

Clauses 7 to 12, 14, 16 to 19, 21 and 23—agreed to.

Title agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd September, 1919.

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

QUESTION—REPATRIATION, ARMADALE COMMITTEE.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Premier: 1, Is there a repatriation committee at Armadale? 2, If so, what are the names of the members of the committee? 3, How many applications for the purchase of properties have been referred to that committee? 4, How many of the properties purchased were owned by members of the committee?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, James Butcher (chairman), J. W. Turner (secretary), W. R. Han, J. H. Champion, Fred Burnes, B. S. Chapman, J. A. Papson. 3, Sixty-one applications have been referred to this committee in accordance with the department's practice, under which all applications worthy of consideration are referred to the local committee and the departmental inspector, and (in the case of orchard properties) to the Agricultural Department expert and W.A. Orchardists' League. All the

reports are considered by the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Board before purchase is approved. 4, Five, all of which were portions of Mr. James Butcher's estate. A special valuation was made in each of these cases by the chief inspector of the Agricultural Bank.

QUESTION—WHEAT STORAGE, FREMANTLE CHARGES.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: In view of the Wheat Marketing Commission's report upon excessive storage charge on wheat at Fremantle, (a) Are any steps being taken to get a refund of the £12,000 per annum charged for storage on wheat in past years by the Fremantle Harbour Trust? (b) Is he aware that even Sydney charged only £6,000 per annum, where much more wheat was stored and shipped at Darling Island Dock?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: (a) The amount of storage paid to the Harbour Trust was by arrangement and was the best deal that could be made. (b) The Government are not aware of the amount charged to the New South Wales Wheat Scheme for storage at Darling Island.

QUESTION—STALLIONS REGISTRATION BILL.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister: Is it intended to introduce a Stallions Registration Bill this session?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: No.

QUESTION—BULK HANDLING OF GRAIN.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, In view of the high price of bags, is it the intention of the Government to proceed with a scheme for the bulk handling of grain, in accordance with the recommendations of the local Commission which considered the subject? 2, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: The matter is receiving consideration.

QUESTION—CORNSACKS, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFER.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Did the Federal Government, on or about the 17th July, offer to assist the Government to obtain cornsacks for the State for the coming harvest? 2, Did the Government decline the Federal Government's offer? 3, Will the Government state what grounds they had for advising the Federal Government that there were sufficient cornsacks in this State for the coming harvest? 4, In view of the present prospects of an abundant harvest, will the Government review the position? 5, If satisfied that

there is a prospective shortage of bags, will they endeavour to secure for this State a further sufficient supply?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, On the 3rd July the Acting Prime Minister wired that various members of the Australian Wheat Board considered that in view of a possible shortage of cornsacks, steps should be taken by the Commonwealth and the four wheat States conjointly to meet the position by making necessary purchases and freight arrangements. 2, The Government decided not to take any action in the matter. 3, The Government considered that the acreage sown with wheat this season was approximately the same as last season, and as the cornsacks arranged for by merchants were sufficient for a 50 per cent. increase in the yield, the circumstances did not warrant their taking any action. 4 and 5, When the harvest is assured the Government will carefully review the position and consider the question of making suitable arrangements to overcome any shortage that may be anticipated.

QUESTION—QUARANTINE CHARGES, REFUND.

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is he aware that passengers on the "Victoria" and other boats, who came to Western Australia from Melbourne early this year, were charged £3 10s. each for prospective quarantine charges, in addition to their ordinary fares and that although the boats were not quarantined, these quarantine charges were not refunded? 2, Who retains this money, the Government or the shipping companies? 3, Will the Government see that the amounts are refunded to the passengers concerned?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (for the Colonial Secretary) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Shipping company. 3, The Government have already endeavoured to secure a refund of the charges made but without success.

QUESTION—STUD STOCK PURCHASES IN EASTERN STATES.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Is it a fact that the Government are purchasing stud bulls in the Eastern States? 2, Is he aware that breeders in this State have for sale pedigree stock of different breeds? 3, Is he aware that breeders of stock in this State have shown their stock in the Eastern States with considerable credit, and that to effect profitable sales they have to export their young stud stock to the Eastern States? 4, If not, in view of the above, will he take steps to fill our State requirements locally?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, There have been purchased in Victoria one stud bull for the Department of Agriculture, and five stud bulls for the Soldier Settlement Scheme. 2, Yes, but the number

of breeders is limited, and the selection restricted. 3, (a) Yes; (b) It is understood that one or two breeders have exported some stud stock. 4, State requirements are filled locally wherever possible, but the purchases made were necessary in the interests of the dairying industry. If further purchases are decided on they will be made from whatever source is found to be most advantageous to that industry, but, when new strains are required, it is essential to import.

QUESTION — TAXATION RETURNS, EXTENSION OF TIME.

Mr. ANGELO asked the Premier: In view of the irregularity of communication, will he arrange with the Commissioner of Taxation to grant taxpayers resident north of Geraldton an extra month wherein to furnish their land and income tax returns?

The PREMIER replied: Yes.

BILLS (2)—REPORT.

- (1) State Children Act Amendment.
 - (2) Justices Act Amendment.
- Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—CROWN SUITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Hardwick, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the Colonial Secretary (Mr. Broun—Beverley) and Mr. Teesdale (Roebourne) on the ground of ill-health.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Slaughter of Calves.
 - 2, Vermin Act Amendment.
- Introduced by the Honorary Minister.

RETURN—TENDERS ACCEPTED.

Mr. GARDINER (Irwin) [4.46]: I move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing:—(a) All tenders accepted for the burial of indigent persons and aborigines. (b) Tenders accepted for food supplies for Government institutions for the year ending 30th June, 1919.

In moving this I have no desire to put the country to any needless expense in providing an elaborate return. The Colonial Treasurer is the rubber stamp of the Tender Board. His name has to go on all tenders accepted by that board. When these papers are laid on the Table of the House I think they may reflect somewhat upon my own personal ad-

ministration. I am asking for them because I want the present Treasurer and the House to judge whether our present system of obtaining tenders through the Tender Board is satisfactory in all respects, and whether as a result of that system the Government are purchasing supplies at the best possible prices.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They are paying pretty heavily under (a).

