time to give the matter its due consideration, we shall be able to effect improvements beneficial to the producers whom we so urgently wish to see restored to their former condition of prosperity. Even if the House adjourned till next Tuesday—

Hon. J. Nicholson: Why not next Monday?

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I have an appointment on Monday. An adjournment until Tuesday would afford an opportunity for fuller consideration of the measure. For my part I feel that to-day I have not sufficient information to be able to cast a reasoned vote with regard to necessary amendments. We can get information where the Government have got it—from experts. A New South Wales expert named Harris, in collaboration with Mr. Sutton, has put up many of the points in the Schedule. The men controlling bulk handling should be able to draft regulations suitable for Western Australia. I sincerely hope the Bill will be amended so as to be satisfactory to the primary producers.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.22]: Before the question is put, I wish to offer a few remarks on the Bill. To me a surprising phase of the measure is that I remember only one previous occasion when a full House was in attendance at 10 o'clock in the evening. We had a full House at a quarter to ten last evening. There must be something in the air! Formerly I looked upon bulk handling as a major question. To-day I do not take that view. Most wheatgrowers now look upon bulk handling as a minor question. The main question is how to keep the farmer on his land and growing wheat.

Hon. A. Thomson: By reducing his costs.

Hon. J. CORNELL: With the present price of wheat, a reduction of 4d. per bushel in costs will not suffice to keep our farmers on their holdings.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: It will go a long way towards it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It might go a long way with Mr. Bolton, who grows wheat as a hobby.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Do I?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Bolton has many other interests. The man looking to wheat-growing for his livelihood does not appear to take much interest in bulk handling. What he is concerned about is his liabilities.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: He has a chance under the Rural Relief Fund Act.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If half the interest now shown by members in trying to get the cocky 2d. to 4d. more per bushel had been manifested throughout this session, and throughout other sessions, to get the man on the land out of his difficulties, he would be in a different position. What chance does bulk handling represent to farmers in the South Province? To-day there are no bulk handling facilities in the South Province.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: They ought never to be there. The production is not large enough.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I understand that Mr. Piesse, through the mills with which he is associated, draws all the wheat he can from the South Province, in bags, not in bulk.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: This Bill will permit that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes. Bulk handling is fast becoming a memory, because economic and seasonal conditions absolutely force farmers off their holdings.

Hon. A. Thomson: Is it not possible for those farmers to come back, as happened in connection with men who had left the mining industry?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Eighty per cent. of the men who after eight or ten years on the land were forced off it by economic and seasonal pressure, and high rates of interest, would go down to see Dr. Bentley before returning to the land.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You are thinking only of the South Province.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Of the North Province, too. Bulk handling, even if installed in the South Province today, would not induce starved-out farmers to return to the holdings they abandoned. Nor will it so induce their progeny.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They should never have been put there to grow wheat.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Are not the farmers in Mr. Cornell's district to be put on grazing propositions?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Let the hon. member read to-day's "West Australian." To hear the arguments used, one might think that the only people in the balance were men growing wheat and in possession of bulk handling facilities, or likely to obtain them. The whole of the Western Australian community is equally bound up with bulk handling as the men who grow wheat and the company who run the bulk handling system. Once a country turns from the old system of bags to bulk handling, there is no going back. Bulk handling thus becomes a national and not a sectional responsibility.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Where will you find the money to make it a national undertaking?

Hon. J. CORNELL: In time it will be a national responsibility. With the system installed to-day, with poor prices current for produce, and not forgetting adverse seasonal conditions, it is beyond question that bulk handling will not prove the national all-round success that it might have been at some other period of our history. There is every possibility that the scheme may fall in, and it may fall in on the national exchequer and the Government. New South Wales experience is that 50 per cent. of growers will use the bulk handling system for about two years, and then go back to bags, and vice versa.

Hon. R. G. Moore: I thought you said just now they could not go back.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They could go back to bags. The object of installing bulk handling is so to constitute the scheme and so to educate the farmer that bags will be eliminated entirely. If the scheme were to fall in, it could be propped up by only one concern, namely the Government of the day. I submit that because the company were allowed by a previous Government to branch out as a more or less private co-operative concern is no reason why the scheme should be extended or should not be curtailed or properly policed. The company can only be properly policed by the Government of the day having a fair and reasonable control over it. If there were any attempt to curtail the proposed Government activities or the Government's watchdog attitude, my vote would be given against it. Bound up in this scheme is the railway system, which is the artery through which bulk handling must flow. The railway system is the property of the people of Western Australia and is of as great importance as is bulk handling; yet the railway system is subject to the control of the Legislature—

Hon. H. V. Piesse: The railway system would not be worth anything unless it had something to carry.

Hon. J. CORNELL: —and bulk handling to some extent must be subject to that same control. Mr. Piesse has said that the railway system would be no good if it had nothing to do. I venture to say there is one railway line in the State which kept the other railway lines in this State solid at a time when this State could not grow enough wheat to make as much bread as would be required in Perth; and that railway line to-day keeps the whole of the railway system solid; I refer to the eastern goldfields railway.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Of course the primary product up there has made that line.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Piesse has said that the railways are no good if they have nothing to carry, but as I say, that one railway line in this State has kept all the other railway lines in the State going when the State could not produce enough wheat to make bread. Then there is the question mentioned in the second schedule. I understand that Mr. Harris is the chairman of the Silo Board in New South Wales, and I am told that he is a very estimable officer and knows his job. For what purpose was he brought over here? Mr. Piesse has not

told us that. I understand he was not brought over here for the purpose of bulk handling.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: I understand that he was.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Piesse has said that the Bill is 90 per cent. of what was recommended by the Royal Commission and by the joint select committee, of which he was a member. Therefore, I assume that the object in bringing Mr. Harris to this State was for the purpose of considering what varieties of wheat would suit the shippers. We can leave aside the two systems of bulk handling, orthodox and unorthodox. In passing I may say that the New South Wales system looks more modern than ours, but that our unorthodox system—

Hon. A. Thomson: Is very much more practical.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I presume that Mr. Harris has come here to discuss with Mr. Sutton what wheat should be exported. That is what the second schedule is for. But the alternate systems, the orthodox and the unorthodox, have nothing to do with the class of wheat to be exported. The two most important phases of bulk handling, whoever conducts it and whatever machinery may be agreed to, is what is received into the silos and what is sent out of the country. If we send inferior wheat out of the country we can only damage the wheatgrower of the State and damage the market for Western Australia. That brings me to an incident which happened ten years ago. I was conversing with the secretary of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool at Regina, and this is the advice he offered to the Australian wheatgrower. He advised the grower never to try to grow red wheats in Australia, because our climatic conditions are not suited to the growing of red wheat, as the Canadian climate is. Then he said that we go on the market at periods of the year different from Canada, and that Europe and U.S.A. had to have Canadian hard wheat for mixing purposes, and that at the other period of the year Europe required the Australian hard white wheat for the same purposes. But he said that immediately we were to get a conglomeration of the wheat we would destroy that reputation which Australian wheat had in the markets of the world. I understand that Bulk Handling Ltd. are going to be the exporters of wheat. In my opinion the closest possible scrutiny should be exercised before allowing certain wheats

to go out of the country. Mr. Piesse, referring to the second schedule, said we ought to get other experts. There are many things about which I do not agree with Mr. Sutton, because he has been given a lot of responsibility which should not be his, but I venture to say that where wheat is concerned there is not another man in Australia the equal of Mr. Sutton.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: That is right.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In his particular line he is the best man in Australia. So what other experts could we get?

Hon. H. V. Piesse: That is not the only point in the second schedule.

Hon. J. CORNELL: No, but it is a very important point. Mr. Piesse referred to smut and said that the standard in the schedule had been fixed by Mr. Sutton and Mr. Harris.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: I do not think Mr. Sutton fixed it; he knows too much about wheat.

Hon. J. CORNELL: This Government and all Governments have recognised that if Mr. Sutton is an authority on any one thing it is on wheat, and I do not think the Government would say what wheat was to be exported until they had consulted Mr. Sutton. Another point: I should like the Chief Secretary, when replying to the debate, to give a definite assurance that the two systems of wheat handling will continue; that is to say, that where bulk handling is installed the farmer will still be able to please himself whether he sells in bulk or in bags. I want that definite assurance. Also I want to know who shall be the deciding factor should a dispute arise. As I told Mr. Piesse about a fortnight ago, there is a first-class row going on in New South Wales, in the Riverina. The two systems are supposed to operate, but the chairman of the Silo Board, Mr. Harris, has denied that he was responsible. The Silo Board has said there will be no stacking sites.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: The Silo Board has to be run by the administration.

Hon. J. CORNELL: And that means in the Riverina, as it might mean here, that where there is premium wheat the millers will put it in bags, but there will not be any trucks to load it. What I want to know is that there shall be no interference such as that with the present bagging system and the present bulk handling system. No stacking sites

means that all wheat would have to go into the silo. At a very long meeting in the Riverina it was pointed out that the silos would not take wheat until certain of it had matured.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is one of the reasons why the Commissioner of Railways should be kept off the shippers' board.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That has nothing to do with the period at which the wheat was to enter the silo. One of the best authorities on wheat in Australia, Mr. G. Drummond, a director of the Commonwealth Bank, said that most of the farmers endeavour to sell some of their wheat at the commencement of the season in order to get a little cash for current operations. If there are to be no stacking sites they will not be able to do that.

Hon. V. Hamersley: But the company would not stop a man from selling.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I want that definitely cleared up. After 16 years of the silo system in New South Wales it was thought that such a thing was not possible. In the interests of the wheatgrowers we should safeguard the position.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Particularly of premium wheat.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes. We in South Province are not likely to be affected, because we have no silos and there is no prospect of getting them. To the enthusiastic supporters of bulk handling, and more particularly to our primary producer friends, let me utter a note of warning. It is idle to think that we can make the measure fool-proof or that we can make perfect legislation of it at the first attempt. If we endeavour to do so, members might over-reach themselves, and it would not be the first occasion on which Bills have been lost between the two Houses. I hope that members will not allow their enthusiasm to run away with their better judgment, but that they will endeavour to improve the Bill, and not to insert amendments that would be incompatible with the principles of the Bill. Parliament, the Government and a great majority of the community are satisfied that a measure of bulk handling should be adopted, though admittedly the lumpers will get a kick. Therefore, in supporting the second reading, I thought it well to utter a note of warning to mem-

bers to refrain from attempting to amend the measure too much.

Personal Explanation.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I should like to make a personal explanation in reference to a remark by Mr. Cornell about Mr. Sutton. I had no intention of casting any reflection on Mr. Sutton, because I consider him to be the greatest wheat expert in Australia to-day. I would not on any account reflect upon his good name or the great work he has done in Western Australia.

Hon. J. Cornell: Of course, you might do it unwittingly.

Debate resumed.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I move—
That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and declared negatived.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Divide!

The PRESIDENT: There was only one voice in favour of the motion.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: There were two voices.

The House divided.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: May I call off the division?

Hon. C. B. Williams: With a censure for the caller.

The PRESIDENT: Has the hon. member leave to call off the division?

Leave granted.

