

terested and somewhat alarmed at the position outlined by the Minister. It represents a national calamity and I respectfully suggest that the members directly concerned join with the Government in taking action immediately to induce the Commonwealth Government to make available, when the drought breaks, a sufficient sum, as a special grant, to assist in re-stocking the pastoral areas. We were supposed to have been granted £77,000 by the Commonwealth Government because of the drought conditions, but every member knows that much more than that amount could be absorbed in the wheat areas alone. I suggest that steps be taken immediately to draw the attention of the Commonwealth Government to the position.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Commonwealth Government did not give us a penny for the drought conditions.

Mr. CROSS: I understand they claim that they did so.

The Minister for Lands: The Commonwealth Government made the grant available because of the effect of the drought on our finances.

Mr. CROSS: Then special representation should be made to the Commonwealth Government immediately. I went through some of the rainfall records for 1914, and I am of opinion that this year will be considerably worse than 1914.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Commonwealth did not help us that year.

Mr. CROSS: They should help us this year.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We will send you across.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 29th September, 1936.

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

BILL—WOOL (DRAFT ALLOWANCE PROHIBITION).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd September.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [4.33]: Primary producers throughout the State, and particularly graziers, should be very thankful to the Government for having brought down the Bill. All through Australia, requests have been made for this legislation, and the Wool Council in all its branches is in favour of it. I was surprised to learn that Mr. de Latour had stated that modern scales are not capable of weighing bales of wool accurately. Surely with our Weights and Measures Act, an inspector should be asked by the Government to inspect the scales at all woolbrokers' sheds, particularly when we have the President of the Western Australian Woolbuyers' Association making such a statement. It is an insult to the brokers of Western Australia to say that the scales in the various warehouses are not accurate. Mr. Parker, who addressed himself to the Bill last week, was speaking on behalf of the woolbuyers. He has every right to place their position before the House. This Council invariably listens to all sides of every question that comes before it, which is an admirable plan for it ensures a knowledge of the subject before members vote. However, I cannot understand the attitude of Mr. Hamersley on this question. Mr. Hamersley and his people have been connected with the production of wool practically since the colonisation of Western Australia, yet he says he does not care whether the Bill is passed or rejected. That is beyond my comprehension. His statement has gone out through the Press and in consequence I have re-

ceived messages from a number of my constituents who have held a meeting at Newdegate and have asked me and my colleague to support the Bill, which is of such importance to the wool producers. Throughout Australia there is a movement afoot to have this class of legislation brought into force. Unless all the States agree to it, it cannot come into operation. There is no doubt whatever that when Australia has passed this legislation South Africa and New Zealand will quickly follow. My friend, Mr. Parker, suggested that we might enact legislation to provide that the grower should be paid for 113 lbs., yet only supply 112 lbs. I trust that he was merely being humorous, for if not I would point out that the wool producers of this country would never suggest that robbery on their part should be legalised in that manner. Whilst I join with Mr. Parker in objecting to at least unnecessary interference in the ordinary style of trading between citizens, I would point out that as long as legislation has been capable of controlling the affairs of nations—and that is for a very long period—it has been the duty of legislators concerned to protect the public against practices which are either dishonest or bordering on dishonesty. Mr. Parker, who is learned in the law, is no doubt well aware that legislation preventing such practices is to be found in statute-books the world over. Such deductions as the draft allowance might in times past, when scientific knowledge was negligible, have been justified because of inaccurate weighing machines, but in these times, when the weight of one human hair can be accurately ascertained, any such reason for the retention of the draft allowance passes into the mists of antiquity. One remark made by Mr. Parker which specially interested me was the suggestion that the extraordinary custom of giving 13 buns for a dozen did not go at the request of the buyer, but because the seller would not continue to do it. Why is he surprised, therefore, that the seller of wool holds the same view, and will not consent to a continuance of the practice? We read from day to day that a certain firm in Western Australia has arranged freight on cheaper lines than the combine ships will agree to. Surely the primary producers, when they combine together to reduce costs, should be permitted to do it. It is only natural that they should wish to take advantage of a more favourable freight arrangement.

Hon. G. W. Miles: In foreign ships, you mean!

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Handled by foreign shippers. It was not my intention to stress the necessity for passing the Bill, because that should be clear to all. I thought the measure would have gone through without a single objection. However, as two members have raised objections, I thought I could do no less than enter my protest against their remarks. I will give the Bill my whole-hearted support, as no doubt will every other representative of the wool industry in this House. I sincerely hope the Bill will go through, and become law.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.41]: This small Bill has been brought down to correct an anomaly that has existed over a long period of years. In recent times many similar anomalies have been laid aside, anomalies that have been brought into existence in trade and commerce but all to the advantage of one side. Fortunately, in this case those who have been suffering from the draft allowance have an organisation, and that organisation has taken a step in the right direction to the end that something which should never have come into existence should now be wiped out. Like Mr. Piesse, I should not have risen but for the objections raised to the Bill and which have been so astounding to me. This draft allowance practice should never have come into existence and I do not think there is any need for me to talk at length about it. It is pleasing to know that this small measure, which I hope will be carried with but very little opposition, will correct an anomaly that has been standing for very many years past. I will support the Bill.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [4.43]: I endorse the remarks of Mr. Holmes, who said he was perfectly willing to be guided in this matter by the Woolgrowers' Council. Long before I became a wool-grower I could never see the justice of this draft allowance. I am definitely in favour of the Bill, and am rather surprised at the remarks of Mr. Parker and Mr. Hamersley. As a woolgrower, I certainly cannot understand Mr. Hamersley's opposition to the Bill.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He did not strongly oppose it.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: No, but from his remarks I gather that he will vote against it. For my part I will support it.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.44]: I congratulate the Government on the introduction of this measure, for it is long overdue. At many conferences the question of draft allowance on wool has been discussed and I must say that for the life of me I have never been able to see why this deduction should be made. It is time that those who are selling their wool had the right to lay down some conditions concerning the manner in which it shall be sold. I congratulate the Honorary Minister on bringing down the Bill. When I first stood for Parliament in 1914 that hon. gentleman was my chairman. At that time he was endeavouring to make a living from the land. I think he is now more comfortably situated. At any rate he is fully competent to speak on the subject matter of this Bill. I support the second reading, and did not anticipate that any member would oppose it.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [4.46]: I am indeed pleased that this Bill has been so well received. Most members of this Chamber have a far more expert knowledge of wool than I have, and their opinions on the subject are therefore more valuable than mine are. Mr. Angelo suggested that the proclamation should be deferred until all the other States, as well as New Zealand and South Africa, had agreed to pass similar legislation. Australia, South Africa and New Zealand are the major wool-producing countries of the world, and all have agreed to the necessity for this type of legislation. New Zealand has deferred action because the authorities there thought it better to wait until Australia, being a particularly important wool-producing country, had first taken action. Legislation has been prepared for the New Zealand Parliament, and will be brought down when the legislation has been passed by all the States in Australia. Mr. Parker made a good speech in defence of a very bad case, and we can give him credit for making the most of the wool buyers' point of view. It struck me that the defence of the draft allowance was really an argument for its abolition. According to Mr. Parker, the farmers stood to lose if this legislation were passed, but the contrary is the case. We cannot, of course, blame the