Mr. GARDINER: Quite so. I found that even under (a) I would be putting my stamp on as approving of certain tenders individually, but when I saw them collectively I received a shock. The disparity in the prices for tenders accepted for the same class of goods for different districts was very marked. The return I ask for is in existence, and the Government will be put to no expense on that score. I might have taken several other lines, but I thought in taking (b) it would at least show the House whether this is the best system we can adopt for what we desire to get. With regard to supplies, again I found myself acting as a sort of rubber stamp, but when it came to an examination of the collective tenders I found that in several instances the prices were very much higher where the product was produced and manufactured than it was in Perth. When I went through the hospital supplies I found such a disparity in prices for tenders accepted that it began to make me nervous. My object is to assist the present Treasurer and to enlighten the House. It may lead to a better system of accepting tenders. Merely because there is one tender put in that tender ought not to be accepted if it shows a very much higher price than the current rate ruling for a particular item. I hope the Government will agree to have this return placed on the Table so that the information which I was trying to fathom before I left office may be made available to members. We can then decide whether this is the best system to be employed for getting the most favourable results.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.48]: I am pleased that this motion has been moved. I am of opinion that if hon. members realised the prices that are charged in connection with the burial of indigent persons they would get up an agitation to ask the Government to enter into the undertaking business.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They had better bury themselves to begin with.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government, of which I was a member, in their last year of office took the matter under consideration on account of the prices charged. There is no doubt that in many cases the prices were altogether too high. In some instances only one tender was submitted, and one was driven to the conclusion that an arrangement had previously been arrived at. The practice in Victoria for many years is that when a tenderer has not carried out his work in a proper manner he is prohibited from tendering in the future, and is struck off the list.

Realising this, and knowing that satisfaction had not been given in the case of supplies that had been made to the Government, I issued instructions that a certain firm was not to be allowed to tender any more for Government supplies until it had carried out its work in a satisfactory manner, and it was seen that the material was up to standard. I was surprised later when tenders were called for almost similar supplies to find that these were the only people tendering, and that no one else would tender against them. I do not know if there was actual collusion, but this appeared to have been the case. In other words, we had to accept their tender or get nothing at all. The ring outside was so strong that compulsion was used to force the hands of the Government. This had to do with electrical machinery. I support the motion because I think it will open the eyes of hon. members when they see the return.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [4.51]: I am afraid the preparation of this return will be more costly than hon. members suppose.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is there written out.

The PREMIER: I doubt that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: These returns are made out every year.

The PREMIER: If hon. members desire to have the information I shall be glad to see that it is supplied. The present system of purchasing for institutions such as those we control cannot be expected to be quite satisfactory. It is true there is considerable disparity in the prices paid for the same article at various points, and it is often impossible to bring these prices into line. The purchases for our various institutions are spread over a good many items, and it is very difficult to control the prices and make certain that the Government are getting true value for their money. We often have to buy a thing that we know very well is being charged too much for. I believe that when hon. members get the return they will be satisfied that the purchases made in the past have been made in a satisfactory manner. I have no opposition to offer to the motion, for I think the House should know what has been done in this regard. I believe that all hon. members are interested to a greater or lesser extent in this question, and I am glad that they should have an opportunity of knowing what the business conducted with regard to our institutions has been.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—STATE CHILDREN AND CHARITIES DEPARTMENTS.

Select Committee to inquire.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth) [4.58]: I move—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the State Children and Charities Departments.

My reason for moving this is that we know very little about these departments and the House is supplied with very skimpy reports if they are reports at all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not the fault of the officers.

Mr. SMITH: I am referring to the reports supplied to the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The reports used to be good, but they have now been cut down.

Mr. SMITH: I am not going further back than the few years during which I have been connected with the House. I am more concerned about the immediate present and the future. These departments are spending large sums of money, and the House has a right to know exactly how it is being spent and whether the country is getting value for that money.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Look at the Auditor General's report and see how small it is. The same thing applies to other offices. They are not allowed to supply the information.

Mr. SMITH: We are dealing with one set of departments in particular. I know very little about what has taken place in these departments, and how the money has been spent. I should like to compare the last few years to show how the vote has been increased. In 1913-14 the State Children and Charities Department cost the country £63,684. In the next year, 1914-15, the combined votes increased to £81,336, or nearly £20,000 more. In the following year the vote still further increased to £87,545.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There was a National Government in then and poverty had increased.

Mr. SMITH: I do not think it made any difference which Government was in power at the time. The matter is entirely in the hands of the department and so far as I can see the Minister controlling the expenditure of these departments has very little to say in the matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He has all to say.

Mr. SMITH: But he only says what he is told by the heads of the department.

Hon. P. Collier: That depends on the Minister.

Mr. SMITH: All Ministers are alike so far as I can see in matters of this kind. It is a human impossibility for a Minister to become au fait with the minute management of these departments, and as a consequence he has to rely very largely on the permanent head. To go back to figures, in the year 1916-17 the amount was still in the 80 thousands.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was a slight decrease due to a change of Government.

Mr. SMITH: The decrease was about £500.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The assistance to women was cut down.

Mr. SMITH: In 1917 the amount reached high-water mark, being £88,410.

Hon. P. Collier: The economy Government had got into their stride by that time.

Mr. SMITH: This huge total was made up of £68,000 for the State Children's De-

partment and the remainder for the Charities Department. The name of the latter by the way was altered in that year to the Homes Department. I draw attention to the fact that in that year the amount spent in the State Children's Department exceeded the Estimates by some £10,000. The House has not been supplied with reports concerning the expenditure of this money and we are entitled to know how it has been expended and whether we are getting value for that expenditure. I have no doubt that a large amount of this money is being well spent, but I am not certain about it. I want to be sure that we are getting value for our money, and in view of the fact that we have not been supplied with reports by the Ministerial head, I consider that the simplest and cheapest and most expeditious way of investigating the matter would be by appointing a select committee to inquire into the management of these departments. With regard to the expenditure of money, I would like to remind the House that last year in answer to an inquiry of mine, it was explained that very large sums were outstanding. These were sums that should have been collected from people who were indebted to the department, but it does not appear that anything has been collected. I would like to refresh the memory of hon. members by quoting some of these figures. In 1914 the amount outstanding was £7,398; in 1915 this total had increased to £11,000. This was due by parents for the upkeep of their children by the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Are you sure of that?