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [5.50]: I regret that I was not granted an adjournment of the debate until to-morrow to enable me to complete the preparation of my information. As the House has seen fit to refuse an adjournment, I shall have to make my remarks, which perhaps will be in a somewhat disconnected form. I have read with considerable interest the speeches made by members in another place. I recognise that every member is considerably interested in the Bill because of its far-reaching effects, but the benefits to be derived by the farmers from bulk handling are such that it would be disastrous if the present company were not permitted to continue the good work they have begun. Much has been said about the directors of the several companies. The Royal Commission, in their report, made a

good deal of the names of gentlemen associated with what were termed closely allied organisations. The companies they represent are all more or less associated with the farming community and those gentlemen have been elected to their respective positions by the farming interests. It should not be thought that, because they have been placed in those high positions, the companies cannot be separated. The companies are closely related because of the work they are called upon to do. Bulk handling is naturally associated with the selling of wheat, and while the Bill permits Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. to handle the wheat, it gives the company a very close interest also in its distribution. That is why those men interested in all sections of wheat disposal from the farm to the world's market have been entrusted by the farmers with positions in the four different companies.

Hon. T. Moore: And a few outside ones, too.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I wish to touch on several points that have not been dealt with. I understand that the Bill is based largely on the system in New South Wales. I have had prepared for me a comparison between the system here and that in operation in New South Wales. The system here is certainly unique for the low price charged for the service. They have given me this information in detail, and I feel I should present it to the House. In New South Wales the Government have provided special rolling stock for the carriage of bulk wheat. That has not been the case in Western Australia. In this State the company had to fit ordinary rolling stock with special devices for the carriage of wheat, so that wooden trucks might be used. The company, in two years, carried 21,000,000 bushels of wheat in trucks fitted for the purpose. No special trucks have been provided by the Railway Department for the bulk handling company, which had to fit trucks at their own expense for the carriage of bulk wheat.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: All the trucks?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Most of them. In New South Wales bulk wheat is carried at the same rate as bagged wheat. In this State the railways make a charge of an extra 9d. per ton for the conveyance of bulk wheat, despite the fact that they have not had to make any special provision for special trucks.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What about the trucks the Government converted?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: They converted a few, but have not produced any special bulk wheat trucks.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: They spent quite a lot of money in converting trucks.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes, but the railways are making a special charge for that. They have not built any trucks specially for the conveyance of wheat in bulk, as has been done in New South Wales. In that State the silo administration is given the use of railway land for silo space and bulk handling purposes free of charge. That would be done because it is practically a Government institution, and there is reciprocity between the two departments. In Western Australia a rental is charged for all bin sites, and sites for bulkhead stores. In New South Wales the silo administration is given control of the stacking sites at all railway stations where bulk handling facilities are provided. The silo administrators have very often refused to allow bagged wheat to be stacked at these points except in the case of premium wheats. In Western Australia a farmer can take bagged wheat to any station, even if silos have been established there.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: And 10 per cent. of bulk wheat.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Bill proposes 10 per cent. of bulk wheat, but I am dealing with present conditions. When we have bulk facilities it is still possible for a person to bring in all his wheat in bags, and truck it away from the station, or stack it there, even if bulk handling facilities are provided. This indicates that bulk handling is not a monopoly at any station where bulk handling facilities are provided. In New South Wales the administrators have full control of the whole of the wheat that passes through stations where bulk handling facilities are provided. In this State those in control of bulk handling were refused the lease of convenient sites for the erection of bins, because these particular sites had been set aside in some cases for bagged wheat. The conditions under which we have had to work in Western Australia have been far more difficult than they have been in New South Wales. In New South Wales the system has cost

so far about £5,000,000. In this State, for a capital expenditure of £160,000 at an aggregate of 53 railway sidings, and upon 53 sets of bulk handling facilities, the company has received about 21,000,000 bushels of wheat during the past two years. The company has not had to refuse any farmer who has brought wheat in bulk to any of those sidings. In New South Wales there have been times when the farmers have been unable to get their wheat into the silos, because the silos were unable to accept it. The administrators of bulk handling there also refused to allow farmers to stack their wheat in bags at these stations, and declined to receive it in any form. Whilst the Bill before us has been based to a great extent on the New South Wales Act, the conditions in New South Wales are inferior in many respects to the local conditions, and more expensive to the producers than the system that is in existence in this State. Mr. Cornell said there was a first-class row in the Riverina district at present, largely owing to difficulties and delays attendant upon the delivery of wheat. When the silos were filled the management refused further bulk wheat, and consequently the farmers were in distress. In the case of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. there has never been any delay in respect to any consignment of wheat that has been handled in bulk by the company. I would refer to the liability of the company as set out in this Bill. It is to be liable for any wheat that is delivered by any person who may perhaps not be lawfully entitled to possession of that wheat. Although such a provision may be necessary in the case of a wheat purchaser, I do not think the provision in this Bill, that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. should be liable is altogether a fair one. It does seem to me that we are asking a good deal when we require Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. to be responsible for any illegal actions which may occur in connection with delivery of wheat. The New South Wales administration is legally freed from that liability. Here the proposal is to make those handling wheat responsible. Deletion of that provision will be asked for. I could go on to give a good deal more information. The difference between the cost of handling wheat in Western Australia and the corresponding cost in New South Wales considerable. Western Australia charges

1½d. per bushel for the handling of wheat in bulk; the New South Wales charge is 1½d. For storage of wheat to the 31st July Western Australia charges 1d. per month per bushel; New South Wales charges ½d. per week per bushel. That brings the total cost of wheat placed in the silo at any time during the season and left in storage, we will say, until the 31st July to 1½d. here as against 4½d. in New South Wales. The two systems seem to me incomparable. It is hardly fair for us to raise our costs to those of the New South Wales system, in view of the high capital cost of the New South Wales installation as compared with our own. The low cost of construction in Western Australia has produced the low prices current here for storage and handling. In New South Wales, with its charge of 4½d., there is no possibility of the scheme ever becoming the property of the owners of the wheat that passes through it. In Western Australia it is proposed, under the deed of trust, that in time the whole scheme shall become the property of its users, those who put their wheat through it. There is a toll of ½d., bringing the charge here up to 2½d. as against 4½d. in New South Wales. Of our charge of 2½d., however, ½d. is set aside for a toll and is really equivalent to capital of the farmers storing the wheat. One feels rather anxious at the New South Wales system being quoted so freely in connection with the Bill. One feels that while there may be some good points in the New South Wales scheme, it is well for us to realise what the cost of the scheme would be if we adopted it here in toto. As to conveyance of wheat, the Government Silo Department of New South Wales pay no demurrage in that connection to the Railway Department, and there is no charge in New South Wales for underloading of railway trucks. That arises from the fact that, two Government concerns being in co-operation, there is reciprocity. In Western Australia, however, Bulk Handling Ltd. have been charged demurrage whenever it has occurred, and have also been charged in respect of underloading of trucks. From that viewpoint Western Australia has been at a disadvantage. The New South Wales Minister has control of bulk handling. On the authority of that Minister, the New South Wales scheme makes losses running from £49,000 to £70,000 annually. The Western Australian taxpayer has not been called upon to pay one penny towards the Co-operative

Bulk Handling scheme. The farmers have paid the whole of their own way, whereas the New South Wales scheme has cost between £49,000 and £70,000 of the taxpayers' money every year. If we are going to change the conditions of the present system of bulk handling, it stands to reason that costs must increase. They are down now as low as it is possible to get them. Any increase in cost will naturally be an increased demand upon those supplying the wheat, because it is in the handling of the wheat that these costs are incurred. I have obtained information from a conference of the Farmers and Settlers' Association of New South Wales held some time ago. There was a good deal of argument as to the costs of bulk handling. The Minister, endeavouring to show the seriousness of the position at country silos, pointed out that during the season 149 silos received only 21½ million bushels, while the total quantity received at those stations was 30,150,000 bushels. Under these conditions the farmers have been compelled to buy bags, representing the difference between the two amounts for 8,650,000 bushels while having the bulk handling facilities. In Western Australia there has never been an occasion when bulk wheat has had to be refused. Naturally there have been improvised bins. They were subject to the elements, and the wheat was reduced in value.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And a lot of it was destroyed.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: However, the company have never had to decline acceptance of wheat.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They would have done better to decline, and thus save the wheat from being wasted.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The amount of the waste would not have been any more than the cost of bags.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: At the tea adjournment, I was referring to remarks by the Minister for Agriculture in New South Wales relative to the cost of the bulk handling system in that State and the difficulties that he recognised confronted the Commissioner there. He pointed out that at present they were losing annually from £40,000 to £70,000 and that that position could not be contemplated indefinitely. That was an indication that the losses incurred there were a matter of grave concern to the Government.

I have pointed out that in Western Australia our system resulted in a great saving to the farmers from the inception. Members will gather from my remarks that I have grave objection to the inclusion in the Bill of any of those restrictive measures that have occasioned so much concern to the Minister for Agriculture in New South Wales. I reiterate the point I made earlier that while the taxpayers of New South Wales have had to make good losses up to £70,000 per annum, the taxpayers of this State have not been called upon to make any sacrifice at all. As a matter of fact, there has been a considerable saving to the farmers here, and the comparison between the two systems that I have made shows how much better is the position of the producers in Western Australia than that of those who are labouring under the orthodox system in New South Wales. The Bill will effect altered arrangements that, if agreed to in toto, will make it impossible to continue the operations that have been carried on with the resultant saving to the farmers. Provisions that will take from the producers the advantages they enjoy at present should not be tolerated. For the sake of members opposite, I desire to deal with points raised by members of another place who represent Fremantle constituencies. I do not know that it is necessary to go fully into the points they dealt with, but there are one or two small items that I may refer to as off-setting the objections raised by them.

Hon. G. Fraser: You mean anticipated objections.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I will accept the qualification. In the first place, there will, of necessity, be a reduction in the work available at the terminal elevator.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Yes, a reduction of 66 per cent. in labour.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Does the hon. member refer to the whole of the work in connection with wheat that passes over the wharf at Fremantle? I think he is mistaken in his calculation. In the first place, during the last two years 21,000,000 bushels of wheat only were dealt with, and it would be quite impossible for the complete bulk handling system to be installed throughout the Fremantle zone immediately. That means that the reduction in work available must be gradual. Mr. Gray cannot say that the reduction will amount to 66 per cent. straight away. We must agree that inevit-

ably there will be a reduction in work available, but it merely represents a transfer of advantage from one section of the community to another. Because the advantage happens to be transferred to the producers we have this unholy cry. The displacement of labour has two points of view, and I think members opposite should take into consideration the fact that while the system may deprive Fremantle workers of a certain amount of labour and consequent remuneration, it will mean increased opportunities throughout the sawmilling areas, as well as in connection with engineering works and the labour involved in installing the silos.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is a poor offset.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Admittedly it may be a small offset, but that will be one result.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: But if the system will place the industry on a proper basis, it is important.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I intended to draw attention to that fact. Another important point is that in dealing with 21,000,000 bushels of wheat during the last two years by means of the bulk handling system, the saving to the producers has been several million bags. Those bags would have been purchased abroad and most of the money would have gone out of the Commonwealth altogether. That meant a saving of approximately £350,000. The installation of the bulk handling system has resulted in most of that money being retained within the State, and it has gone into the hands of the producers.

Hon. C. B. Williams: How much would that saving mean to each producer?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I cannot say what the savings represented per producer, because all do not have the same yield. I can give the approximate saving per bushel. The Bulk Handling Commission dealt with that phase at considerable length and they arrived at the conclusion that it represents $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel, or a total of £350,000. That is a big consideration to the man on the land.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Averaged out it would represent about £30 per farmer.