wool buyers and wool brokers for following the practice that has been for so long in operation. The case put up on their behalf, however, will not bear examination. Mr. Hamersley criticised the action of the Commonwealth Government in reducing the size of wheat bags. That was no argument against the Bill now before us. The Commonwealth legislation was brought down as a humanitarian measure. When large wheat bags were in use, many distressing accidents occurred at the various water fronts throughout Australia. It is not correct to say that the farmers have suffered as the result of the introduction of the smaller bags.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

The **CHAIRMAN** (Hon. J. Cornell): Before taking the Chair as Chairman of Committees, following upon the last biennial election of the Legislative Council, I desire to thank members for the confidence they have reposed in me in electing me as Deputy President and Chairman of Committees. I appreciate the honour, and trust that my term of office will be as happy as my previous term of office was.

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

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Cue-Big Bell Railway.
 - 2, Fremantle Literary Institute Mortgage.
 - 3, Land Act Amendment.
- Received from the Assembly.

BILL—ABORIGINES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd September.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [4.56]: This is essentially a Committee Bill. I know the Minister wishes that it shall not be unduly delayed, as a number of other measures are coming to us from another place, and I

shall not speak at great length upon the second reading. From the point of view of the State this is a most important Bill. It appears to be an earnest endeavour to do something more for natives than has been done in the past. The problem is a difficult one, and must be tackled before the difficulties are accentuated. We must remember that the natives owned this country, and that we took it from them. We have now contaminated the breed, with the result that we have a large and increasing number of half-castes. The great problem which the Government have to tackle is that of half-castes. The native trouble in the North is not a great one, but the half-caste problem is very serious. I have endeavoured in the last few days to obtain information, and from my inquiries I find the position more disturbing than I thought it was. Half-castes are breeding very quickly, and are being allowed to live as natives live. That in itself is undesirable. When at Kellerberrin the other day I approached several people in the hope of obtaining some information about half-castes in the district. I was informed that generally the half-castes were a clean people. There are exceptions, but generally speaking they are clean. That was borne out by a considerable number I saw at the local show. The women particularly were well and cleanly dressed. They wore clothes that had had to be washed, and these were clean and well ironed. I was surprised at the turnout of the half-castes on that occasion. I was informed that many of the men were good workers, and that, if handled properly, they became good and useful citizens. Some of them, however, would not do any work. The rations, I understand, were under very good control. When work was available the policeman in charge of the district would not issue rations, but insisted on the natives taking work. In other parts, I understand, where that care is not given, where natives are supplied with rations irrespective of whether they work or not, the men are refusing employment, and are just living on the rations. That is most undesirable. But the worst feature is the growth of these people. It is typical of crossbreeds that they are rather prolific. One man told me he had working for him a half-caste who was a very good worker, but who had 16 children. His neighbour employed another man who had 10 children. If this is to occur throughout the country it

will readily be seen what is likely to happen. The most important aspect of the problem is that dealing with the female native, and it is in this connection that I differ from the provisions of this Bill. I do not think we are going far enough. We have a duty to these people. We contaminated their blood, and there is an obligation upon us to see that the half-castes, at least, have an opportunity to earn a living. At the present time we are doing nothing to enable them to do so. I refer particularly to the girls. We should take girls away from their mothers when they reach a certain age and train them. They should be removed at as early an age as possible so that their removal will not be too much of a wrench to the mothers. I understand that up to the age of eight, nine or ten, half-caste children are capable of learning very well at school. From then on to the age of puberty—and that is the dangerous time—they need to be taught other things, most important matters in which they should be given instruction being sex questions and cleanliness. They should be given a reasonable education and trained to take their places as domestics in the homes of white people. If they have been taught habits of cleanliness the white people will not mind employing them, and if they have been taught the dangers of their sex they may have a chance of coming through without getting into trouble. This is a most important part of the question, because the native girl is a child of nature, and her character is not sufficiently strong to withstand the urge of nature. We must endeavour to train her in that direction, and so, perhaps, teach her how to avoid danger. The breeding of half-castes constitutes a colossal menace to the State. In a certain period—I forget how many years the Minister said—their numbers have risen from 800 to 4,000. If they continue breeding, and we go on allowing them to live as natives, it is a disgrace to us. Their numbers will soon be 40,000 instead of 4,000, and then the problem will be out of our hands. The problem is not in the North but in the South. There are not many half-castes in the North; the Minister knows that. I was up there recently on some of the stations, and I have never seen a happier race of natives than I saw there. They are well nourished—so well nourished that they are refusing to eat kangaroos. The natives on our station will not touch kangaroos. We have to kill 1,000 sheep each year, and 800 of them go to the natives. The place is