Mr. SMITH: These figures were supplied by Sir Henry Leffroy who was then Premier. In 1916 the total increased still further, being £13,905; in 1917 the figures dropped to £3,500, but I would like to point out that that decrease was not due to any payments made by the parents, but was due to the fact that the Government had written off about £10,000 as bad debts. For the reasons which I have given the House should look into these questions because it seems to me a very slack way of doing things to pile up such enormous sums of money every year, then find that they cannot be collected and subsequently write them off. No business can be carried on on such lines. The department should see that some of the money is collected. Instead of that they adopt a very easy way of getting rid of the liability—they write it off.

Mr. Pickering: They realise there is no hope of collecting it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That might have been going on for 10 years.

Mr. SMITH: For many years, but I want to ascertain whether the department are taking every precaution and are doing everything to collect the money. I know, of course, it is not possible to collect money from everybody, but when there is such a huge sum of money outstanding, it seems to indicate that there is laxity somewhere. Last year, as I have stated, the total was brought

down to just under £3,500. I am sorry that owing to the short notice I have not been able to get all my facts together.

Mr. Underwood: You have had all the week.

Mr. Thomson: You have the "Sunday Times" behind you.

Mr. SMITH: Most people go to the "Sunday Times" with complaints.

Mr. Green: You and the member for Fremantle are the only members here who have papers behind them.

Mr. SMITH: I have hinted that there must be a lack of proper supervision in the expenditure of the funds at the disposal of these departments and in order to support my statement, I would like to quote one or two extraordinary instances, that have come under my notice. I am not going to give any names but I can assure members that the cases are fair samples of those which come under the notice of the department almost every week.

Mr. Foley: You do not want to take much notice of anonymous stuff.

Mr. SMITH: This is not anonymous. In one particular case a widow with a family was granted monetary relief. Later on she married again but did not disclose the fact to the department, and payments for the upkeep of her children and herself went on in the usual way, although her second husband was in receipt of a good salary in one of the Government departments.

Mr. Thomson: For how long were the payments made?

Mr. SMITH: It was about two years before the department "took a tumble" that she was married, and I may say that ample proof of that marriage was given because this woman gave birth to a child, and though the department were aware of that they continued to pay the allowance for a considerable time. Another case which was discovered showed that the department had overpaid a lady at Northam to the extent of £36. There was still another case where a family was receiving an allowance from the Charities Department and they were able to take a trip to the Eastern States by the Transcontinental railway. All this time the Charities Department were paying an allowance.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How could that be done if the people were away?

Mr. SMITH: I do not know, but it happened.

Mr. Foley: Did the children for whom the payments were being made also go to the Eastern States?

Mr. SMITH: Yes. I have no desire to weary the House with the recital of incidents of this sort, but I can assure hon. members that there are many cases. I would give another instance, and this is a most glaring one. The station-master at one of our suburban stations parted company with his wife and he threw the onus of supporting his children on the State; he positively refused to pay for their upkeep, although he was in the employ of another department. The

State Children Department allowed the money to accumulate until they thought it time to take steps to make him pay. They summoned him but he ignored the summons, and then they proceeded against him under a judgment summons and he was sent to gaol for a few weeks. He served his time at Fremantle, returned to his former position as station-master, and absolutely refused to pay for the upkeep of his children.

Hon. P. Collier: He should have been made to pay.

Mr. Underwood: But he was not.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He could not allow the children to starve.

Mr. SMITH: I am not blaming the department for maintaining the children, but there should have been some means by which the cost of maintenance could have been deducted from his salary. It is absurd that a man in one Government department, receiving a good salary, should be able to leave his wife and children to be supported by another Government department. There was another case at Collie recently. A reputedly single woman had twin children, and an application was made to the department for support. The case was investigated by the inspector and the secretary; they were satisfied it was a deserving case and paid the woman an allowance for 12 months. It was then discovered that she was a respectable married woman living with her husband. This shows there is something wrong with the method of inspection.

Hon. P. Collier: Would not she be liable to be prosecuted?

Mr. Underwood: But she was not prosecuted.

Mr. SMITH: I want to know why the department were so negligent as not to prosecute. There was another case at Collie. A woman, who was deserted by her husband, divorced him. She and her children were thrown on the care of the State. The State very properly granted her an allowance and continued to pay it for a long time. It was then discovered that, within a few months after her divorce, she had rejoined her husband and was living with him. He was in a good billet, but she still drew the money from the State for the support of the children.

Mr. Wilson: Why did not the department prosecute?

Mr. SMITH: They should have prosecuted.

Mr. Foley: You do not want a select committee to find out why they did not prosecute.

Mr. SMITH: That is only one case from hundreds that might be quoted.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I doubt whether there are hundreds. These are one or two you have picked out.

Mr. SMITH: In justice to the department, these cases should be thoroughly investigated, so that we can ascertain whether they are bona fide. A select committee would do a considerable amount of good. It seems to me that once the de-

partment get a man, woman or child on their books, they keep on paying the allowance, irrespective of whether there is justification for it or not. It is quite possible that a family to-day might be hard up and it is only right to support them; perhaps in six or 12 months' time that family might get on their feet again. In that case support from the State should cease. But there are many people who are mean enough to continue to accept a dole of charity from the State, even when capable of supporting themselves. I want a committee to ascertain whether there is a proper system of checking the charity being paid out by the State. I know it is the practice of the department to allow payments for the upkeep of children to get into arrears, and to take no proceedings until the amount becomes quite alarming.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What would you do in the meantime, starve the child?