Hon. J. Cornell: On what did they base their figures?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Principally on the saving on bags.

Hon. J. Cornell: On what yield?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: It was based on the quantity of wheat handled. The Royal Commission had to go on definite figures, and they had the fact that 11,000,000 bushels were handled in the first year and 10,000,000 bushels the next year. Instead of the money so saved being sent out of the country, it was utilised in the majority of instances in effecting improvements on properties.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Nonsense!

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That is by no means nonsense.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What would the saving amount to to each farmer? It would give him a chance of getting a decent pot of beer.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: If the hon. member looks at it in that light, I will let it go at that. Members will have gathered from my remarks that I am opposed to importing into the scheme anything that will increase the cost to the producer. That is what it will amount to if the Bill be agreed to in its present form. Our system of bulk handling was introduced a few years ago as a means of self-help by a certain section of the community. Those persons enjoyed community of interests and organised for the purpose of reducing the cost of production. Which is the better way to improve one's situation, by the reduction of costs or by increasing the actual monetary return on produce that is sent out? I refer to it this way and draw attention to the fact that throughout the Commonwealth during the last few weeks there has been a great controversy concerning the home consumption price of wheat. It is proposed to give 3d. per bushel as the home consumption price. That will be a direct tax on taxpayers. The consumer will have to pay that 3d. per bushel. Now here is a case in which the farmers themselves are prepared to co-operate and use their influence to reduce the cost of production by 2½d. per bushel which, at that end, is of far more importance than 3d. per bushel as a bonus. When our farmers are working in that direction, they are doing more for themselves and for the community than they would be doing if they were refused the opportunity to carry on the present system. In other words, the 2½d. per bushel saved in production costs at that end is of far more importance than 3d. per bushel coming at the other end, which is a drain on the taxpayers. Any measures likely to interfere with the conditions here are not in the best interests of

the whole of Western Australia. That is the reason why I am opposing a number of the clauses in the Bill, and why I am anxious that the present system shall continue and shall be given statutory authority. I do not know that I need say very much more, except to refer in a comparative way to the work which has been done by the Government in trying to assist other industries, notably an industry which came under notice recently when we had visitors interested in the goldfields. When Sir William Campion and Mr. Claude de Bernales came here a little while ago they were toasted from the coast to the goldfields.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Who toasted them?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Labour Party at the Trades Hall in Beaufort-street.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The goldfields Labour Party did not toast them at all.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: But they should have done.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: They were toasted here at the headquarters of the Labour Party.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The metropolitan headquarters.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Those gentlemen visited the goldfields.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The Labour Party did not toast them there.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Government have done a great deal to see that the gold-mining industry is assisted. I am only referring to this as showing the way in which those representing the goldmining industry are being received and the industry assisted.

Hon. J. Cornell: Assisted, but not with money.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: And the Government have given certain authority over some mining areas to certain individuals and so restricted the advantages that might have been gained by those engaged in the mining industry. But here in the wheat industry we have a company that has been established and has taken under its wing every wheat farmer throughout Western Australia. The company is prepared to assist those farmers, but here we have a Bill designed to block the company, a Bill which, if every clause of it were carried in its entirety, would preclude the company from carrying on and extending the advantages it is able to give at present. That is why I have spoken on the second reading, knowing that most of the work must be done in the Committee stage. I have expressed myself

against the introduction of the system adopted in New South Wales with such drastic effects against the best interests of growers—I object to that system being introduced into Western Australia. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [7.48]: It seems it is left to me to throw the first stone in opposition to the measure although, following the various speeches delivered, it is hard to decide whether or not members are in favour of the Bill. It seems to me members are between two stools; they want bulk handling, but they do not want the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: They are in favour of the Title.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is so. If members do not like the Bill, I am prepared to assist them to throw it out.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Of course you are.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Will you assist in making it a practicable Bill?

Hon. G. FRASER: I will give every assistance to defeating the measure.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Are you saying that with your tongue in your cheek?

Hon. G. FRASER: No, I am saying it openly and frankly; I will do all I can to defeat the measure.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You do not happen to be a farmer.

Hon. G. FRASER: There seem to be two factions in regard to bulk handling. We have on the one hand those representing farming districts, who seem to think the only thing in the world to save the farmer is bulk handling.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Reduce that to wheat farming.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must ask members to allow the hon. member to proceed.

Member: Give him rope enough and he will hang himself.

Hon. G. FRASER: Notwithstanding that the measure is of such vital importance to my district, I do not intend to delay its passage unduly. I realise that practically every member has made up his mind about the Bill, and that delay will not affect the position materially. I do not know how my colleagues will view the matter, but I do not intend to delay the Bill unduly.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Have you had a caucus meeting?

Hon. G. FRASER: We have not had a caucus meeting. Each of us is working off his own bat.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I doubt it.

Hon. G. FRASER: Those members representing the wheat farmers seem to have in mind only one thing and that is bulk handling. While I admit that it is impossible to stop the wheels of progress, I must say that apart from the fact that bulk handling will seriously affect my district, I have not been convinced that bulk handling is essential to the progress of the State. The wheat yield of Western Australia scarcely justifies the large expenditure necessary to instal a bulk handling system. Claims have been made that certain savings will be effected by the farmer if bulk handling is introduced. I doubt very much whether anything like the savings mentioned will be made. We have been given various estimates of the savings ranging from 2d. to 3½d. per bushel, but even those who have ranged themselves behind the scheme all along have not made up their minds what the actual saving will be.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Be on the safe side, and call it 2d. a bushel.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: The Royal Commission said 2½d.

Hon. G. FRASER: Does 2d. represent the saving to a farmer who is living adjacent to a siding? How will the farmer who has to cart his wheat 20 miles be affected?

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Have you not read the report of the Royal Commission?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Then why ask that question?

Hon. G. FRASER: It appears to me that the estimate of 2d. or 2½d. has been very much exaggerated, and I feel sure that from the State point of view a considerable deduction will have to be made when other factors are taken into consideration. When the whole of the advantages and disadvantages are weighed, I believe that the saving will be so little that it will be a gamble to make a change from the present system to bulk handling. We have been told on many occasions that once the change to bulk handling is made, it is impossible to revert to the bag system.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: You will not want to revert.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not know.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Well I do.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member is an interested party; I am not.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: And therefore a better judge.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have yet to learn that an interested party is able to give an unbiassed judgment on any question. I am entirely independent.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What interest have you?

Hon. G. FRASER: Only the interest of my province and of the State.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: That is your interest.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have no personal interest.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: But you have.

Hon. G. FRASER: Summing up all the facts, I cannot believe that the saving to the State would be sufficient to warrant my voting for the change.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member is merely fighting for his own district, as other members are fighting for their districts.

Hon. G. FRASER: With this difference, that with quite a lot of other members there is a personal aspect that does not influence me. During the debate no very solid reasons have been advanced in favour of the change. Against the claim that the farmer will save 2d. or 2½d. a bushel, several disadvantages from the State point of view must be offset. I admit that the farmers will make some saving, and that from the standpoint of the individual there is something to be said in favour of bulk handling.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Will it not save the money that is being sent to India for jute?

Hon. G. FRASER: References made to that point would lead one to believe that that trade will be terminated, but when we examine the situation we find that a considerable trade in jute will still be necessary.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Not to anything like the extent at present.

Hon. G. FRASER: From the remarks of some members, one would be justified in concluding that the importation of jutes would be almost entirely eliminated.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It would reduce work on the wharf.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. The bags necessary for flour number something like 600,000, equal to 40,000 tons.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Most of them are made in Australia.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am speaking of jute bags, not calico bags. Bags to that number are required for flour export. Bags are also required for super.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: We are not suggesting bulk handling either for flour or for super.

Hon. G. FRASER: But we have been told that there will be a great saving in bags, and one would be justified in concluding that the importation of bags would be practically ended.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is impossible to follow the trend of the hon. member's speech with all those interjections. Members will have an opportunity to speak at a later stage.

Hon. G. FRASER: For the carriage of super approximately 1½ million bags will be required.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Those bags are not used for carrying wheat.

Hon. G. FRASER: Thus quite a considerable amount of money will still have to be sent out of the State for the purchase of bags.

Hon. J. Cornell: You have not quoted chaff bags or potato bags.

Hon. G. FRASER: No, because I have been dealing with wheat farmers. Something like 2,000,000 bags will be required for bran and pollard, so that in all we shall require some 4,000,000 bags. Consequently it is just as well for members to realise that a considerable sum of money will still have to be sent overseas for bags.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Can you tell us the number of bags that will be saved by the bulk handling of wheat?

Hon. H. V. Piesse: A member for Fremantle would not put that up.

Hon. G. FRASER: I will leave that to members supporting the measure.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You do not want to have both sides?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am endeavouring to put up my side, just as other members have put up their side, and I have not heard them advance anything favourable from my point of view. I am following in their lead. There is another phase of the matter that vitally concerns my district, namely, the displacement of labour. We have endeavoured to arrive at a reasonable estimate showing how far our people will be affected. The most reliable figures we have been able to

get hold of indicate that the introduction of bulk handling on the water front at Fremantle alone will show a loss from the wages point of view of approximately £80,000 to £85,000, with the displacement of between 500 and 550 men. There are grave doubts about the success of this bulk handling system. When an attempt is made to introduce it, it is natural that we should endeavour to do what we can to put off the evil day. When discussing the question of displacing labour, we must take into account other people than those on the waterfront, namely, members of the business community of our city.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: And in Calcutta, where the jute comes from.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not so much concerned about Calcutta. That city will go on whether we have bulk handling or not. I want to come nearer home than Calcutta. The bulk handling system will be very serious for Fremantle, not only from the point of view of the workers of the district but for the business community. We have to consider what bulk handling will cost the State in general. There is no doubt that, should bulk handling become an established fact in the near future, and the revolutionary change over from bag to bulk wheat is made, with the corresponding displacement from the labour market of a large number of men, industry will find itself in the position of being unable to absorb the rush of unemployed. There will be nothing for these people to do, and they will have to fall back upon the Government for sustenance, as thousands of others have had to do in the last few years.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: They can be employed in building the terminal elevator.

Hon. G. FRASER: The number of men who would be employed on that work would be a bagatelle compared with the number of men who would be put out of work. They would represent a drop in the ocean.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: How many men will be displaced?

Hon. G. FRASER: At least 500 men on the waterfront alone. It is difficult to estimate the effect the system will have on other sections of the community. It will involve the business community, and all the transport services to and from the wharf. There is no doubt that the number of persons displaced on the wharf will be greatly augmented from other sources. It is difficult to arrive at the cost this will mean to the State

in the way of outlay on sustenance. Some three or four years ago there were approximately 17,000 unemployed in the community, but gradually, and as a result of much hard work on the part of many people, the number has been greatly reduced. Under the bulk handling system there is no question that the number of unemployed will increase alarmingly. In Fremantle 500 men from the wharf alone will be displaced.

Hon. H. Seddon: Do you think they will be displaced immediately?

Hon. G. FRASER: Once the bulk handling company has permission to go ahead, no time will be lost in extending the principle to as many sidings as possible.

Hon. H. Seddon: It is a question of finance.

Hon. G. FRASER: I believe the company can get sufficient funds to put the scheme into operation very quickly.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: How many million bushels do your figures represent?