swarming with kangaroos, but the natives will not eat them. They are well nourished, they are paid for their labour, and they are happy. There is a provision in the Bill that anyone who cohabits or has sexual intercourse with a native shall be subject to a minimum penalty of a fine of £50, or six months' imprisonment. I want to put the position in this way: Kimberley is a tropical country where white women cannot live for long periods. Our immigration laws do not allow us to have Chinese, Japanese or Malay cooks, so the station people have to batch or train natives or half-castes to do the work, and in many cases they do it quite satisfactorily. Now here, in the metropolitan area, any one of us can cohabit or have sexual intercourse with any girl indiscriminately, and there is no law to prevent us. Brothels are looked upon as a necessary evil. The fact that they are permitted to exist shows that they are a necessary evil. Yet when we come to the North-West where these, shall we say, facilities, are not available, and a young man happens to fall—and it is only natural he should: if people do these things down here, they might easily do the same there—he is subject to a minimum penalty of six months' imprisonment or a fine of £50. I have already said that the native is a child of nature. I have heard some rather extraordinary stories about the North, and I can well understand how some young men do fall. I have heard of a boundary rider going to a windmill with a 20,000 gallon tank, seeing there a sylph-like figure rising from the water, with no clothes on and receiving an invitation to join her in the tank. It is only natural that in such circumstances a young man would get into trouble. I have heard of men on Kimberley stations who sleep out to enjoy the cool air and who, on returning to their camps, have found young lubras under their blankets. I am pointing out how simple it is for a young man, cut off from social intercourse with his own people, to associate with the native women. Yet here there is a suggestion that if such intercourse is proved against him, whether the girl be a full-blood or a half-caste, he shall be subject to a minimum fine of £50 or six months' imprisonment. I propose to move an amendment in Committee, that the minimum fine be cut out altogether. I think there is a maximum fine of £200. That could be left in.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Stress the point about the natives in the South.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I had forgotten that. Further on penalties are provided for supplying liquor to natives and for inducing a native to cohabit with another man—which is worse, I think, than having intercourse oneself. For this I understand there is no minimum fine. There is a maximum, but it is left to the discretion of the magistrate to fix the minimum. I think that should apply also in this case, where intercourse takes place between a native and a white man. I am not objecting to the penalty, but the fixing of a minimum will mean that we will get no penalty at all, because no magistrate will convict under such conditions. There is the other point to which Mr. Miles has drawn my attention, and it deals with the southern part of the State. We might help to overcome the difficulty by getting the half-castes and the quadroons away from the full bloods. The natives are of the same blood as we are, and the colour can be bred out of them for the reason that they are not like Asiatics or the negroes. The danger to-day lies in the native camps in the South-West where the half-castes go back and live with the full-blooded natives, and in that way get back once more to the darker blood. If we can separate the half-castes from the pure blacks we shall go a long way towards eliminating the colour trouble. Every effort should be made to take the full-blooded black away from the half and quarter-castes so that the blending shall be towards the white. The colour must not be allowed to drift back to the black. If we can only segregate the half-castes from the full-bloods we shall go a long way towards breeding the dark blood out of these people. That is all I have to say. I am going to support the Bill, and I am sure every member will do likewise; but it is such a big question that I do not think the Government have gone far enough. We should be prepared to spend considerable sums of money in taking away the female children, giving them a good education, and training them to do useful work. If they do go out to service, and then get into trouble, that trouble will be associated with white people which, in itself, will assist to breed out the dark colour. The main essential is to breed out the dark colour. I support the second reading.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.15]: There are many different sections of the people who have been claiming for years that the aboriginal population should be

placed on a better footing. To talk glibly in that way is very easy, but to handle this immense problem is quite another matter. The Bill before us does represent a step in the right direction, namely that of clarifying the position and making it much more satisfactory. At the same time we cannot go too far, because there are many difficulties to be surmounted, the chief one of which will be finance. It might be wise, as Mr. Craig said, to segregate the half-castes from the natives of pure blood, but to do that would be a very costly business. It must be remembered also that some of the half-castes are no better than the natives, and to have them mingling with others would be very dangerous. When Minister controlling the department I had some experience of the difficulties. It was astonishing to find how misinterpretations could be spread by various organisations, not in Australia alone, but in Great Britain and America. Those organisations had names such as Society for the Amelioration of Natives and similarly high-sounding titles, and they seemed to be prepared to receive reports, no matter the source from which they emanated, and spread them by means of printed matter.

Hon. J. Cornell: They are the goody-goody people.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. No doubt the Minister now in charge of the department has had experience of it. It is terrible that people will spread such reports without first making inquiries to ascertain the truth. The department have issued corrections of many of those statements, but in many instances the damage done could not be overtaken.

The Chief Secretary: And some of the statements have been repeated.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, after corrections have been made, the statements have been repeated.

The Chief Secretary: That is the stock in trade of such organisations.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, to keep the societies going. Undoubtedly much more could be done for the aborigines, but progress must be slow. How many people in Australia contend that disease is rampant amongst the natives and half-castes through their contamination by whites? The worst disease prevailing amongst the natives has nothing to do with the white population. There is a peculiar disease known as granuloma which does not affect white people—I have heard of only one case, and I do not know whether it was correct—at any rate it

does not generally affect whites. Therefore the whites cannot be blamed for that. It is one of the worst types of disease.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I have known plenty of white men affected with that disease.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Perhaps I have got hold of the wrong name.

The Chief Secretary: That is right.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Then I have heard of only one white person having been affected. I would like Mr. Wood to see what I have witnessed in the Port Hedland district and to appreciate the extent to which the unfortunate aborigines have been afflicted. At Broome there are all sorts of castes and mixtures, but it is pleasing that in that town there is a special school for the many different types of half-caste. I commend the people responsible for the school for the work being done. They are performing a wonderful service, and it is a godsend to have the half-castes kept away from the white population at Broome.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is not a Government school.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, but it is subsidised by the Government. During the financial crisis it was proposed to cut out the subsidy of £150 a year, but after making a thorough investigation I considered the amount small in comparison with the work being done. In my opinion the amount should be increased rather than reduced. To a large extent the native question depends upon administration, and a competent administrator is necessary. There has been a good deal of misunderstanding regarding the Chief Protector of Aborigines, Mr. Neville. Before I came into close association with him, I was inclined to condemn him to a large extent. There are certainly occurrences in that department which would lead one to form a wrong opinion of him and his work. After having been closely associated with Mr. Neville for a lengthy period, I consider him a very able, conscientious and admirable officer who has to administer a most difficult department. If this measure is left to his administration we can rest assured that it will be soundly administered and need feel no concern whatever on that score. One matter about which Parliament should be very careful—I see no reference to it in the Bill—is not to interfere unduly with the employment of natives or half-castes. They are very useful for station work. I would not say that they are cheap labour; my experience is that they are not. Their payment and keep

might be small, but the numerous natives attached to those who are employed must also be kept on the station, and that makes them very expensive. However, the natives are necessary to work the stations. If anything were done to interfere with their employment on the stations, the natives would merely be thrown back on the hands of the State and would have to be maintained by the taxpayers. While their labour is advantageous in the working of stations, they would become an expense and a nuisance if they were rendered idle. I hope nothing will be done to interfere with their employment on stations. Much has been said about the treatment of natives on the stations. My experience, not only as a Minister of the department, but when travelling through the North, is that while there may be very few cases in which the native is not treated as he should be, in the event of illness or in the provision of medicine or general care, such cases are exceedingly few, and we should not be too harsh in laying down provisions that might inflict hardship on people who have treated the natives humanely. With very few exceptions, people in the North treat the natives well and they do it, not only because they are humane, but because it is in their own interests.