Mr. SMITH: No, but the department allow arrears to mount up to £100 or more before taking proceedings. Then perhaps they find themselves in the position of asking a man, getting £3 a week, to pay £100, and it is like trying to draw blood out of a stone to get anything from him. If these amounts were paid regularly, the parent would not notice the outlay, but when parents are allowed to cultivate careless habits and incur heavy arrears, it becomes impossible for them to pay, and the only thing left for the department to do is to write off the arrears. Under a proper system, these amounts would be paid weekly or fortnightly, according as the parent received his wages. Until recently, the department have been proceeding against parents in such cases in the Children's Court. The Children's Court was never intended for cases of this sort. It was intended to prevent a child being branded as a criminal and having his name published to the world for some slight offence. But the department have been bringing cases of maintenance into the Children's Court and thereby parents have been able to evade publicity because, under the Children's Court regulations, newspapers are not permitted to publish the names of the people prosecuted therein.

Hon. P. Collier: Are the cases, brought by the department for maintenance, heard in the Children's Court?

Mr. SMITH: Yes, for maintenance purely and simply, cases which would reflect no disgrace whatever on the child if reports of them were published.

Mr. Underwood: Do you mean in cases where the department are suing parents for maintenance?

Mr. SMITH: Yes, I refer to those cases and not to cases where the mother is suing the alleged father. There is no publicity in these cases and many people, who evade their obligations, simply snap their fingers at the department and refuse to pay. They say, "Let the State support the children; I shall not do it." The names of such peo-

ple should be published. A select committee could inquire why the department adopted this procedure. In many cases, wealthy people have been sued for maintenance for the support of their children and, at the last minute, the summonses have been withdrawn and the money has not been paid.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a serious allegation.

Mr. SMITH: I know a case concerning one of the wealthiest women in Perth, who refused to pay for the upkeep of her grandchildren, for which she was legally liable. She was summoned and, at the last minute, the summons was withdrawn, why, nobody knows.

Hon. P. Collier: Some influence at work.

Mr. SMITH: Probably.

Mr. Green: Was the member for North Perth responsible for having the summons withdrawn?

Mr. SMITH: That could be ascertained by a select committee. I am told that considerable dissatisfaction exists in the department owing to favouritism, and the result is inefficiency in the working of the department. I do not know whether this is correct, but the statement should be investigated. The office accommodation is very unsatisfactory. If an inspector wishes to have a private conversation with a member of the public, he has to hold it in the passage. That is very unsatisfactory.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister for Works is reorganising the whole of the accommodation.

The Premier: And is doing a lot of good work, too.

Mr. Underwood: He will spend a few thousand pounds.

Mr. SMITH: This should be the subject of an inquiry. The inspectors should have proper accommodation so that they can interview members of the public. The department is overcrowded and, in consequence, there is a great muddle in the working. An amusing incident occurred recently. A lady applied for a State child. Many women, who have no children of their own, adopt a child from the department, and the practice of the department is to institute inquiries regarding the character of the applicant to make sure that she is a fit and proper person to be entrusted with the care of a child. They naturally look to the police to help them, and in this instance they instructed the police to make inquiries. After a few days' search it was discovered that the applicant herself had been a ward of the department. Therefore the department should have had all details as to character, and should have been under no necessity to apply to another department for information.

Hon. P. Collier: That would not necessarily follow. It would be years previously that the lady had been a ward, and the department could not be expected to remember the name.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. SMITH: I am not stressing that particular instance. Another phase of the management of the department which I must mention is the method adopted in distributing the children. The distribution does not always seem to be guided by a consideration for the best interests of the child. Frequently a child is sent to an institution when it would be much better for the child if a home were found for it. There are cases where children have been taken from their mothers and made State children. The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) has heard of the case of the Brown children.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They were committed by the court. They were not taken from the mother by the State.

Mr. SMITH: I do not know who really was responsible, but the fact remains that one of the children after removal from the mother fell ill and died.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The child had good attendance, though.

Mr. SMITH: The other child also fell ill, and only as the result of insistent appeals by the mother was the child returned from the institution to her. She gave it proper attention and nourishment, with the result that it lived.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The mother herself told me that the child was so much taken with the person looking after it, that it would leave the mother to run to that person.

Mr. SMITH: I think the case could have been so arranged that the children might remain with their mother. In that event the life of the other child might have been saved. Undoubtedly there is a tendency in the department to send all State children to institutions instead of boarding them out. In this connection there are numerous cases of what I might almost describe as cruel.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: In the case you have just mentioned, the children were put into an institution at the mother's request.

Mr. SMITH: I was not aware of that. However, I know of a case in which a child had been boarded out for two or three years with a lady who was almost a mother to it, who practically adopted the child and became greatly attached to it, the child also being greatly attached to this lady. Later an application was made to the department by some people in better circumstances who desired to adopt a child; and the department selected this particular child, and took it away from the foster-mother with whom it had been for a number of years. The taking away was much against the wishes of the lady and also against the desire of the child.

Mr. Foley: If that lady had adopted the child, the department could not have taken it away from her.

Mr. SMITH: She had practically adopted the child, but was still being paid so much per week by the department for its keep.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Is that another Fremantle case?

Mr. SMITH: I do not know where that particular case occurred. Possibly the child

may have been removed to a home better circumstanced financially, but the feelings of the foster-mother and also of the child ought not to have been disregarded. This was distinctly a case of cruelty. Another case within my knowledge is that of a lady who had been asked by a neighbour and a very close friend, on her death bed, to take charge of her children. The lady did as requested, and with the consent of the father kept the children for twelve months. After that lapse of time the father married again, and he thought he would like to take the children back from these friends who had practically adopted them. He did take them away, but it was only a matter of a little time when he applied to the State to take them over. Thereupon the State, instead of handing the children back to the family who had cared for them after the mother's death, separated the two children from each other and placed them in different institutions. Moreover, the department took from the children their original names and gave them other names. It cost the family who had befriended the children considerable time and trouble to get them back again. I do not know why the department should have hesitated in that instance to return the children to the family who had already looked after them. There is absolutely nothing against those people, who are highly respectable. However, as I say, there seems to be an anxiety on the part of the department to make these children State children and to keep them in institutions. I do not say there is any collusion between the department and these institutions, but there does seem to be a feeling that once a child is made a State child it should be kept in an institution.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The great difficulty is to get suitable foster-mothers.