Hon. G. FRASER: My figures are based on between 11,000,000 and 12,000,000 bushels for the 1930-31 season.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Shipped at Fremantle?

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes. The introduction of the system at that time meant a loss in wages of about £16,000 at Fremantle. It is hard to give estimates on these questions, and I wish to be as near to the mark as possible.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You want something that cannot be checked.

Hon. G. FRASER: Mr. J. Thomson, when giving evidence before the Royal Commission, said he would not dispute the figures that were put up.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What has happened to the men already displaced?

Hon. G. FRASER: They have had to get sustenance from the Government.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: They will have found a living somewhere else.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am glad the hon. member mentioned that point. There is no doubt the cost to the State will be considerable. These men have not found a living elsewhere, unless living on the dole or being employed on Government works can be called getting a living. I call that being a charge on the State. That cost must be offset against any so-called saving due to bulk handling.

Hon. J. Cornell: As many wheatgrowers as ever will still be on sustenance.

Hon. G. FRASER: The farmers are supposed to be going to save 3d. a bushel by bulk handling. That will not take them out of the wood. It will not save the farmers from ruin.

Hon. A. Thomson: It will help them.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: It will give them a little encouragement.

Hon. G. FRASER: It may represent a saving of between £30 and £40 a year to a farmer.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: It is worth it.

Hon. G. FRASER: That would not make much difference to his financial position.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Plus the £5 a month allowance.

Hon. G. FRASER: On the other hand, the money that is now being drawn in wages by the men who are handling bagged wheat will make a big difference. The saving to the farmer will make very little difference to him, as he will remain head over heels in debt whether we have bulk handling or not. The wages to the worker, however, mean that he is kept off the dole, and business is more brisk as a consequence in various parts of the State. I thought Mr. Piesse would oppose the Bill. I know that bulk handling will lead to a displacement of many men in his district.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Not on your life. The men in our district can always take up positions and earn their own living.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have seen some evidence which shows that the total number of men who will be affected by bulk handling at Albany will be 300, and that a similar number will be affected at Bunbury. Fremantle is not the only port that will be affected.

Hon. L. Craig: We shall have to be careful how we vote on this Bill.

Hon. G. FRASER: There is a big contingent of men in the province represented by the hon. member who will also be vitally affected. He will have to watch his steps. I believe the figures for Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton are about the same. I have examined them and find that this is so. About 3,000 people in this State will be adversely affected by the introduction of the bulk handling of wheat. I ask those hon. members who have been doing all they possibly can to secure the introduction of the system to offset against the supposed ad-

vantages that will accrue from the system the cost the State will be called upon to bear if it is introduced. If careful consideration be given to the matter, it will be found, as I said earlier, that a very small amount indeed will be saved. For that reason it is my intention to do all I possibly can to secure the defeat of the measure. There has been much talk during the course of the debate, but I have not yet heard any member state that any bulk handling system in Australia has proved successful.

Hon. A. Thomson: Our own has.

Hon. G. FRASER: Our own is on a very limited scale.

Hon. A. Thomson: But it is successful.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have yet to learn where the system has proved successful. Mr. Yelland mentioned the losses that have occurred in New South Wales, but he offset that by saying it cost the people of this country nothing. He, however, has not taken into account the points I have advanced. It has been mentioned that the railways should have no say in the system, but are not the railways one of the biggest factors in connection with the bulk handling of wheat? Has it not been necessary for the Government to go to considerable expense in altering trucks to suit the bulk handling system?

Hon. H. V. Piesse interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member has had his say.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That does not stop him.

Hon. G. FRASER: He is like Tennyson's brook. The Government have had to shoulder much expenditure in connection with the alteration of rolling stock to suit the requirements of the scheme. Many other items of expenditure must be taken into account before one can arrive at the conclusion that bulk handling is in the best interests of the State. I have gone very carefully into the matter and I cannot see that the time is yet opportune for the introduction of the system into this State. From the point of view of cost, I am not convinced that it will prove to be in the best interests of the State. In fact, my conclusions lead me to the opinion that it would be much better for the Government to give the farmers 3d. per bushel bonus rather than take the risk of installing the bulk handling system. I believe that if the Government paid such a bonus, it would prove to be much less costly than the system proposed

by this measure. For the reasons I have given, I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.15]: The arguments which I have just heard put forward by Mr. Fraser have assisted me materially in arriving at the definite conclusion that the bulk handling system is absolutely essential. Mr. Fraser said that a vast sum of money was being paid by the farmer to the wharf labourer. This is his statement, and he asked why the wharf labourer should be deprived of that money so that it might benefit the farmer. If there is any means whereby the well-paid worker in Western Australia can share some of his earnings with the most poorly paid worker in Australia—

Hon. G. Fraser: Did you say well-paid? Did I hear aright?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: What do they get now?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Four times as much as the farmer.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Compared to the farm labourer, the wharf labourer has a princely wage. The farm labourer is paid from £1 to 30s. a week.

Hon. G. Fraser: He has a constant job.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It is undoubtedly a permanent job. If the large sum of money which Mr. Fraser mentioned can be diverted from the labourers at Fremantle to the man on the land, there will be nothing better for Western Australia.

Hon. G. Fraser: The amount of money a farmer earns is more than 80 per cent. of that which is earned by the men on the waterfront.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Well, let those men go on the land. They are wanted for the harvest.

Hon. J. Cornell: You try the work for a while.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Which work?

Hon. J. Cornell: On the land.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No. I say the wharf labourer's work is very arduous, but if he can get better pay on the land, then let him go on the land.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is no use over-running an industry.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: No. That is why I think you should close the books

of the Lumpers' Union, because there are too many lumpers.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is a pity the farmers' books were not closed a few years ago.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I have had complaints from farmers that they cannot secure workers. I would ask Mr. Fraser whether he would prefer to be on Government relief work or be a farm labourer? I suggest that the great majority of men would prefer to be on the relief work provided by the Government, because they would be better off than if they were working on a farm.

Hon. G. Fraser: How many married people can you get for farms?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I understand there are applications almost every day, in fact every day, by farmers for married couples. The farmers cannot get them. The men prefer to be on Government relief work. If there are means by which the farmers can save money, it is infinitely better that they should be able to put it in their pockets, so that they can remunerate the workers more reasonably. The farm labourer has to work very hard and long hours. Mr. Fraser asks, "What is £30 or £40?" It is very nearly a year's wages for a farm labourer. Apparently, to the wharf labourer it is a mere nothing.

Hon. G. Fraser: I said in comparison with the farmers' debts.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If he is in debt, let him remain in debt! Don't let him get out of it!

Hon. G. Fraser: Thirty or forty pounds will not put the farmer out of debt.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: But £30 or £40 will probably provide the farmer with a labourer for half a year, including his keep. The hon. member suggested that this amount should go into the pockets of the wharf labourer. To compensate the farmer, he suggests a bonus of 3d. a bushel. The hon. member would rather have the money sent out of the country to India to pay for coloured labour. I am not suggesting that I need anything to convince me of the absolute necessity for the introduction of the bulk handling system, but I am pleased to say that the argument which I heard adduced a few minutes ago abso-

lutely convinces me of the urgent necessity for it.

Hon. G. Fraser: You don't need much convincing.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [8.21]: I do not intend to speak at length in reply.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Mr. Gray wishes to speak on the second reading, and so do I.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: I spent the greater portion of this morning in carefully examining and analysing the large batch of amendments on the Notice Paper. Upon arriving at Parliament House this afternoon, I was told that some of those amendments, if not all of them, were to be withdrawn and others substituted. Apparently my studies could have been more usefully devoted to economics or psychology. I will say that I am indeed pleased with the support, the almost unanimous support, accorded to this measure. There are two classes of support, direct support, and support by implication. There has been an abundance of support by implication of the Bill, at any rate sufficient to convince me that a large number of members will support me in my efforts to get the Bill passed. There was much discussion of various features of the measure, but the great point was missed. Members moved around it without touching it, and by implication led me to believe that they are entirely in support of the principles of the measure. We had a defence of the bulk handling system. That may have been needed for the enlightenment of those who have not given a study to the question. Then the virtues of Bulk Handling Ltd. were cited. To those tributes I have no objection whatever. On the contrary, I endorse them. In my opinion the company deserve great credit for the ability and enterprise displayed by them, and for the success which has attended their efforts. But that has no application whatever to the Bill, and has in no way enlightened me on the great question concerning which I awaited explanation—what was the nature of the amendments, and what were the amendments, hon. members intended to move? Up to the present I have not been enlightened. Other aspects of the subject were touched upon by hon. members. There was complaint that the Bill was submitted to the Chamber only last night. That is so; but the measure has been before the public of Western Australia for two or three

weeks, and I think at least every agricultural member of this Chamber recognised his responsibilities to such an extent as to secure a copy of the measure from another place and give it careful examination. I am sure, from the intelligence with which the Bill has been debated in my presence and from the noting of certain little defects in it, that every attention was given to the measure before it entered the portals of this Chamber. One nasty blow was given to the measure by Mr. Yelland—much to my surprise. The hon. member said that the Bill would knock Bulk Handling Ltd. out.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: But he did not explain how. I was awaiting a further development of his ideas, and hoping that he would be a little more specific and give me some indication of what was in his mind. However, the hon. member did not do so.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: I shall do that in Committee.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: One point of objection was raised by Mr. Piesse—to the Commissioner of Railways being a member of the Wheat Delivery Board. The other point of objection was raised by Mr. Yelland, probably representing the vital amendment he will seek to make in the Bill—the wrongful conversion of wheat. It seems to me that those are two very simple propositions, which can without much difficulty or much debate be decided in Committee.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: I dare say they can.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY**: So that again I thank hon. members for the way in which they have received the measure. I trust that when I see the new amendments on the Notice Paper to-morrow I shall be still further encouraged, and later be in a position to congratulate hon. members on, and at the same time thank them for, the great support given me in connection with this measure.

Hon. E. H. Gray: On a point of explanation. The Leader of the House was a little too quick for me.

The **PRESIDENT**: The hon. member was not on his feet until after the Chief Secretary had begun his speech.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I wish to give notice that I shall place on the Notice Paper an amendment to provide compensation for men displaced through unemployment con-

sequent upon the introduction of bulk handling.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

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

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it agreed to the Council's amendments.

BILL—RESERVES.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it agreed to the Council's amendment.

BILL—ELECTORAL.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it could not concur in the Council's amendments because of the many drastic alterations in the principles of the Bill as submitted.