Hon E. H. Angelo: Mr. Moseley mentioned that in his report.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. The Bill is really one for consideration in Committee. I am pleased that the Government have introduced it because it is certainly a step in the right direction. As time goes on and funds permit, we shall probably be able to improve upon what is now proposed for the good of the natives as well as of the State. I shall have some amendments to move in Committee, but with that reservation, I support the second reading.

HON. E. H. ANGELO (North) [5.25]: Mr. Craig said that this was a most important Bill. I quite agree with that statement. It is not only important to the natives; it is important to the people who employ the natives and also to the good name of Western Australia. If we can treat the natives in the way they should be treated—and by this legislation I believe we shall be able to do even better than in the past, provided the measure is properly administered—the slurs occasionally cast on our good name will perhaps not be heard again. The Chief Sec-

retary pointed out that it was time we had new legislation because the Act under which we are working dates back to 1905. I listened attentively to every word uttered by the Chief Secretary when moving the second reading of the Bill. I was pleased with the very comprehensive and detailed manner in which he explained the various provisions of the measure. Since he spoke I have carefully re-read Mr. Moseley's report, and I think we can congratulate that gentleman upon the excellent report he presented. If this Bill and his report were taken together, I do not think it would be necessary to have any second reading speeches at all. It appears to me that most of his recommendations cover rather an amendment of the administration than an amendment of the Act. His recommendations for amending the existing Act are set out in Clause 2 of his report. Most of them seem to be embodied in the Bill. Some modifications of his recommendations are proposed, and it is about those differences that I feel concerned. In Clause 2 of the Bill the definition of "native" appears and is fully explained. The definition, in my opinion, would bring too many classes under the control of the commissioner. Mr. Moseley recommended in his report that applications should be submitted to a magistrate before certain half-castes were brought under the measure and that an appeal should lie to a magistrate from a refusal to grant exemptions from the Act. This provision should certainly be included in the Bill. I personally know of people of this kind who are perfectly independent and capable of looking after their own affairs. The other day I was speaking to a gentleman who knows the North-West, and he said that he had heard quite a number of complaints from educated half-castes who had no desire for any protection and no need for it, but had been unable to obtain exemption from the Act. A person of this kind feels his position very keenly, and I consider that provision should be made to enable any person feeling aggrieved by the control exercised by the commissioner to have the right of appeal to an independent tribunal in order that he might secure exemption from the provisions of the Act.

The Chief Secretary: Have you read the Bill?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Yes, I have. In my opinion, a mistake has been made in not following Mr. Moseley's recommenda-

tion on the question of control. His first recommendation reads as follows:—

Appointment of divisional protectors as permanent officials.

Mr. Moseley evidently prefers divisional protectors responsible to the Minister, to travelling inspectors; and I agree with him. The objection voiced by the Minister is that this would mean the constitution of three separate departments, that it would be too costly, and that it would place on the Minister an almost intolerable burden. As a North-West member, I can hardly agree with that view. I feel that the authorities in Perth will never properly understand the position in the North-West and North. Recommendations by travelling inspectors to the department in Perth, to be considered by the head and dealt with as the Minister might think fit, would involve great delays. It is one of the complaints frequently heard in the North that when problems arise in connection with the employment of natives, problems calling for immediate attention, there is nobody on the spot to deal with such questions promptly. I see no difficulty in the constitution of three divisions, as proposed. No policy can be laid down which will apply equally to the natives throughout Western Australia. The difference between the native problem of the North and the similar problem in the South is as wide as the distance that separates them. The appointment of travelling inspectors, who have after all only to make recommendations to the Commissioner, will not improve matters greatly. If, however, Parliament in its wisdom considers that it cannot agree to the appointment of divisional protectors, and insists on travelling inspectors, then we ought to have an advisory board, which would, incidentally, relieve the Minister of a great deal of the work which he rightly fears would be thrust on his shoulders if the matter were dealt with by travelling inspectors. Of the advisory board I wish to speak a little further in a minute or two. New provisions are made in the Bill to deal with offences between black and white. We have all heard what Mr. Craig said on that subject. I think we all realise it to be a most painful subject, one that is difficult to understand fully in the South. We ought to be grateful for the information Mr. Craig has furnished. But to my mind

there is no question that we must take some drastic steps to prevent what is going on, not only from a moral point of view, but also from a health point of view. We have been told about young fellows riding along and finding some beautiful woman in a tank. We have been told about others lying out in the sun and finding a girl under the blankets. But who is to tell us that the woman or the girl is perfectly healthy? We know how rampant certain diseases are in the North. We have heard what Mr. Baxter said on that subject.

Hon. V. Hamersley: And then there is leprosy.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: It is not only a question of leprosy. In my opinion there is a worse disease than leprosy amongst the natives in the North, one that probably has taken off hundreds as against single lives lost through leprosy. Not only that, but the disease is ruining the lives of hundreds of white men. That is the disease with which we have to cope. I agree with Mr. Craig that probably the penalty for the first offence is rather severe—imprisonment with a fine of £50. On the other hand, Mr. Moseley is very emphatic that there should be no fine, but straight-out imprisonment. Personally I should like to see, for the first offence, a fine not too high; and let the offender be made to understand how seriously the State regards his offence, and what a danger the offence is to himself. If he persists in offending in the same way, then on the second or third occasion let the penalty be one of imprisonment without fine. That is the only way to put down the offence.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is like gold-stealing; it will never be put down.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Gold-stealing does not often ruin health. Here the ruin may spread to two or more generations, causing untold misery to innocent people. The Bill deals with the native question, but the object of this particular provision is not so much to protect the natives as to protect white people from syphilisation. The Bill suggests the establishment of courts of native affairs, more or less as recommended by Mr. Moseley. The suggestion is a good one, but I would like to know what is meant by the words—

The court may call to its assistance the headman of the tribe to which the accused person belongs.