Mr. SMITH: I know there is a great difficulty in that respect, but we must admit that it is much better for a child to be brought up in a home circle rather than in an institution. No matter how bad the average home may be, it cannot be worse than many of the institutions are. This is a particularly wide motion, and I suppose a great deal more might be said on it; but I must make a few observations on the manner in which children are handled after their committal by the Children's Court. Under the State Children Act of 1907, an Act which is twelve years old, and which ought to be replaced by a new Statute—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has just been amended.

Mr. SMITH: I am aware of that. However, under that Act children committed to institutions are supposed to receive five hours' education daily until they are 11 years of age, and from that age until 14 years they are supposed to have only three hours' instruction daily.

Mr. Underwood: And how much work?

Mr. SMITH: As much work as can be got out of them. I understand the children

are kept working in the gardens, slaving away at growing vegetables—

Mr. Underwood: And at milking cows.

Mr. SMITH: Yes; and I believe that work is done for the benefit of the institutions. The children are supposed to be getting an education in this way, but the work is not educational at all. All the results of the children's work go to the credit of the institution. I do not think it is the wish of hon. members that children sent to these institutions should be turned into drudges.

Mr. Underwood: The Fairbridge farm school is run on the same principle of enslaving children.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That one is the worst of the lot.

Mr. SMITH: If a child is ordered by the Children's Court to be boarded out, he gets all the benefits of a home and, furthermore, is educated in the same way as other children until he reaches the age of 14. He has no drudgery. But the child committed to an institution gets only three hours' education daily between the ages of 11 and 14 years, and has to do a great deal of work. What is the result of this system of so-called education? We have no report on that. The report states that the institutions are conducted in an admirable manner, and all that sort of thing; but it contains nothing about the efficiency of the system from an educational point of view. I submit we want to know something about that aspect of the matter. If it is proper that a child boarded out shall receive the same education as other children up to the age of 14, then it is proper that a child committed to an institution should be educated in exactly the same way. While the State Children Act Amendment Bill was going through Committee the other evening, we were told that anybody could visit these institutions at any time, that anybody was welcome to make an inspection of them. We were told that the doors of the institutions were wide open, and that visits of inspection were positively welcomed.

Mr. Underwood: It was the Minister for Mines who said that.

Mr. SMITH: I think it was the Minister who said so, and I was misled by the statement. I do not say that the Minister intended to mislead. A select committee of the Legislative Council last year took evidence in this connection from Mr. Watson, who is the officer in charge of the State Children Department. Mr. Watson was told by the committee—

The right of inspection is given to a special magistrate only. It is considered that the women justices should not be excluded.

And Mr. Watson's response was—

Churches do not care about visitors coming at any hour of the day or night. They feel that a great deal of interference and friction might arise if too great powers were given.

That does not coincide with what the Minister has said. We were given to understand that visitors could inspect the institution at any time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They can do so at any reasonable time.

Mr. SMITH: The answer given by the witness indicates that there is a considerable amount of objection to visitors inspecting those institutions.

Mr. Underwood: They might see the kiddies hard at work.

Mr. SMITH: I heard recently of a boy being thrashed for refusing to work in the garden of one of those institutions. The extraordinary thing about it is that the institutions are actually paid more money for the upkeep of the children consigned to their care than the Government pay to private homes or to foster mothers. Why should that be? Those institutions deal with a large number of children, they have practically no rent to pay, their premises and grounds having been granted to them for nothing; the public subscribe large sums of money to their maintenance, and in many ways those institutions are saved the expenditure which has to be met by ordinary individuals. Yet those institutions are being paid more per head for the upkeep of children than are foster mothers.

Hon. P. Collier: How much are they paid?

Mr. SMITH: I think 8s. or 9s., while the mothers get only 7s.

Mr. Roche: Natural mothers receive only 7s.

Mr. SMITH: It ought to be the other way about. A select committee, after inquiring into this question, should be able to enlighten the House considerably. I think I have shown that it is highly desirable we should have an inquiry. First of all there is the expenditure of a large sum of money per annum, and we have no definite information as to how the money is spent. Also there are many rumours as to the way in which the department is managed. To appoint the committee would be a cheap and simple way of finding out how things are going along. I hope the House will agree with my proposal.

On motion by the Attorney General, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [5.48]: My object in introducing the Bill is to give Parliament an opportunity for expressing an opinion as to whether the appointment to the position of a Minister of the Crown of a person who is not a member of Parliament is in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution Act. I wish to make it clear that I am as strong an advocate of constitutional authority as is any other member of the

Assembly; I will go so far as to say that I am just as strong an advocate as is the member for Albany (Mr. Scaddan) who, it will be remembered, fought his last election campaign mainly upon the issue of constituted authority. I also desire to make it clear that in my opinion the Constitution is not a cast iron instrument, that it is a servant of the people and, rightly, can be amended to suit the wishes of the people and of Parliament, whenever desired. I also wish to get an expression of opinion as to whether the appointment to Ministerial office of a person who is not at the time a member of one or the other House is in the best interests of the State. Also I invite discussion on the question of administration as it affects the respective Houses of Parliament. In my opinion the intention of those responsible for framing the Constitution was that the Council, elected as it is on a property franchise, should be a House of review. That is supported by the fact that no person under the age of 30 is entitled to hold a seat in that Chamber. During the past few years a tendency has developed to transfer the administration to the Council. Last session Mr. Colebatch, a portfolioed member of that House, was administering the Education Department and the Colonial Secretary's Departments, comprising Police, Medical, and Charities. Hon. members know that the portfolioed Minister, the representative of the Government in the Council, has to keep himself conversant with all legislation passing between the Houses, a task in itself sufficient for any one man. It is a physical impossibility for any man to keep himself in touch with the progress of legislation through the two Houses and at the same time administer those important departments to which I have referred. By the very nature of his duties as representative of the Government, the leader of the Council has not the time to devote to the administration of important departments. Moreover, there is a principle involved, namely, that members of the Council have not been elected to carry on the administrative affairs of the State. It has not tended to the welfare of the State that so many of the details of administration have been left to members of the Council. In addition to those departments which were administered by Mr. Colebatch, we have Mr. Baxter, the Honorary Minister in the Council, administering other important departments, administering the Wheat Pool, and all transactions connected with the wheat harvests of the State. This, I contend, is not in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution. In my opinion the Council is intended to be a House of review, and is not called upon to take any prominent part in the administration of the affairs of the State. I desire to protest against important administrative affairs being placed in the hands of a member of Parliament elected upon a property qualification to the Council. The Constitution has been framed with a view to placing the whole of the administrative affairs of the State in the hands