BILL—LIMITATION.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had disagreed to the amendment made to the Bill for the reason set out in the schedule annexed.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West [8.31]: I propose to deal with one or two points only that have been made during the debate. At the last sitting Mr. Angelo, in criticising the Bill, dealt very fully with the position of the State Insurance Office. I listened to him with a good deal of interest and felt that if all he said were true and he had given the House the whole of the facts, there was a very damning case indeed against the State Insurance Office.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: I quoted entirely from the Auditor General's report.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I know, but I suggest the hon. member misrepresented the matter quoted from the Auditor General's report.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: I read extracts from the Auditor General's report, and that is all I did.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I know quite well that the hon. member quoted from the Auditor General's report, but he placed his own construction on what he read. I say very definitely that, as one who had been a member of another place for many years and has held a seat in this House for a few years, the hon. member must have a better knowledge of State insurance than his utterances last night would lead one to believe. He alluded first of all to the Fire and Marine Insurance Fund, which is referred to in the Auditor General's report, and stated that for that year a profit of £1,100 had been made. Then he inferred that if there were one big fire, it would wipe out the whole of the profits and that there would not be anything left in the fund to meet other claims.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Suppose Parliament House were burnt down.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What a holiday we would have.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have given a fair summary of what the hon. member said.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Yes.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member admits that. If he had read the Auditor General's report fully and had been fair in quoting extracts from it, he would have pointed out that the Auditor General showed that there was a credit balance in that particular fund of £47,866. The hon. member did not mention anything about that. He quoted the profit made for one year and suggested that one decent fire would wipe out that profit and the fund would be insolvent.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: I said the year's profit would be wiped out.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I suggest to the hon. member that when he quotes figures of that description, more particularly when dealing with extracts from the Auditor General's report, he should be very careful to give the whole of the facts and not merely those particular items that suit his argument. The hon. member has been asso-

ciated with at least one financial institution, and consequently we may look to him to have some knowledge of matters of this description.

Hon. H. Seddon: Don't be unkind and say which institution it was.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I want to be fair to the hon. member, believing that any man holding a position of that description in an important financial institution will at least have sufficient knowledge to be able to interpret whatever appears in the Auditor General's report with regard to criticism of a somewhat similar concern. I say most definitely that Mr. Angelo was most unfair and endeavoured to create an entirely erroneous impression in the minds of members.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: You know perfectly well I dealt with the profit for one year, and I said it was so small that it would be wiped out if there was one fire, and that is absolutely true.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Of course it was absolutely true, but the hon. member did not give all the facts, and that is what I am complaining about. He inferred last night that £1,100 was the sum total of the assets of the State Insurance Office.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: No; I did not. I said nothing about assets.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No other construction could be placed upon the hon. member's remarks, otherwise he would have been fair and pointed out that there was a credit balance in the fund of £47,866. Then again the hon. member knows—

Hon. E. H. Angelo: In fact, I said that was the one bright spot in the whole of the figures because that fund had made a profit of £1,100.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member also knows that every insurance office takes the necessary steps to cover itself as far as it can with regard to insurances it carries. I would like to advise the House that the manager of the State Insurance Office takes the same precautionary steps. It is merely an ordinary business precaution to re-insure any big risks that the office may be carrying, and I am advised that the proportion of re-insurances by the State Insurance Office is such that what is retained is adequate to cover claims arising from any big fire that is likely to take place.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: I am glad to hear that statement, but that does not appear in the report.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Auditor-General's report gives the information very clearly on the same page as the hon. member quoted from, and indicates that there is a credit balance in the fund of £47,866 as at the 30th June, 1935. Then the hon. member went on to deal with the Government Workers' Compensation Fund, and one would assume from his remarks that the losses sustained by the fund have to be met by the general taxpayer. The hon. member overlooked the fact that the fund is privately controlled and covers workers' compensation.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: It started with £50,000 and it is now £900.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It does not matter what the cost may be, the Government will have to find it.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Who finds the money for the Government? The taxpayer.

The HONORARY MINISTER: As a matter of fact, if the fund were to show a substantial surplus there would be the immediate complaint that we were charging too much for the service and that those charges should be reduced. I have yet to learn that any private office would be prepared to take that insurance at the rate which is charged by the Government.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: You will have to raise the rate if you are to make it pay.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is a question not of making it pay, but of making ends meet.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: The Auditor General says you lost £50,000. How do you explain that?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It can be explained in the same way as other things are explained; in some years there are losses and in other years there are gains, and for the reasons I have already given there is no need to build up any substantial fund in order to meet the extraordinary losses that may occur in one year. Then comes the industrial diseases section of the State Insurance Office. Again the hon. member quoted from the Auditor General's report. During the nine years the office has been in existence it has accumulated a surplus of £258,000, but as an offset against it is a reserve for outstanding claims, i.e., 299,000.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: The Auditor General says "claims already admitted but only partly paid."

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is true those figures appear in the Auditor General's report, but the fact is that in that £229,000 is a reserve of £150,000 to meet claims which have not yet arisen. That will be information to the hon. member.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: And to the Auditor General, too. You cannot get away from this, that it says here "Claims already admitted but only partly paid."

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am giving the hon. member the absolute facts.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Why did not you give them to the Auditor General?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have nothing to do with the Auditor General, but I have something to do with what the hon. member says here.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Minister is giving one set of figures, whereas Mr. Angelo gave another.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am quoting the same figures.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: The figures are the same, but the explanation is different. I do not know whom to believe. The Auditor General is an officer of Parliament, and probably the Minister has his advice from his own officer.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Now that the hon. member has perhaps said all that he intends to say, we will see what the Auditor General did say. I have just pointed out that the £229,000 reserve with which the hon. member was dealing includes a reserve of £150,000 to meet claims which have not yet arisen. The hon. member says he quoted the Auditor General's figures. Actually, the hon. member has been saying what he thinks the Auditor General said. I should like members to read this statement.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: It is in the Auditor General's report on page 47.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member left out one word, which makes all the difference. The line reads—

Industrial Diseases Section — including miners' phthisis claims already admitted but only partly paid, £229,374 ls. 11d.

The hon. member left out that important word "including." If the hon. member were fair, he would ask what is the balance. If we take the miners' phthisis claims which are already admitted and only partly paid, there is a balance in the fund of £150,000.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Where does that appear in the Auditor General's report?

The HONORARY MINISTER: On page 47. Workers' Compensation and Employers' Liability Insurance. As I said before, I rose only in order to correct what seemed to me a very wrong impression created by the hon. member. If the hon. member will look at page 47, he will see all the figures there. The reserves in the general accident section, including £20,000 transferred from the industrial diseases section, amount to £25,630. Then the industrial diseases section, including miners' phthisis claims already admitted but only partly paid, has a reserve of £229,374. So naturally a wrong impression has been created by the statement the hon. member made last night. Then the hon. member commented on the payments made under the Miners' Phthisis Act. All I want to say in regard to that is that those payments have no connection whatever—

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Read this comment by the Auditor General. He says—

Charge compensation paid during the last nine financial years. Miners' Phthisis Act charged to Consolidated Revenue.

He further goes on to say "for which the insurance office collected a premium." How are you going to get over that?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It provides compensation for men withdrawn from the industry.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: But why is it given a premium?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind Mr. Angelo that he will have another opportunity to reply to the Minister's remarks.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Of course that money would have to be paid. It is provided for in the Act and the opposition to the State Insurance Office made no difference to the amount that would have to be found.

Hon. H. Seddon: As a matter of fact, there is no profit.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, the hon. member knows that payments of compensation under the Miners' Phthisis Act are in a different category from any other form of insurance.

Hon. E. H. Angelo interjected.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Auditor General's report explains it very clearly. The hon. member went on to deal with the general accident section, which made a loss last year. I might say that loss was occasioned as the result of an unfavourable experience we had in the mining indus-

try. If that same unfavourable experience continues, we shall have to get it adjusted.

Hon. H. Angelo: By increasing the premium.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Probably.

Hon. C. B. Williams interjected.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is considered inadvisable to raise premiums in the mining industry on account of one year's unfavourable experience, but as I say if it continues consideration will have to be given to that.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about malingerers in other sections?

The HONORARY MINISTER: They do not come under this.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is general insurance.

The HONORARY MINISTER: But they are not covered by the Government scheme. The hon. member made some comments in regard to the establishment of the State Insurance Office, which he described as an illegal office.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: You had to bring down a Bill to legalise it.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am endeavouring to believe that the hon. member is pleased to think that we have an office of this kind operating in this State. While he was speaking he gave me the impression that the private companies had been very badly treated.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: I did not say that.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He said they were not given time to consider the position. While he was speaking I interjected that they did have time, but the hon. member took no notice of the interjection.

Hon. J. Cornell: Pretended to be asleep.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The insurance companies definitely refused to transact the business.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Without proper information.

The HONORARY MINISTER: They were given ample opportunity and were supplied with certain information. Whatever information was available to the Government was given to them. They were even asked by the then Minister for Works to quote a premium. They advised that they were unable to arrive at any charge, although they suggested that it would be somewhere in the vicinity of 20 guineas per cent.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Did not they at that time ask for certain particulars which the Government actually had but would not supply to them?

The HONORARY MINISTER: They were given all the information that the Government could supply. After allowing ample time for them to consider the position, the Government appointed a committee to make inquiries as to the probable cost. The committee arrived at a rate of £4 10s. per cent., and that rate is still being charged. The private companies regarded £4 10s. as a totally inadequate rate.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Quite correct.

The HONORARY MINISTER: And said they could not touch the business at that rate. If the Government had not established the State Insurance Office, either the industrial diseases section of the Act could not have been proclaimed or the mining companies would not have been covered. I think that was understood by every member who gave consideration to the question at the time. I do not know that I need say much more by way of comment on Mr. Angelo's remarks. I think I have shown that while he certainly quoted from the Auditor General's report—

Hon. E. H. Angelo: In every instance.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He was most unfair in the implications he made, more particularly in view of the fact that had he examined the Auditor General's report closely, he must have placed a different construction upon the existing state of affairs. I sometimes wonder whether the supporters of private insurance companies are really genuine in their expressed desire to see the State Insurance Office closed. I believe it is a fact that there are some classes of insurance which private companies are only too pleased to pass over to the State Insurance Office because they themselves are not prepared to take the risk. The State Insurance Office is in this position, that it is prepared at least to quote some charge, because, if it did not do so, many individuals would probably suffer considerably.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Private companies never refuse accident insurance.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There are what are termed undesirable risks which the companies do not care to touch.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: What are the undesirable risks?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Doubtless there are quite a number. Such risks are handed over to the State Insurance Office, and the State office does its best to conserve the interests of the taxpayers. The Government are in the same position as many private firms regarding the insurance of employees. They have a perfect right to establish an insurance fund of their own, and if it happens that one section shows a loss in one year, we cannot escape the fact that in other years rather substantial profits have been made and considerable sums have even been paid into Consolidated Revenue. The experience of this year may not be the experience of next year, but whatever the result may be, the Government would have to find the money. That being so, there is no necessity to charge against particular departments any higher premium than is really necessary, but if the State Insurance Office has the misfortune to experience several bad years in succession, there must of necessity be an increase of premiums to make the fund financial.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [S.55]:

I am keenly interested in anything affecting the miners and insurance. I trust that every member, before setting out to question State insurance, will think hard. If he considers the number of men employed in the mining industry to-day and the amount of money in the fund of the industrial diseases section of State insurance, he will realise that it is not nearly enough to meet the claims that might be made in any one month of the year. It is high time that the State Insurance Office was legalised, and I trust that when the Government are returned to office again next year, one of the first measures they introduce will have for its object the legalising of the State Insurance Office. If such a measure be presented to this House, I hope that it will be passed for obvious reasons. I defy any member to mention any insurance office outside the State office that would take the risk, so why not be honest about it? If the State Insurance Office went out of existence, 13,000 men working in the mining industry would be without cover under the third schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. Further, if one of the private insurance companies took over the risk, they would undertake it as starting from the day of taking over, I assume, at the premium paid to the State Insurance Office with already 200 or 300

men suffering from early silicosis and probably 800 to 1,000 men on the verge of developing early silicosis. This entails a liability for each and every one of those men of £750 if they choose to leave the industry and claim the benefit. What insurance company would take that risk? The 200 claims against the fund would wipe out a large amount of money to the credit of the fund, and the other 800 or 1,000 men, who have been in the industry for some years, would at any time be liable for an early silicotic ticket. On the average, they would have only seven or eight years to live. If the State Insurance Office is to continue to carry this insurance, now is the opportunity to raise the premium and accumulate a nest egg while the industry is so highly profitable.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: Who pays the premium?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The employer. The premium is something like 11s. per man per week for all hands. The men are insured on a wages basis, which means that the workers or contractors who are earning more than £400 per annum are covered by insurance because their particular jobs are reckoned at the wages rate.