Surely the words do not mean that the headman will take any part in the proceedings in a judicial capacity? If that is not the idea, what is meant? If the headman is not to be there in a judicial capacity, why is he to be there?

The Chief Secretary: To advise the court.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I have had experience with natives, and have heard them in court for many years, and I have never yet seen one native who could give advice in any judicial capacity. If he is to be there as an interpreter, to tell the offender in a friendly way what the whole thing is about, to tell him what he should do to put his story right, and when he is sentenced explain to him the position, if headmen capable of doing those things are obtainable well and good.

Hon. J. Cornell: I understand the object to be that the headman shall explain the tribal customs.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Surely those customs could be gathered and placed in some book, which could be furnished to every magistrate dealing with native cases, so that he would be conversant with tribal customs. We may find one or two headmen able to carry out the job satisfactorily, but I doubt it.

The Chief Secretary: Let us give the proposal a trial.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: A recommendation made by Mr. Moseley in his report is the establishment of island settlements for delinquent natives. That is a recommendation which I think should receive serious consideration, in view of our knowledge of native prisoners being that they, or most of them, will escape at the first opportunity. If they are constantly locked up, their state is a very unhappy one indeed. There is nothing a native dislikes so much as being tied up or chained up early at night and not let out until late in the morning. I had a good deal of experience with natives many years ago in Roebourne. I was there for five or six years, and for portion of that time was an officer of the local court. There were then about 200 natives imprisoned in Roebourne. Their lot was anything but a happy one. They had to be locked up early, because they were always trying to get away. During the day they had to be chained to barrows, because that was the only way to hold them. The Government could afford only about half-a-dozen warders to mind the 200 natives, and of course the warders had

to take precautions to ensure that the natives did not get away. I may say that the natives did not feel the chaining very much, and that they did a good deal of useful work. Nevertheless, their lot was anything but a happy one. I do not believe in treating native prisoners with severity, because often they do not understand when they are transgressing the white man's laws. On the other hand, some years ago I saw good deal of the native establishment at Rottnest, long before the Minister knew anything about the island. There were then 300 native prisoners there. The life of those prisoners was totally different from that of native prisoners in Roebourne. The Rottnest prisoners got a good deal of liberty. They were not chained up. They went out in batches to do what work was necessary. They had their Saturday afternoons off, and on Sundays they had the whole day to themselves. They were rather a happy crowd, and were treated as I like to see native offenders treated—not harshly, but kindly, while at the same time they were made to realise that they had done wrong. It was quite a pleasure to see the way the Rottnest native prisoners enjoyed their day of rest. They went out fishing, and trapping wallabies, and always came back at night with huge bundles of wood to hold a wonderful corroboree, by way of entertaining the warders and their families and, of course, visitors on the Sunday evening. That is why I consider the two pictures are altogether different. Natives who have to be imprisoned should not be tied up and locked up as they now are, especially in the North-West, in hot stuffy prisons. What we want is an island where they could be placed to serve their terms of imprisonment. It would not be so expensive, because the prisoners would provide nearly all their own fodder. An island like Sunday Island at the entrance to King's Sound would be a suitable location for a settlement of that kind. And not only that, but it would keep the natives prisoners from contaminating other natives, who have not deserved imprisonment. The Bill does not tell us what is proposed to be done with diseased natives, of whom I was speaking a little while ago. That is another question which, in my opinion, merits the most serious consideration. What are we to do with the poor unfortunate creatures who are suffering from terrible venereal diseases? The hospitals at the ports are not satisfactory. Natives will get into them, and

so spread the diseases further. That has been known to happen time after time. Diseased natives must be segregated, and kept right away from all other natives. There are not many of them who recover, unfortunately; but all natives affected must be kept away from other natives, so as to minimise the evil as far as possible. Years ago the Government had two islands on which they had established lock hospitals to deal with this class of natives. Those hospitals proved to be a failure.

Hon. J. Cornell: What was the trouble?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I am about to tell the hon. member. The policy, in my opinion, was quite right; but the Government could not have selected two more unsuitable islands if they had picked over the whole of Western Australia. It is well known that Carnarvon is the third windiest place in the world, and those islands are only just off the coast at Carnarvon. For eight months of the year the wind howls at half a gale; the islands are low-lying and there is no protection from the wind. The poor unfortunate natives, mostly brought down from the tropics and suffering from terrible diseases, could procure no shelter on the islands. There is very little wood, and natives require fires, especially at night, and particularly when they are sick. The islands were useless for the purpose for which they were chosen, and the natives would not stop in the huts. If two suitable islands had been selected, I believe the scheme would have proved successful. I do not claim they would have been successful from the standpoint of effecting cures, because I am afraid there will be very few cures effected. On the other hand, more suitable islands would have proved the scheme successful in making the lives of the natives as happy as possible under their unfortunate circumstances. I feel certain that if the Government had selected two other islands, such as we have, say, in the Dampier group—I have in mind Rosemary and Enderby Islands—one of which would have been set aside for men and the other for women, the scheme would have been successful. The islands I mention are quite big enough to enable the natives to wander around. They could procure a certain quantity of food for themselves, and they could get plenty of fish. There is some timber on the islands, and ample shelter from the wind. While there may not be sufficient timber on the islands themselves, there is plenty procurable in the mangrove

creeks, and the timber there would have been ample for the fires of the natives. Certainly something should be done in that direction. I urge members to give very serious consideration to the impracticability of giving one individual the full responsibility to carry out the extremely important work of caring for the aborigines throughout this huge State of ours. Western Australia comprises a million square miles and the conditions vary from place to place. They are totally different in the North from those that obtain in the South, and I presume the same applies with regard to East and West. In his report, the Royal Commissioner, Mr. H. D. Moseley, said:—

It does seem to me a matter of impossibility that the affairs of the natives should be adequately governed by one officer having his headquarters in Perth. That is what the present form of administration amounts to.

In my opinion, whichever plan Parliament agrees to, either divisional protectors or travelling inspectors, we should establish an advisory board.

Hon. J. Cornell: All the sticky-beaks in the country would want to get on the board.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Not at all. There is always someone who is willing to endeavour to belittle a suggestion—even before that suggestion is made. I would advocate the appointment of the advisory board being left in the hands of the Minister. It should be an honorary board and should consist of gentlemen—I would not have ladies on the board because there will be matters to be dealt with that are not very savoury, matters with which no lady would like to be concerned—whose work it would be to advise the Minister from time to time, and, in fact, to relieve him of much of his work. I suggest that the men appointed to the board should know something about the business they would have to deal with. Perhaps a North-West member who has lived for many years in the northern parts of the State could be one of the members, and at the moment I have in mind the member for Pilbara in the Assembly, Mr. Welsh, who has lived among the natives for a long time and has employed many of them.