of the Assembly, the Council having been created as a House of review. I do not desire to make any personal attacks or comments upon the hon. gentlemen at present administering the departments of State whilst holding seats in the Legislative Council. What I wish to bring forcibly and prominently before hon. members is that this Assembly is charged by the Constitution to administer the affairs of the State. The tendency during the past few years has been to transfer a considerable amount of administrative work to the Chamber which under the Constitution is not entitled to conduct it. It is a serious matter for the people of the State that they have a Chamber elected upon an extremely limited franchise and able to accept that responsibility, when only one-third of the people have any say as to who shall be their representative there.

Hon. P. Collier: A chamber of horrors.

Mr. MULLANY: There have been transferred to the Legislative Council powers of administration which rightly belong to this Chamber. As proof of the intention of the framers of the Constitution that the administration of the affairs of State should be confined to this Chamber, we have only to refer to the Annual Estimates. When these are under discussion in this Chamber, members have the right to delete items of expenditure and by their vote to affect the Estimates in many ways, but all that the Legislative Council can do under the Constitution is to pass the Appropriation Bill in connection with the Estimates. The Council cannot delete any items whatsoever from the Estimates. This affords proof of the fact that the Constitution contemplated that the control of the administration of the affairs of the State and of the expenditure should be in the hands of this Chamber. Members will see from Clause 2 of the Bill that I propose to delete the words "at last" occurring in line 6 of Section 6 of the Constitution Act, which at present reads—

No member of the Legislative Council shall hold any office of profit under the Crown other than such as is liable to be vacated on political grounds, or than that of an officer of Her Majesty's sea or land forces on full, half or retired pay. One at least of the executive offices liable to be vacated on political grounds shall always be held by a member of the Legislative Council.

With the words deleted the section would read—

One of the executive offices liable to be vacated, etc.

My object is to give members of this Chamber an opportunity of expressing an opinion as to whether the administration of the affairs of State should be carried out by the Legislative Council. I admit it is necessary for the Government to have a representative in another place, but I do not desire that there should exist the danger of the whole of the affairs of State being administered by Ministers in that Chamber. Under the Constitution, as it stands at present, there

is nothing to prevent the leader of the Government from selecting the whole of his Ministry from amongst members of the Legislative Council. The Act merely says—

One at least of the executive offices liable to be vacated on political grounds shall always be held by a member of the Legislative Council.

I desire that it should be made imperative that there shall never be more than one portfolioed Minister in the Legislative Council. If members would go carefully through the Constitution Act, I think they will agree that its intention is that the administration of the affairs of State should be confined to members of this Chamber, and that the Legislative Council is to serve the purpose of a House of review with only one representative of the Government in it, to pilot legislative measures through that Chamber that have been sent to it from the Legislative Assembly. Subclause 2 of the Bill provides for the addition to Section 6 of the Constitution Act of the words "and five being members of the Legislative Assembly."

Mr. Pickering: How does that affect Honorary Ministers?

Mr. MULLANY: They have no place in the Constitution. The intention of the framers of the Constitution clearly was that there should be one member of the Government appointed from the members of the Legislative Council, and that the remaining five should be members of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Willmott: You do not make it definite even now.

Mr. MULLANY: It is being made definite. Members will see from Section 43 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act, that provision is made for one at least of "such executive offices" being always held by a member of the Legislative Council. The Act leaves it at that. I want to make it clear that there shall be only one of the executive offices in the Legislative Council and that there shall be five members in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Willcock: It may be necessary in the future to have more than six Ministers appointed.

Mr. MULLANY: If hon. members desire that it should be laid down for all time, that only one member of the Council should be an executive officer, I am quite prepared to accept that. As the Act stands at present there cannot be more than six portfolioed Ministers. I do not think the position could be made more clear than is provided by this Bill.

Mr. Pickering: There never has been more than one executive officer in the Upper House.

Mr. MULLANY: No, but the trend of affairs has recently been such that it is hard to say what may be done in the future. I desire to obviate any possibility of there ever being more than one Minister in the Legislative Council. I claim that it is im-

possible for any man to do justice to his position as Minister under circumstances such as we find to-day in another place. How can the present representative of the Government in another place do justice to the administration of the departments under him and at the same time attend to the legislation that is passing through his hands in that Chamber? The Premier is making use of his battle cry, "We must get down to work." It can readily be shown in the case of the Minister in the Legislative Council that this policy is being applied altogether too harshly. In the person of the Attorney General, who is a member of this Chamber, we have an illustration of what I mean. The Attorney General is merely being called upon to administer the affairs of the Crown Law Department, and to deal with Bills in this Chamber affecting that department. The Minister in another place however, has to administer the affairs of his own departments and introduce legislation affecting them and at the same time take charge of Bills affecting the Crown Law Department. I fail to see how it is possible for the Attorney General to give due value to the State for the remuneration he is receiving. He gets the ordinary salary of a Minister of the Crown.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MULLANY: Before the tea adjournment I was dealing with the provision of the Constitution Act as regards the distribution of Ministerial officers between the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. My main object in introducing this Bill is to give Parliament an opportunity of expressing a definite opinion as to whether it is in accordance with the Constitution that a person who is not a member of either House of Parliament should hold a Ministerial office. I ask hon. members to consider the whole question seriously. My belief is that such an appointment is directly contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, and therefore I ask this Assembly to lay it down as a definite principle that no person is eligible to hold Ministerial office unless he has previously qualified by becoming a member of the Legislative Council or of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Duff: Is there any precedent for the appointment you refer to?

Mr. MULLANY: I will deal with the precedents shortly. In order to achieve the object I have in view, I propose that the second paragraph of Section 6 of the Constitution Act, 1889, should be amended so as to read: "One of the executive offices liable to be vacated on political grounds shall always be held by a member of the Legislative Council, and five by members of the Legislative Assembly."