Hon. J. Cornell: It the insurance is not properly adjusted, we will not be able to give the men what the Legislature said they should have.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is so, and ultimately the claims will fall on the State.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: That means of necessity an increased premium.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is what I am inferring. Now that the industry is on such a sound footing, it should be the time to build up a reserve fund for the State Insurance Office. No private company would take on the business. It is just as well to be candid about it. A worker is insured for 12 months after he leaves his job. What insurance company would take the risk of insuring a worker for 12 months after he had left his employment, at the cost at which the State office does the insurance? The Third Schedule risk comes to nearly 6s. per man per week. The other amounts that go to make up the 11s. a week include the Mine Workers' Relief Fund contribution of 9d. per head per week, and the other ordinary risks under the insurance. I do not know that the Honorary Minister is correct in laying all the blame at the door of the

mining industry for the extraordinary high amounts paid out in premiums under the Act. There are many risks attached to mining. Last year 900 accidents occurred in the industry. Of these, 546 were serious, and 22 were fatal, representing nearly two fatal accidents a month. One does not find workers in the mining industry staying away from work for longer than they can help. Half wages are no use to a man whose contract earnings may be from £10 to £12 a week. He will usually return to work as quickly as possible. I have averaged things out at five weeks' absence from work for the whole of the 900 men concerned. As I have said, there were 546 serious accidents. Under the Compensation Act, a man has to report a cut finger, or anything that may become serious. This is a method whereby his interests are safeguarded. If the compensation in all these cases were added together, it would probably not reach £30,000, and what has been paid out altogether is about £98,000. Doctors get very little by way of remuneration for the services they render under the Compensation Act.

Hon. J. Cornell: Not on the goldfields.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The medical men who collect money from the miners, under the medical agreement, get nothing from the State Accident Insurance for treating injured men. The workers have to pay 3s. per fortnight to the doctor, and they practically pay their own medical insurance against accident. I do not see why the worker should have to insure himself for medical treatment. I am now endeavouring to induce them to agree to withdraw from the medical agreement, so that the employers may carry their share of the liability. I would not mind if this Chamber localised the State Insurance Office to cover the risks under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. Ultimately the burden of these mining risks will come back upon the State. To-day about 13,000 men are employed in the industry. I may assume that 11,000 are working for wages or are on wages and about 2,000 are prospectors. The prospectors come under the Mine Workers' Relief Act, although they are not insured under the Workers' Compensation Act. If the mining industry slumps, as it will do ultimately, the number of men employed in the industry may drop to 4,000, as it did in 1930. This will mean that approximately 7,000 men will have left the

industry, just as the lumpers may leave the wharves, because there will be no work for them to do. A great proportion of the 7,000 men will leave the industry partially dusted. A percentage will be in the early stages of silicosis. At that stage they may not have been served with a silicotic ticket. Under the law, they are allowed to register when they leave the mining industry. So long as they register every 12 months, they are entitled ultimately to the £750 provided by the Act. That must be taken into consideration. At that time there would be only 4,000 men left to be insured and making a special contribution to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. There will thus be a liability that cannot be estimated. That is our future risk under the Act. No private company would be justified in taking the risk involved. Some time ago negotiations were conducted with the insurance companies, and the ex-Minister for Works, Mr. McCallum, played a big part in them. We tried to arrange things so that each man would get the compensation due to him for loss of health, but no company would take the risk.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: You do not want the insurance companies to do that; the mines can do it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: We tried repeatedly to induce insurance companies to take over our union accident risks. We were charging each man 1s. per week, including union dues, a benefit of £50 for a fatal accident, £30 for natural death, and £1 a week for accident. We could get no company to take the risk of ordinary accident on the basis of 1s. a week. I admit there is an element of gambling in respect to that class of insurance. There is the factor that out of the 10,000 or 11,000 men engaged in the industry there are 70 to 80 per cent. of entirely new men, who have taken the place of about 1,500 men who have been turned out of the industry. It may be some time before any of the new men are affected, and therefore the State Insurance Office should begin now to build up funds so as to be ready for the time when these funds will be called upon. There is one industry in the State that can always be counted upon to return premiums to insurers, that is the goldmining industry. We know what we pay under the Miners' Phthisis Act, and that a tax of about 1s. 6d. in the pound has been put on gold profits to meet that expen-

diture. I wish now to talk about workers' homes on the goldfields. No provision has been made on the Estimates for them. I see that the Premier has gone to the goldfields. I shall be there myself at the end of the week, when I hope to find out why provision is not made for workers' homes there. As a member of the Labour Party I desire to dissociate myself altogether from the obstacles that have been placed in the way of the erection of workers' homes on the goldfields. It appears that the board has the sole determination of the class of house to be built. The Labour Party does not stand for the delegation of powers to a board. In fact, I always understood the Labour Party were prepared to take risks to try to carry out the intention of an Act of Parliament. Personally I do not want to shelter behind a board. We do know that this particular board can be dispensed with at a moment's notice. If that be so, then there is no reason why the Government should not proceed with the erection of workers' homes on the goldfields. If provision is not made for this purpose in the Appropriation Bill, I hope the money will be found in some other way. There is another matter I wish to deal with. Despite the fact that the mine workers secured an increase in their wages early this year—in January—despite the fact that a Labour Government is administering the law of this State, and despite the fact that the Miners' Union has by peaceful methods tried to induce the Government to apply the mining award to men working at the State batteries—

Hon. J. Cornell: Does it not yet apply?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am sorry to say it does not, and I understand the Government have refused to apply it. Last year, after allowing for the loss which the Government sustained in treating prospectors' ore, the State battery showed a net profit of over £15,000. What is the reason that the worker at the State battery has to work for less wages than does the miner? The Union demand and get the same rate of pay for the men working on Mr. de Bernaldes's mines, the Kalgoorlie United, the Southern Cross Phoenix and the Coolgardie Phoenix, and these mines have been working for 12 months and not crushed a ton of ore.

Member: In other words, you want the mines to pay 14s. a day to the miner and eat up their capital?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: We will be entitled to withdraw our men from work if they are not paid what the law says they shall be paid. I do not want to say that right on the eve of an election, but the union is entitled to withdraw the men if they are not paid the same rate of wages as are paid to the men working alongside them for private employees. I trust the union will take the matter up with the Premier while he is on the goldfields and that, before the year is out, the workers at the State batteries will be paid the same wages as are paid to the men working for private employers. The union, as I have said, has been very patient and loyal for the past 11½ months.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: You have recourse to the Arbitration Court.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: We have, and that is where the union is told to go.

Hon. H. V. Piesse: What is the reason?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am not a member of Cabinet, and so cannot give you the reason. I did not intend to speak to the Bill, but I would like to pay a compliment to the State Insurance Office for the manner in which the business has been conducted. I have had many dealings with that office on behalf of unfortunate men who have contracted miners' complaint, and I have invariably been shown every courtesy by the staff. I have not got for the men anything more than they were entitled to, but I desire to place on record my appreciation of the treatment I have received from Mr. Minihan and Mr. Bennett. On the other hand, the men have given the Government just as fair a deal, because they do not malingere. I would like the Minister to look up the expenditure on insurance in connection with the mining industry. I say it has not all been expended in that industry, but if he finds that I am wrong, then I will apologise.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPREME COURT.

Recommittal.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 84—Decree nisi for divorce or nullity of marriage:

Hon. G. FRASER: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 3 the proviso in lines 30 to 33 be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"Provided that the court may refuse to grant or may adjourn consideration of the application if any costs awarded against the respondent or the co-respondent in the suit have not been paid."

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

Bill reported with a further amendment.

Further Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, Bill again recommitted for the further consideration of Clauses 77 and 81.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 77—Cases in which Court may refuse decree of dissolution:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Last night an amendment was made, limiting the power of the court in regard to petitions where adultery was alleged as the ground. The addition of the words "on a petition charging adultery" has the effect of limiting that discretion which courts of law are recognised as possessing. It is quite true, as pointed out by Mr. Parker when moving the amendment, that our amendment Act of 1911 inserts certain words that varied the law previously obtaining in that connection—limiting the discretion of the court to cases where adultery was alleged as the ground for the petition. The draftsman of the Bill, whom I saw again to-day regarding this matter, stated he was particularly anxious for the words added last night to be deleted. In moving the amendment last night, Mr. Parker explained that Mr. Sayer was not in favour of it.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: But only, one might say, on personal, legal grounds.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Mr. Sayer explained that there was a similar provision in the Victorian Act, and that the law is the same in England, where grounds of divorce are not so numerous as they are here. The provision is similar in Queensland. In 1922 or 1923 the Queensland Parliament passed an Act containing an amendment almost

identical with that made by us in 1911 or 1912. In the case of Gray v. Gray, heard in 1925, which went to the Full Court, a question arose whether on a petition by a wife for divorce on the ground of five years' desertion—the period fixed by Queensland law—the court could intervene, having regard to the circumstances of the case. In that particular case the petitioning wife acknowledged that she had committed adultery. The question arose whether the court could intervene and exercise its discretion either in favour of or against the petitioner. My personal view is that it is not a good thing for Parliament to withdraw from a court that power which has been recognised as inherent in courts. When the matter is looked into, one must recognise that the amendment was passed under a misapprehension. The case having gone to the Full Court, it was decided by two judges to one that the court was not entitled in the circumstances to exercise the discretion, and the petitioner became entitled to relief. It is an important step to take away from the court this right, and I desire to refer the Committee to some observations made by the Chief Justice and the two other judges. We have the opportunity now, with a consolidating Bill before us, to rectify the position by restoring the power and discretion which the court had previously.

Hon. G. Fraser: Go back to the time of the Ark!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The law in Victoria is as was originally provided in the Bill, and gives to the court full discretionary power to intervene in such matters.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Parker made the point that his amendment was to restore the law to what it was.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am desirous of pointing out that the draftsman in this matter adopted the view that it is much better that that power should be restored because the amendment made in 1911-12 was the result of a misapprehension. I want to indicate the opinion of the judges who tried a case in Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: What bearing has that on this amendment? The Queensland judges cannot adjudicate on our law.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: By an amendment agreed to in 1922—

The CHAIRMAN: That was 13 years ago.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON:—they brought their law practically into line with ours and removed the discretionary powers that the court had the right to exercise, in intervening where they considered it necessary. In his judgment, the Chief Justice, after referring to the omission of the right in favour of the court to exercise discretion, stated that if the omission to make the discretionary bar applicable was due to an inadvertence, the legislature would doubtless remedy the matter. The judge clearly indicated that he believed it was due to misapprehension that Parliament had amended the law, as Parliament in this State had similarly amended the law in 1912.

The CHAIRMAN: Twenty-three years ago.