Hon. J. Nicholson: And there is Mr. Craig.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: At the moment I was dealing with the North. Regarding

the South, I would suggest a gentleman like Mr. Craig.

Hon. L. Craig: I do not know enough about the natives.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The hon. member gave himself away this afternoon; we know that he does. Perhaps another member could be chosen to represent the goldfields areas.

Hon. G. Fraser: Put the sticky-beak on.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Should a sticky-beak be appointed to the board, it would be the fault of the Minister himself, because I suggest that he should make the appointments and he should see to it that men were chosen who would be able to render him some assistance. Then, again, we might be able to secure Mr. Moseley as a member of the Board. He has done wonderful work in the interests of the natives. He travelled for over 15,000 miles and inspected every settlement, so his advice would be invaluable. That is the type of board I would suggest the Minister should appoint. Members of Parliament could be appointed to it, because it would be an honorary board. I am sure that they would furnish good advice and it must be remembered that it is not a matter of administration only. The Bill certainly deals with the administrative side, but that is not all there is to it. The problem is one involving matters of policy. Mr. Craig has suggested certain things that should be done and various activities that should be looked into. That is the type of work the advisory board could undertake.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That would be rather invidious for members of the Legislature.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: It might be possible to secure other gentlemen to act on the board. We might secure the services of one or two pastoralists who have retired but are intimately acquainted with the native problem.

Hon. G. Fraser: What about Daisy Bates? She knows a good deal about the natives.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But the hon. member does not want ladies on the board.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: That is so: I would bar them. Ladies may be useful on other boards, but with regard to the advisory board I am discussing various matters may crop up that I for one would not like to discuss with a woman. Then, again, if an advisory board were appointed,

the position would be safeguarded so that there would be no alteration in matters of policy or administration when a Government went out of power. If a board were established and were in operation for some considerable time, they would become accustomed to the work and we could be assured of continuity of policy. I do not suggest that the Minister would accept the proposals submitted to him by the board in every instance, but he would have the benefit of their advice. I agree with much that has been said already regarding more funds. We must provide more money for the amelioration of the conditions of the natives. At present we are not doing the job properly. It is all very well to say that Acts of Parliament have been passed, that funds have been provided, and that we have told the Chief Protector and others that they must look after the interests of the natives. If we are to do the job properly, we shall have to pay for it.

Hon. J. Cornell: The big job is to make the coloured section self-supporting.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Yes, and that is where the advisory board would come in. I am satisfied that many of the natives could be sent out rabbiting, kangaroo shooting and fox hunting. They are very fine hunters, and many of the natives would make a lot of money in that direction. The money could be handled by the Government and doled out to the natives as they required it. The balance could be retained for future requirements of those who had earned it. Western Australia is spending 19s. per head per annum on its native population as against Queensland's expenditure of £2 8s., New South Wales £5 7s., and South Australia £6 18s.

Hon. J. Cornell: But there are very few natives left in New South Wales.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: Those that are left in New South Wales should be able to earn their living. At any rate, there is a vast difference between the £5 7s. per head per annum that New South Wales spends on her natives, and the 19s. per head per annum that we make available for the benefit of our natives. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [5.55]: I am very glad that the Government have at last introduced legislation to deal with the natives, and I congratulate them upon the amending Bill. I confess that my perusal

of the measure created a certain amount of disappointment, because certain proposals have been included that led me to believe they were inspired by the department. Many essential matters affecting policy have been left undone. At the outset there is a proposal to alter the name by which the aborigines are known. I fail to appreciate why that is necessary. There is nothing derogatory in the name "aborigines," which means it refers to people who were in the country at the time of its early settlement, and to their descendants. On the other hand, the word "native" means "appertaining to the place of one's birth or native land." Many members of Parliament, including myself, are natives of Western Australia, but we are not aborigines, so I fail to see why the name should be changed at all. Perhaps there is something in the Minister's mind that induced him to propose the change. There are many desirable amendments included in the Bill, but much has been left undone. Certainly the Bill is an improvement on the parent Act. The Royal Commissioner, Mr. H. D. Moseley, in the course of his wonderful report, advocated decentralisation of control, but the Minister does not favour that policy, on the score of expense. I suggest a compromise under which one protector shall be appointed for the North-West and another for the South. I do not think it would be any more expensive than the present proposal of divisional inspectors. The officer in the North would be responsible only to the Minister, and there are many problems that would have to be dealt with quickly without the necessity for the officer journeying to Perth in order to submit his proposition to the Minister or the Chief Protector. Mr. Moseley does not advocate the establishment of an advisory board, but in that respect I think he is wrong. With Mr. Angelo, I consider an honorary advisory board quite essential, although not necessarily should it consist of members of Parliament. There are many public-spirited men who would be only too happy to act on such a board so as to advance the interests of the natives. There are probably some retired pastoralists and others living in the city who know something of the natives and their requirements.

Hon. J. Nicholson: In his report Mr. Moseley mentioned Mr. Cusack, who is a very fine type of man.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes, he is a very estimable person. I differ from Mr. Moseley

in this particular instance. The Minister said that we were out to do something for one particular set of people. I maintain that the aborigines represent many sets of people with many different languages—not dialects, but languages. The natives in the Kimberleys cannot understand the natives in the North-West and they adopt pidgin-English as a means of communication. Then, again, as we go further south the language is different and the methods of employment are quite different. In fact, everything is different except the colour. The problems of the natives in the North are totally dissimilar from those affecting the natives in the South. In the North the position is much easier, and the missionaries and the pastoralists have the situation well in hand. I do not think we need do much to alter the present position in the North. I know the natives are happy there. I have seen them at work. Some receive wages whereas others do not. Those who do not receive wages receive more than an equivalent. Generally speaking a working native has about a dozen relatives and hangers-on, all of whom have to be fed by the station. In the North-West, generally speaking the blacks are very happy. I would suggest taking a line of demarcation about Geraldton, having one protector for the whole of the North, and another for the South. The Minister has said we must give these people a chance to become good citizens. I fail to see in the Bill any provision at all under which we are going to give them a chance to become good citizens. We have to-day the sorry position created by the half-caste and the quarter-caste, and other blacks of various hues, almost all the colours of the rainbow, living in filthy camps. Yet there is no suggestion as to how we are going to take them away from the camps and put them somewhere else. Many of those people are only breeding up a race of rotten loafers, good for nothing and nobody. Something definite should be laid down for our future guidance. The half-castes should be segregated from the blacks, and put into schools and taught useful occupations. There is no reason why many of those fellows should not prove to be good farm hands. The girls, constituting the greatest problem of the lot, could be put into schools also. I would not be above taking them away from their mothers at the earliest possible stage. We have to face this problem, but so fast are these people breeding that during the last 12 months there has