Hon. T. Walker: Why five?

Mr. MULLANY: Because the Constitution Amendment Act of 1899 limits the number of Ministers to six.

Hon. T. Walker: Why not say "and the remainder by members of the Legislative Assembly"?

Mr. MULLANY: That would do. I am not concerned about the wording. I wish only to establish the principle that any person holding a Ministerial office shall be a member of either the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council. If the Bill reaches the Committee stage, as I trust it will, it may then be amended on the lines suggested by the member for Kanowna. At present, however, the Constitution definitely limits the number of Ministers to six. I wish the Assembly to express the definite opinion that no person shall hold Ministerial office unless he is a member of one or other of the Houses of Parliament.

Hon. T. Walker: I think the Constitution Act provides that now.

Mr. MULLANY: The only definite reference to that point which I can find in the Act is the provision that one at least of the executive officers shall be a member of the Legislative Council.

Hon. T. Walker: The implication is there.

Mr. MULLANY: Undoubtedly; but since we have persons in responsible positions taking it upon themselves, notwithstanding that clear implication, to appoint to Ministerial office persons who are not members of either the Assembly or the Council, it is time this amending Bill was introduced. I quite agree with the member for Kanowna that the clear implication throughout the Constitution Act is that nothing else shall be done. But the Act does not explicitly say so. In support of what I contend is the clear implication of the Constitution Act, let me refer hon. members to Section 67 of that Act, which they will find on page 152 of our Standing Orders. The section reads—

It shall not be lawful for the Legislative Assembly to adopt or pass any vote, resolution, or Bill, for the appropriation of any part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, or of any rate, tax, duty, or impost, to any purpose which has not been first recommended to the Assembly by Message of the Governor during the session in which such vote, resolution, or Bill, is proposed.

Hon. members know perfectly well that a private member cannot receive a Message from the Governor. Under the Standing Orders no private member is permitted to introduce any Bill proposing an appropriation of public funds. The Standing Orders say clearly that without a Message from the Governor such shall not be done; and no person other than a Minister of the Crown can receive a Message from the Governor. This plainly shows that the framers of the Constitution Act thought it was impossible that any but a member of Parliament would hold

the position of Minister of the Crown. In my opinion, Section 67 is clear and definite evidence of the intention of the framers of our Constitution that holders of Ministerial office should at all times be members of either the Council or the Assembly. In reply to an interjection of the member for Claremont (Mr. Duff) I may say that there have been precedents in Western Australia for the recent appointment. I suppose that is what the hon. member really wishes to know.

Mr. Duff: That is what I was asking.

Mr. MULLANY: I am not dealing particularly with the recent appointment of the Minister for Mines and Railways, but with the whole question. There was a previous appointment of the same nature under somewhat similar circumstances.

Mr. Underwood: You can put it that there was one previous breach of the Constitution.

Mr. MULLANY: I am not going to say straight away that it was a breach of the Constitution. I want Parliament to say whether or not it was a breach; and if Parliament does say so, then I want Parliament to stop the leak. In my opinion, the Constitution Act is so vaguely worded that one cannot positively declare the recent appointment of the Minister for Mines and Railways to have been a breach of the Constitution. I want the House to say whether or not similar appointments are to be made in future. The precedent I have mentioned occurred about 18 years ago, when the present Solicitor General, Mr. Sayer, was appointed to Ministerial office without being a member of either House. I know nothing of the circumstances of that appointment. Another precedent has been referred to by the Attorney General, but that precedent is not on exactly the same footing as the appointment of the present Minister for Mines and Railways. The Attorney General referred to the case which occurred about 10 years ago of the then Minister for Mines and Railways, Mr. Gregory, now member for Dampier in the Federal House of Representatives, continuing to hold his portfolio after he had been defeated for the Menzies seat at the general election. Mr. Gregory, having been defeated at the general election of 1908, appealed against the result of the election, claiming that there had been certain irregularities, which it is not my purpose to enter into just now, as they are of no present interest to the House. The fact remains, however, that Mr. Buzacott, now Senator Buzacott, secured a majority of votes at the Menzies election. Pending the hearing of the appeal, which was upheld, Mr. Gregory continued for about three months to hold office as Minister for Mines and Railways. That, I contend, was a breach of the spirit of the Constitution. My view is that Mr. Gregory, having lost his seat in the Assembly, which seat had qualified him to hold a Ministerial portfolio, should have imme-

diately resigned his office as Minister for Mines and Railways. He did not do so, and it is quite possible that one of the reasons why I feel so strongly regarding the recent appointment is that I heard the present Minister for Mines and Railways, Mr. John Scaddan, in assisting Mr. Buzacott to fight the election which followed upon Mr. Gregory's successful appeal, most strongly denounce the action of the then Government in permitting any person who was not a member of either the Council or the Assembly to hold Ministerial office. I regret that there was not a "Hansard" reporter present on that occasion, but I clearly remember the present Minister for Mines and Railways denouncing the action of the Government in permitting such a state of affairs to exist. By the way, the present Premier was an Honorary Minister in that same Government, so that, probably he has followed precedent, and this is a pernicious practice that he is prepared to allow to continue and encourage. On that occasion to which I have referred there may have been some justification for Mr. Gregory to continue to hold office, inasmuch as he had previously been elected member for the constituency, and he had appealed against the result of the election. There may have been some slight justification, though I am not prepared to say there was. But I clearly remember how very strong the present Minister for Mines and Railways was at that time in his denunciation of any such thing being allowed to continue. I do not desire to repeat what the hon. gentleman said at that time, because what I would tell the House now would be only from memory.

The Minister for Mines: And I might tell the House that your memory was faulty.

Mr. MULLANY: It is unfortunate that the Minister for Mines was not in the Chamber a few minutes ago, because he would have heard me say that I did not intend to commit myself by repeating anything he said. I will, however, tell the House what Mr. Bath, the then leader of the Opposition, had to say in this Chamber upon the subject. Speaking on the Address-in-reply on the 12th November, Mr. Bath said—

I refer to the way in which the Minister for Mines has hung on to the portfolio after having been defeated in the constituency for which he sought election. Of course there is a polite fiction that Ministerial office is something in the gift of the Crown, but it is after all only a fiction. It would be a bad thing for representative government if we gave it any weight more than the weight of fiction. Ministerial office in Western Australia or any part of Australia is contingent upon the holder of it maintaining the confidence of the majority of the electors in some constituencies.