The Honorary Minister: Do you think those words really imply that?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Undoubtedly.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot see what bearing this has on the question.

The Honorary Minister: The Queensland legislature have not remedied the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: And that was 13 years ago.

The Honorary Minister: Therefore it could hardly be due to an inadvertence.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Mr. Justice Lukin did not share the same view as the Chief Justice and the other judge; yet he drew attention to the importance of the discretionary power being retained to the court, and in support of his views quoted remarks by Lord Justice Vaughan Williams in England. This emphasises that it is essential to allow the courts to exercise discretionary power for the good of the morality of the community. It is not in the interests of society to do otherwise, and we should restore the law to the form in which it stood prior to the amending Act being passed in 1911-12.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot see that these references have the slightest bearing on the question before the Chair.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: They have a decided bearing.

The CHAIRMAN: As I understand the position, Mr. Parker moved to restore the law to what it was when it was amended 23 years ago. The Queensland legislature enacted similarly 13 years ago. Subsequently the Queensland judges moralised regarding what the legislature there ought to do, but the legislature has not altered the law. What bearing has that on this matter?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Your remark, Mr. Chairman, bear out what I am endeavouring to explain to the Committee, namely, that it is desirable to restore the law to what it was prior to 1911.

The CHAIRMAN: It is very unusual to quote extracts in Committee. That is done on the second reading.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But the question was not raised during the second reading debate.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could have made the point himself.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If you will allow me to proceed, I want to place before members of the Committee the views of the Queensland judges to emphasise the necessity for restoring the discretionary powers.

The CHAIRMAN: And the Queensland legislature disregarded their views.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I hope you will allow me to finish my remarks. I urge the Committee to view this matter seriously. We are here to legislate for the good of the people.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must realise that there is only one factor to be amended.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If we limit it, as this clause is now limited, to a petition based on adultery, the net result is that if a petition comes up on another ground the court has no discretion similar to that discretion which it previously had in regard to any petition in which the petitioner has been guilty of a wrongful act prior to the decree being granted. Until 1911 the position was that if, on a petition being presented, it was found that the petitioner had been guilty of some wrongful act, the court had discretion to say whether they would allow the petitioner the relief sought.

The CHAIRMAN: That is the twelfth time that point has been made in this Committee.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not think so. It is obviously necessary for me to make that position clear. However, I will not take up time unnecessarily. When we are passing laws we ought to consider what powers a court has for the welfare of the community. It is a good thing that those powers should be retained, and I hope the Committee will recognise that in this case we should review the decision arrived at last night, and allow

the clause to stand as originally printed. I move an amendment—

That the words inserted at a previous Committee, "on a petition charging adultery" be struck out.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I will support the amendment. It is perfectly true that the Bill now takes away the discretionary power which the amendment proposes to restore. If a husband were suing for divorce on the ground of desertion and it was subsequently proved that he had been guilty of adultery, it is quite likely that the desertion was due in the first place to the adultery of the petitioner.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: But that does not apply. That is the law now.

Hon. L. CRAIG: But the adultery may have taken place before the suit was brought, and the respondent may have learnt of it and consequently deserted her husband. In such a case, why should not the court have discretion? I will support the amendment.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I will oppose the amendment. I am not in favour of divorce if it can be avoided but, in the circumstances indicated in the amendment, it would be in the interests of all concerned if the petitioner got his divorce. If a man is so much concerned about the morals of his wife, why does not he get a divorce?

Hon. L. CRAIG: The boot may be on the other foot.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I do not care which way it is. What is the use of keeping people legally tied if they will not live together?

Hon. L. CRAIG: In which case the judge would grant the petition.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: But he might not. If a man deserts his wife, and fails to maintain her, she is entitled to a divorce.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am afraid there is some misconception about this matter. Mr. Craig referred to desertion. If one party to a marriage leaves the other because that other has committed adultery, the desertion is justified and there is no discretion in regard to that. This clause, as amended, brings the law back to what it is here to-day and in Queensland also. In 1912 in Western Australia, and in 1922 in Queensland, the discretionary power was taken from the judges for a very good reason. Mr. Justice McNaughton was trying to exercise his discretion, as judges do,

on the ground of public morals. One can see that he would not have granted a divorce if he could possibly avoid it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It was thought that the Matrimonial Causes Act should be amended.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Judges do not exercise their discretion in a personal way, but from the standpoint of public morals. That is the attitude judges would take up if the parties seeking for divorce had strayed from grace, and they would therefore refuse to grant a divorce. In 1912 the Divorce Act was amended so that this applied only when the petitioner had been found by the court to have also committed adultery, in which case the court might exercise its discretion. It does not matter whether the case is defended or not. I would like to have gone beyond what the law is, but have confined myself to bringing it back to what it is, not taking away entirely the discretion of the judge. If the petitioner is himself living in adultery he must inform the court, and he cannot then get a divorce if a judge exercises his discretion. Mr. Nicholson wants to go back to the time of the ecclesiastical courts over which a clergyman used to preside. I could quote hundreds of cases that occurred during the course of the last century far stronger than those which have been quoted by Mr. Nicholson. At that time it was very difficult to get a divorce. At the beginning of last century the petitioner had to go to Parliament to get a divorce, and it could be obtained then only by a certain arrangement with members. We shall stultify ourselves if we solemnly vote in one direction one night and in another direction the following night. I do not see why we should hand back to judges the authority that is called discretionary, but is in effect a direction that they shall not grant a divorce if it is against public morals to do so.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That the Committee do now divide.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	6
—				
Majority for	..	..	..	11
—				

AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo
Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. W. J. Mann

Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. H. Seddon
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. V. Hamersley

Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
(Teller.)

Motion thus passed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	14
				—

Majority against .. 4

AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton
Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. J. Holmes

Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. E. H. Angelo
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. W. J. Mann

Hon. T. Moore
Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. H. V. Piesse
(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause, as amended in a former Committee, agreed to.

Clause 81—Relief to respondent on petition for divorce:

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That in lines 6 to 8 the words "or in the case of proceedings instituted by the wife, on the ground of her adultery, cruelty, or desertion" be struck out

It was an oversight that these words were not struck out when the clause was amended last night.

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

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

Third Reading.

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

BILL—RAILWAYS CLASSIFICATION BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—New sections:

[Hon. J. Nicholson had moved to strike out Subsection (3) of the proposed new Section 22B.]

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member claimed there was a material difference between the provision in this Bill and the provision in the amending arbitration Bill. I am advised that there is no material difference. It simply places the railway officers in the same position as other sections of the Public Service in accordance with the amending arbitration measure, to which this Chamber agreed quite recently.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Withdrawn.

Debate resumed from the 10th December.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [10.13]: I do not propose to speak at any length on this Bill, although it is a very important measure. I have had the Bill examined by the Crown Solicitor and I propose to content myself by quoting his remarks on the essential features—

An examination of the provisions of the Bill shows that the radical differences between the Bill as introduced by Mr. Cornell and the provisions as contained in the Electoral Bill introduced in the Lower House are as follows:—

1. The old vicious principle of enrolment on the basis of ratepayers' lists has been preserved.

2. It has been attempted to alter the conception of "clear annual value."

With these two alterations we seem to achieve but little improvement on the present provisions in the Constitution Acts Amendment Act.

The practice of the Electoral Office, I understand, has been to accept the amount of the rent paid by the tenant as the criterion of annual value so far as the tenant is concerned. That, indeed, was the principle enunciated in the Bill as introduced in the lower House, but the framers of this measure seek to make the clear annual value the amount of the rent less rates and taxes payable by the landlord out of the rent, or, if the tenant pays the rates and taxes, the actual amount of the rent. This, in my opinion, is open to the criticism that we are not considering the value of the landlord's interest, but what a tenant is paying as the value for the occupancy which he enjoys and the Bill as introduced in the Lower House provided that the criterion should be that sum of money which the tenant actually expended for the benefit of his lease.

Hon. G. Fraser: The right method, too.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is my opinion. The Crown Solicitor continued—

There is one more important feature about this Bill which needs special mention, and indeed mention was made by Mr. Cornell of this matter when moving the second reading. That is, he refers to squatters on Crown land. At the present time such a person, if he has a dwelling which is worth £17 per annum, has the right to be enrolled as a Council elector, and, as you are no doubt aware, there are quite a lot of persons who claim enrolment under this provision who are squatters.

By inserting the words "lawfully occupying" in the provisions relating to the inhabitant occupier's qualification, Mr. Cornell would deprive these people of their right to be enrolled. You will be the best judge as to whether the franchise for the Council should be narrowed down any more than it is.

If the old ratepayer provisions are to go back, why should the squatter be deprived of his right to enrolment?

The Road Districts Act expressly lays down the liability of the squatter for the payment of rates, and in many cases the squatter has a substantial occupancy. He builds a house, and, as is the custom in mining communities, he continues to occupy that house until the field gives out or mining becomes unprofitable. It may be said that in many cases he is just as much a part of the community as the man who has a house of his own on land of his own.

In view of that opinion, which closely coincides with my own views, I cannot support the Bill.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [10.17]:

It appears to me that Mr. Cornell intends to embody the provisions applying to this House that formerly were in the Electoral Bill. I am inclined to support the Bill he

has introduced, with the exception of the definition of "clear annual value." However, the position has materially altered since the hon. member introduced his Bill. We have received a message notifying that the Assembly are not prepared to accept our amendments to the Electoral Bill, and in those circumstances it seems that any further attempt on our part to amend the Constitution Act will probably meet with a similar reception from another place. Therefore, it is questionable whether this House would be wise to persevere with the Bill. If the House decides to do so, I intend to move the amendments regarding "clear annual value" of which I have given notice. While Mr. Cornell's definition of "clear annual value" goes further than the definition in the Electoral Bill recently before the House, I think that by adopting it, this House would give away the position which, while not in accordance with the attitude adopted by the Electoral Department, is quite tenable until a case has been decided in the court. That is exactly what is meant in the Constitution Act by the term "clear annual value." The amount of £17 is mentioned in no fewer than three of the qualifications for this House. We have £17 as the qualification for a householder; £17 is set down as the qualification for a leaseholder, and £17 is also set down as the qualification for a ratepayer. In my opinion, the framers of the Constitution Act, when they stipulated the sum of £17 in each instance, obviously intended that it should represent the same amount without making necessary allowances, so that there should be the same qualification for a householder as for a ratepayer. But in order to make the matter clear it is my intention, if the Bill passes the second reading, to ask hon. members to support me in the definition of "clear annual value" which I have placed on the Notice Paper. To me it seems that by adopting the definition suggested by Mr. Cornell, this House will give away a position which it should zealously maintain.

HON. J. CORNELL (South—in reply)

[10.21]: I merely wish to clear up certain matters. Obviously, the Government do not intend to proceed with this Bill. They are prepared to accept the present chaotic state of affairs instead of an improvement. Mr. Fraser knows that 95 per cent. of the contents of the Bill is what the Chief Electoral

Officer wanted, what he requested of the Commission.

Hon. G. Fraser: The other 5 per cent. makes it unacceptable.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Bill does not get rid of the ratepayer.

Hon. G. Fraser: I would rather keep the ratepayer than make the alteration.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member would rather have hundreds of claims butting in on the last day.