been an increase of 400 in the previous population of 4,000 half-castes. So members can work that out for themselves and see what the position is likely to be in a few more years. There will then be so many half-castes and coloured people in the State that we shall not know what to do. But we owe it to the future generations of white people that something should be done to stop this ever-increasing menace. There are many ways of doing it. If those people were segregated instead of being allowed to breed like rabbits, that in itself would be an immense gain. One member spoke of a coloured man with 16 children. I understand that many such people have up to 10 children each. And, as we know, they live crowded together in a dirty filthy little humpy, and the children can see the intimacy that is going on between their parents. So what chance have such children got? Mr. Craig spoke about the penalties of the North. Without following the hon. member through all the details that he gave, I would say that but for the position in the South I would advocate the removal of these penalties altogether. I am sure that a small fine would meet the position, so long as those people who misbehave themselves are brought into a position where, a certain amount of publicity is inevitable. That, I think will overcome the position, more effectively than would heavy fines. So when in Committee I will support any amendment put forward to reduce the penalty. Another thing that would stop a lot of this increase in the half-caste population would be the preventing of half-caste girls from loafing around the towns. It does not require any special Act, for to-day we have the Vagrancy Act under which it could be done. I feel the police have been falling down on their job, for one has only to go into a country town any night, especially any Saturday night, to see the half-caste girls waiting about for the young fellows to come along. So I say I think the police are a good deal to blame for this great increase in quarter-castes in the southern areas. The Bill provides for compulsory examination of any persons suspected of being diseased. Personally I think the time has come when all natives should be periodically examined for disease. Without such an examination it is not easy to say that a person is diseased. So I suggest to the Minister that a periodical examination should be made of every aboriginal in the State to whom

inspectors have access—for, of course, many aborigines in the bush would not be easily accessible to the inspector. It is quite impossible to tell without examination whether or not a half-caste or a quarter-caste has leprosy or venereal disease. I have heard of coloured women who have acquired disease from someone else, but are not aware that they have it. When in Committee I shall move for a compulsory periodical examination of all aborigines and coloured people in the State. That would save the spreading of disease in the future and would tend to stamp it out straight away. Under present conditions it is only a matter of time when disease will be rampant amongst those people in the Great Southern areas, for most of them are living in much worse conditions than those in which the blacks live up North. Even there, of course, we find fairly large families sleeping together in one humpy.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And with a couple of dogs.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Yes, and with a couple of dogs. In the Bill it is left to the Protector to decide whether a marriage shall be performed. I think the Protector should be instructed by Parliament that no half-caste is to marry a black. I would absolutely prohibit that. I know that the long distance view is to breed these people right out, but so long as the half-castes can mate with the full blacks, the process is being reversed, and in five years' time we shall have a great many more half-castes and quarter-castes than we have to-day. Under our marriage laws I would not allow any coloured person to marry a black. I hope the Minister will not think I have unduly criticised the Bill. I know the aborigines have not had a chance in the past. Mr. Angelo has taken out some figures about our coloured population, and another member has said that in Queensland there are 16,000. However, in my view that is no excuse. We have to face the position. I am aware that this Chamber cannot increase the aborigines Vote, but I do hope that in another place more money will be voted to cope with this great menace to Western Australia. Mr. Baxter has said that we should deal with the matter by a slow process. I do not believe in that, for I think we require to get at it straight away, else we shall be faced with such a problem in future that we will be unable to cope with it. I will support the second reading.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [6.10]: I will support the Bill, for I think it is long overdue. I cannot understand why the Government have difficulty in finding more money for this very important legislation. There seems to be no suggestion of any increased expenditure by the Government. We know that a money Bill cannot be introduced in the Council, but I should like to ask the Minister that when replying to the debate he should tell us how much extra money it is anticipated spending on the aborigines. Surely with those unfortunate people living in the conditions in which they are, the Government should take determined steps to segregate them. The only way of doing that is by the expenditure of money in building places where the coloured people could reside. We have had an experience down at Carrolup, in my province. While the experiment was condemned by many people, at all events the natives had the use of this area of land. True their dogs gave considerable trouble to the adjacent settlers, and many charges were made against them. At the same time I feel confident that most of those natives did appreciate having a home to go to. In the Great Southern we have the missionaries at work, and in places like Gnowangerup I have had opportunity to appraise the splendid work being done by those missionaries. Many farmers and settlers in that district prefer to have the services of a native to that of the average working man. Several people have told me that in the Gnowangerup district it has been suggested that with our National Park at the Porongorups, and with a large area extending between the Porongorups and the ranges and Cranbrook, land might be set aside so that the coloured people should be able to take up small farms and work them under satisfactory supervision. That area of land would also afford a hunting ground for the full-blooded blacks. Then I understand there is another area down by the Tone River that could be reserved for a similar purpose. All this, of course, would cost money, but I think the time has arrived when money must be found for the purpose. One has only to travel through the Great Southern to realise the dirt and filth amongst which the natives are existing in their camps. Only last winter I was travelling through to Williams when the local policeman asked me to come along and see a particular camp. It was in a terrible condition. There seemed to be as many

dogs as natives in the camp. The camp was very low-lying, and it was terrible to see the half caste children mixing up with the natives.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I should now like to deal with the question of education. In the Great Southern areas the children of half-castes and quarter-castes, who are living under the same conditions as white people, are receiving their education at the State schools. The parents are living as respectable citizens, and taking up their citizenship in an honourable way. They should be permitted to send their children to school. The younger children, however, must be removed from the terrible environment under which they are now living. Money will have to be found by the Government to create institutions to provide for this. To-night we heard Mr. Angelo talking about an advisory committee or board. We also heard several members refer to "sticky-beaks." I do not know what is meant by that term. Does it mean interference with the conditions of the aborigines?