Hon. G. Fraser: The best organiser wins.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Boiled down to tin tacks, rather than give the Chief Electoral Officer 95 per cent. of the machinery he has asked for, the Government say, "We will keep the matter as it has been in the past." Still, a few of us have succeeded in spite of that, and we hope to succeed again. The Royal Commission on the Bill introduced a provision continuing the ratepayer till the 30th June. I dissented from that proposal, as also did Mr. Thomson. That appears from the Royal Commission's report. We still have the ratepayer, like the poor, always with us. The Honorary Minister said the Bill would do away with squatters. It would not, despite Mr. Wolff's declaration to that effect. I have it on the authority of Mr. Sayer, who drafted the Bill. I clearly put to Mr. Sayer the definition of "squatter." In the original Bill that definition read, "is an inhabitant-occupier who as owner or tenant bona fide occupies a domestic establishment in the Province." I said to Mr. Sayer, "People go on Government reserves or Government leaseholds, as is the case at Yellowdine." If the Honorary Minister goes to Yellowdine to-morrow, he will find that every business man occupying a business block bought at a big price was given a definite undertaking by the Government Auctioneer that squatters would be cleared off the blocks near where business was done, and that squatters would not be allowed to conduct businesses on their blocks. However, those squatters are conducting businesses on those leases to-day at Yellowdine. I put it to Mr. Sayer, "What does bona fide mean?" He replied, "It means anything. It might mean good faith, or anything. The expression 'bona fide' has no lawful binding meaning." The other day Mr. Troy was clearing squatters off mining leases in the Central Province. If a squatter was lawfully in occupation of the premises, this Bill would not block him. If he was

not lawfully in occupation, he should not have the privilege of the Legislative Council franchise. The Honorary Minister says he does not want the Bill because he supports people unlawfully squatting on leaseholds. Next, there is the point of the clear annual value. The definition of "clear annual value" in the Bill is the definition contained in a manual which is issued to all registrars. It declares that rates and taxes shall be taken into consideration. Mr. Seddon, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Drew know that. Mr. Sayer drafted the definition of "clear annual value." He drafted it on the basis of a decision given under the Representation of the People Act passed in Great Britain during 1886. So far as Mr. Sayer's memory goes, it is the only statute in which the term "clear annual value" is used. The interpretation was given by three eminent judges, and so clear was it that it was clear to the man who owned the property. Mr. Fraser agrees with the contention as to £17 less rates and taxes.

Hon. G. Fraser: No. The Commission arrived at £17 irrespective of anything else.

Hon. J. CORNELL: What is the balance?

Hon. G. Fraser: The rates and taxes.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am merely asking for the re-enactment of the law. However, I have not the slightest desire to inflict the Bill on the Government or anyone else. In view of the reception it has received at the hands of one Minister. I think the best course to adopt is not to proceed with the Bill. With the leave of the House, I will withdraw the Bill.

Bill, by leave, withdrawn.

BILL—NATIVE FLORA PROTECTION.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 3rd December. Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair: Hon. H. J. Yelland in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 6—Penalty for picking protected flower or plant (partly considered):

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following words be added:—"with the permission of the owner or occupier."

As the clause stands, the impression may be created that it will give the right to

trespass and pick flowers on private land, and vandalism may follow. Some owners of property endeavour to protect the native flora, and I have been told of instances in which people have not only trespassed, picked flowers and destroyed plants, but have damaged fencing.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. The more I consider the Bill the less I appreciate it. The idea that people may go on private land to pick a few flowers should not cause Mr. Macfarlane any fear. The owner is fully protected by law.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: If he is there.

Hon. W. J. MANN: If we make the Bill too restrictive, people will not bother about picking wildflowers, which will be left to be ploughed in or eaten by stock.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the Bill is to be effective, the amendment is necessary. As the clause stands, an individual found with wildflowers in his possession need only say that he had plucked them on private land and no prosecution could follow, irrespective of what damage might have been done.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I oppose the amendment. It is not such a simple matter as Mr. Fraser suggests, and the law courts would require something more definite. Some people own enormous areas of land, and it would be difficult to get their permission. If we protect wildflowers on Crown lands that should be sufficient, without dealing with private property at all. Many people derive much pleasure from picking wildflowers and decorating their homes.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	7

Majority for	8
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AYES	
Hon. A. M. Clydesdale	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. W. H. Kilson	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. E. H. Angelo
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller.)

NOES	
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. C. G. Elliott	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. R. G. Moore	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Nicholson	(Teller.)

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

New clause:

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 12:—

It shall be lawful for any constable or other officer of the police force in Western Australia or any inspector or other officer appointed under the Forests Act, 1918-1931, or such person as may be appointed by the Minister as an inspector under this Act, to examine any wild flower or native plant in the possession of any person, and if such flower or plant appears to have been obtained contrary to the provisions of this Act, to detain same, and demand the name and address of the person in possession of such flower or plant, and to take such action as is necessary to enforce the provisions of this Act.

The original Clause 12 was struck out because of the objection taken by the Committee to the appointment of honorary inspectors. In this new clause honorary inspectors are not provided for, but police officers are given permission to take action and, in addition, provision is made for officers appointed inspectors under the Forests Act, and for any such person as may be appointed by the Minister an inspector under this Act.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the Committee will not accept the new clause because, in effect, it is only getting back to the original clause, which was struck out because it provided for the appointment of honorary inspectors. This new clause provides for the appointment of inspectors, although not by the name of honorary inspectors. I advise the hon. member to withdraw the new clause.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Committee by an emphatic vote turned down the original Clause 12, which provided for the appointment of honorary inspectors. If Mr. Yelland really wants this new clause, he should delete the words "or such person as may be appointed by the Minister an inspector under this Act," for certainly such persons will be honorary inspectors. If the hon. member will delete those words I will support the new clause, but not otherwise.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Obviously, unless there be provided some machinery to police the Bill, it will prove to be only a pious resolution. Under the new clause the officers of the Forests Department will be made inspectors, and in all probability will be paid for their work. It is a very necessary provision.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I hope the new clause will be accepted. If this Bill

contains nothing that will enable the Act to be policed, and insure that our wildflowers are safeguarded, we might as well not pass it. We know that vandalism has already led to the destruction of many varieties of flowers and plants. In two or three years time the boronia may be extinct. Large areas where that plant was growing have already been destroyed. Our flora is being shipped away to the other States. It is essential that our wildflowers and plants should be protected.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I agree with the remarks of Mr. Mann. The difficulty would be overcome if the clause provided for the inclusion of any other person permanently employed by the Forests Department.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not wish to force the new clause upon the Committee. It provides already for what Mr. Cornell has suggested. With a view, however, to meeting the wishes of the Committee, I ask that I be allowed to move it with the excision of the words "or such person as may be appointed by the Minister as an inspector under this Act." The new clause will then read as follows:—"It shall be lawful for any constable or other officer of the police force in Western Australia, or any inspector or other officer appointed under the Forests Act, 1918-1931, to examine any wild flower or native plant in the possession of any person, and if such flower or plant appears to have been obtained contrary to the provisions of this Act, to detain same, and demand the name and address of the person in possession of such flower or plant, and take such action as is necessary to enforce the provisions of this Act."

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I would prefer to see those words left in the clause. Agricultural societies are very much concerned about the passing of this Bill. The work of inspection should be made easy, and inspectors appointed by the Minister should be available.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The police force discipline the community under our laws, and the forestry officers are competent to look after our great forests, and surely they are competent to look after our wild flowers without bringing in inspectors from horticultural societies.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: At the week-end one can travel many miles outside the metropolitan area without seeing a forestry officer

or a policeman, and that is where the damage is being done. The Minister should have authority to approve of competent persons to act as inspectors.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I withdrew the words because they were tantamount to the appointment of honorary inspectors. While I agree with Mr. Macfarlane and Mr. Gray, I suggest that the measure be given a trial and, if necessary, it can be amended later.

New clause put and passed.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 14:—"Any inspector may at any time enter upon any premises, land, shop, warehouse, or may board any vehicle, vessel or other means of transport, and may thoroughly search and inspect the same and every part thereof and anything thereon or therein, or open packages, for the purpose of ascertaining whether native plants which have been declared protected are contained or stored therein or thereon; (a) and may call upon the occupier, agent, or driver to supply his name and address, together with that of the owner or person who gave permission to dig up or otherwise remove the said protected roots and flowers."

I am concerned not so much about the picking or cutting of wild flowers as about their destruction through vandalism and commercialism. I have already spoken of a car-driver who had between 5 cwt. and 6 cwt. of kangaroo paws ready for shipment. Our wild flowers should be protected to the greatest possible extent.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Clause 10 should afford the protection desired by Mr. Macfarlane. I do not think there is a provision in any of our statutes to compare with this inquisitorial proposal.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: A similar provision appears in the Fertilisers Act, and in other statutes. Without the inclusion of the new clause, the provisions of the Bill could not be effectively enforced.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There will be no inspector under the measure, and so the new clause will be meaningless. Mr. Macfarlane desires that inspectors be empowered to search people embarking on boats. The police may do that to-day. If a responsible person were conversant with a breach of the Act, he could telephone the inspector of police or a sergeant of police, and action would be taken.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I am willing to withdraw the amendment, if the Committee is against it.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Clause 10 covers the position.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

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

House adjourned at 11.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 12th December, 1935.

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

QUESTION—LOAN FUNDS FROM COMMONWEALTH.

Mr. DONEY asked the Treasurer: 1, What amount of loan funds has been received by the Government from the Commonwealth Government for the current financial year? 2, How much of this loan money was spent up to the 30th November, 1935? 3, Will there be any further loan money available for the remainder of the current financial year?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (for the Treasurer) replied: 1, Proceeds of loans made available through Commonwealth Bank to 30th November, £1,180,792; less amount not yet drawn, £1,175,000; total, £5,792; local raisings and repayments, etc., £499,859. 2, Loan expenditure, £928,092. 3, Yes.

QUESTION—WHEAT, FEDERAL BOUNTY AND GRANT.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has payment of the 3d. per bushel bounty on the 1934-35 wheat crop been delayed in any case because funds were not available? 2, If the answer to question No. 1 is in the affirmative, why are funds not available from the Federal grant for this purpose? 3, What amount of the Federal grant for necessitous wheatgrowers for the 1934-35 season has been paid up to 30th November, 1935—(a) to Agricultural Bank clients; (b) to other wheatgrowers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. Funds were available, but late applications caused the original estimate to be exceeded and necessitated the transfer of additional funds from the Commonwealth to cover the amount required. 2, See No. 1. 3, As payments are made by branch offices, considerable time will be required to obtain the information asked for.

QUESTION—RURAL RELIEF FUND ACT.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Will the Government state when the Rural Relief Fund Act of 1935 will be proclaimed? 2, Have the trustees authorised by that Act been yet appointed? 3, Is debt adjustment action by the Agricultural Bank being delayed in order that such action may coincide with similar action under the Rural Relief Fund Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The Bill having been assented to, the Act is now in force. It does not need proclamation. 2, No, but the appointments will be finalised at an early date. 3, No. Where Bank clients have outside creditors, however, they are advised for obvious reasons to apply under the Rural Relief Act for debt adjustment. The policy of the Commissioners in this connection was published in the "West Australian" on the 8th ult.

QUESTION—LAW CASE.

Hughes v. Gray.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Were any of the costs ordered by the magistrate of the Police Court, Fremantle, in the case Hughes v. Gray to be paid by the defendant to Hughes, paid by