Hon. J. Cornell: That may be due to your innocence.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: If they are referring to the great interest which the clergy and missionaries take in the natives, the term does not apply, because these people are doing wonderful work. In Narrogin the Rev. Mr. Boxall, the Church of England Minister, takes a particularly keen interest in the welfare of the natives. When the Bill was first before Parliament a resolution was passed by Synod in Bunbury asking that the conditions of the natives should be carefully investigated. There are hundreds of half-castes in my district, and they are there to stay. Some splendid citizens are to be found amongst them. Several have spoken to me recently. Quite a number of them can read and write, and they have been educated in State schools. They do not like the idea of being classed with the natives. To a certain extent this is class legislation, or it brings the nigger or native into the same category as half-castes. There should be some distinction between them, especially when these people are endeavouring to better their conditions and become good citizens. We discussed

in connection with the Electoral Act a proposal to give these people power to register as voters. In my office a few weeks ago a very smart half-caste man made the following observations:—"I can read and write. I have a farm of 600 acres which I have selected. I am not allowed to raise any money from the Agricultural Bank because they do not consider my land of sufficient value. I am married to a half-caste girl. We both have a vote. I am not permitted to take up my citizenship. If I enter an hotel I at once come under the ban of the police." I replied, "You have the right to vote and your wife has the same right, and you are living under good conditions and are improving the land." This man, by the way, owns horses and has built his own home. He said, "Mr. Neville will not give me that right." Sometimes I think the Chief Protector has too much power. I realise that Mr. Neville has given excellent service to the State, and has been faithful to the Minister and the Government. He is, however, given too much power. That is why I am sorry that the Bill does not allow for two or three zones, as suggested in the excellent report of the Royal Commissioner. The conditions in the North are different from those in the South. If a Commissioner were appointed for the South, encircling the Great Southern and the Geraldton districts, he would be responsible to the Minister for the administration of the Act. It is not too late to make the necessary amendment. The Chief Secretary has always been courteous when members have gone to his office with respect to these unfortunate people. I feel sure he has their welfare at heart, and will be only too pleased to accept the advice of those who genuinely desire to help these persons. Mr. Craig referred to the penalties for having intercourse with the natives. I do not think any fine would be too great for offenders in our district. The position is different in the North, for in that case I would not make the punishment imprisonment.

Hon. L. Craig: You must separate the North from the South.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: Yes. As Mr. Wood has said the trouble occurs on the outskirts of the towns. These girls often wait for opportunities to get into touch with the old drunks and others who are under the

influence of liquor and who will take drink to the native camps. That is how so much trouble occurs. I have nothing but good to say of the splendid work the police are endeavouring to carry out, particularly in the province I represent. They are very kind to the natives, but are certainly firm with them. After dark in the Great Southern districts it is seldom one sees a native in the town. If there is such a thing as a circus or a show going on they may get a special permit to remain in the precincts of the town. Occasionally we hear big arguments going on in native camps. My property in Katanning adjoins a native reserve. A few weeks ago a native woman had her skull crushed and she suffered from concussion, because another native had taken drink into the camp. That sort of thing must be controlled. The liquor laws are severe enough for anybody. Any one who takes liquor to these people should be severely dealt with. The Chief Secretary referred to illegitimate children in connection with these people. I am glad the same law is going to apply to those illegitimate children as it does to the illegitimate children of white people. When it can be proved that a man is the father of one of these children he should be made responsible, and pay the same maintenance as an ordinary person has to do. That will afford the natives some protection. I have been told by the police that in many cases they can trace the fathers of these children, but they are not allowed by law to bring them to justice. It would be a move in the right direction if the white man's law were applied to the men in question. I refer to the Child Welfare Act. I welcome the Bill and reserve the right to discuss certain clauses of it in Committee. I hope that all Governments will see that a larger sum of money is made available so that these unfortunate people may have their conditions improved and their welfare studied. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—TENANTS, PURCHASERS, AND MORTGAGORS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [7.42] in moving the

second reading said: The purpose of the Bill is to continue the Act passed by Parliament in 1930 as a result of the unemployment that followed the advent of the depression. It was hoped then that the conditions which necessitated the relief embodied in this legislation would not continue in existence over a protracted period, and, consequently, the Act was made operative for only one year. Unfortunately, a considerable section of our community has continued to experience depression conditions since the enactment of the initial Bill, with the result that, during each of the last six years, the Bill has been brought before Parliament for re-endorsement. The Act now operating makes provision for the tenant, purchaser, or mortgagor to take action in the court to obtain a stay order to prevent the landlord, owner, or mortgagee from exercising his rights. Under other legislation, the latter are not debarred from exercising their rights, unless the tenant, purchaser, or mortgagor concerned makes application for a stay order. In that case, both parties are summoned to appear before the court. Consideration is then given to all the circumstances and a decision is made on the result of evidence heard and facts adduced. Rights under this Act are given only to persons in difficult circumstances, by reason of unemployment or part-time employment. Despite the general improvement in economic conditions during recent years, the necessity still exists for the continuation of this legislation. Last year 27 applications were made to the court under the provisions of the Act. There would have been a considerably greater number of applications for stay orders but for the fact that there is no legislation preventing people from contracting themselves outside the provisions of the Act. A provision is contained in the present Bill to prevent this practice. This amendment seeks to debar landlords and mortgagees from taking advantage of a person's unfortunate economic position for the purpose of compelling him to sign away his rights under the law. Members will join with me, I am sure, in the hope that this witnesses the last occasion on which it will be necessary for legislation of such a nature to receive their consideration. From long experience with the conditions of part-time employment and unemployment in the Fremantle district, I feel it is absolutely necessary for this legislation

to be continued for at least another year. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. V. Piesse, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.49 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 29th September, 1936.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 1.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—BUTTER, LABELS.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that butter is being sold, contrary to law, in wrappers marked "North Coast" and "Bunbury" which has not been produced in the places named? 2, If so, will he give instructions for proceedings to be taken against the persons or firms who are breaking the law?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes, and have considered amending legislation to prevent the practice. 2, The matter is in the hands of the Dairy Products Marketing Board, who are dealing with it. Anyone can, however, take action under the Criminal Code.

QUESTION—TROLLEY BUSES, CLAREMONT ROUTE.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Have tenders been accepted for one complete unit and eleven chassis and