Many hon. members are personally acquainted with Mr. Bath, and the words I have quoted are those in which he expressed his opinion of the action of the Government of the day, and the difference between the language used by Mr. Bath and Mr. Scaddan at that time is just simply the difference between the different styles those two gentlemen adopt in speaking.

Mr. Duff: The Minister for Mines has changed his ideas since then.

Mr. MULLANY: I have no hesitation in saying that on the occasion when appointments of this kind have been made they have not been in the interests of the State so much as in the interests of political organisations or individuals. There is no doubt about that, and I fully expect to receive the support of the present Minister for Mines for this Bill which I am introducing.

Hon. P. Collier: Having got in himself you think he should close the door on everybody else.

Mr. MULLANY: If the practice of appointing persons who are not members of Parliament to Ministerial office is going to become common, I will ask hon. members to consider where such a thing will possibly lead us. Unless the Constitution is made quite clear on the subject, we may find that political organisations may demand, as a condition of their support, that a nominee of their's shall be appointed to a Ministerial position without that nominee having to seek election to Parliament. That might appear to be an extreme view, but it might easily come about, seeing what has already occurred and the action that has already been taken by political organisations. Remembering all this, it would be a short step indeed from a political organisation to make such a demand. The action taken by the Farmers and Settlers' Association three years ago, when they decided to sell their support to the old Liberal party, has become political history. The object at that time was to combine with the Liberal party to turn out the then Labour Government, and we know that the stipulation was made that as a condition of their support the Liberal Government should oust the Scaddan Government, and that the present Premier, Mr. Mitchell, should not be permitted to hold the Lands portfolio.

Mr. Money: Is all this for the hustings?

Mr. MULLANY: I have not yet got to that stage of talking nicely for the sake of any party or organisation. I am telling the House just what took place on the occasion when the Country party sold their support to the Liberal party. Only a few weeks ago in his presidential address at the Farmers and Settlers' conference, Mr. Monger spoke as follows—

It was no doubt fresh in the memories of many settlers that when the Country party joined with the Liberals to oust the Labour party—

I am not using my own words; these are the words of the president of the Farmers and Settlers' Association. They must be correct too, because they did sell their support at that time. The present Minister for Mines said they did so.

—from power, they endeavoured to impose a condition that should Mr. Mitchell be chosen as a member of the Wilson Government he should not hold the portfolio of Minister for Lands.

They did not go so far as to say that Mr. Mitchell should not become a Minister. They were quite willing to pass him on to any other section of the community. Mr. Monger went on—

This stipulation was insisted upon by delegates to the conference, because they were dissatisfied with Mr. Mitchell's past administration of the department. This understanding was observed by the late Mr. Wilson when he allotted portfolios to his Ministers. From the date of the resignation of the Wilson Government to the creation of the present Mitchell Government Mr. Mitchell did not occupy Ministerial rank. Now we have Mr. Mitchell installed as Premier, and head of the department which controlled the land. If their condemnation of Mr. Mitchell's past administration of the department was justified, what was their position now?

I do not know and I am not altogether concerned. I am not concerned as to whether their criticism of Mr. Mitchell's administration of the Lands Department was justified or not. But the point I wish to illustrate is that a political organisation in this State have already laid it down that they have taken a hand in the allocation of portfolios. I am not confining my remarks in this direction to the Farmers and Settlers' Association. My desire is to obviate a possible danger. It may be that in the course of a year or two the gentlemen at present sitting in opposition may be returned with a majority, and if the kind of thing which I have been condemning is permitted to go on we may find Mr. McCallum making the demand that he be given a portfolio.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not like precedents being set up.

Mr. MULLANY: I am therefore taking this step with the view of preventing any Premier who might come along from doing anything of the sort, and I consider I am justified in asking the House whether such a thing should be permitted. There is another aspect of this question. It is an astounding state of affairs that after a man has announced himself as a candidate for election that any Government should step in and do anything which is likely to influence the decision of the electors in the constituency affected.

Hon. T. Walker: It amounts to bribery. The Minister for Mines: You cannot bribe the Albany electors.

Mr. MULLANY: I agree with the Minister for Mines when he says that it is not possible to bribe the Albany electors. I am

not going to accuse them of having been bribed. I believe the result of the election would have been the same in any case.

Hon. T. Walker: You know better.

Mr. MULLANY: I am not referring to that particular election; I want to obviate the possibility of such a thing occurring in the future.

Hon. P. Collier: Some constituency not so strong as Albany might be influenced.

Mr. MULLANY: That is so. But notwithstanding the fact that the Minister for Mines says it would be impossible to bribe the Albany electors, I wish to point out that gentleman was rejected by the Albany electors two years previously, when he was not a Minister.

The Minister for Mines: Like good wine, I improve with age.

Mr. MULLANY: That may be. This is not a personal matter with me.

Hon. P. Collier: But the facts are there.

Mr. MULLANY: I am not attacking the Minister for Mines, or the Government; I am endeavouring to show that the Constitution is so vaguely worded that it may be argued the Government were justified in taking the action they did. My object in bringing forward the Bill is to afford Parliament an opportunity for making the Constitution clear and definite on the point that no person other than a member of Parliament shall be elevated to Ministerial rank. I ask members to deal with the Bill, small but important, entirely aside from party or personal consideration, and to determine the question solely upon its merits and in the interests of the State. If they do this they will make clear to the people the intention of the Constitution in this regard. If hon. members think that it is right to appoint other than members of Parliament to Ministerial positions, they will reject the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Attorney General, debate adjourned.

BILL—KALGOORLIE FRIENDLY SOCIETIES INVESTMENTS VALIDATION.

Second Reading.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) [8.2] in moving the second reading said: The Bill, I understand, has been approved by the Government. However, it is considered advisable that it should be introduced by me, a private member, intimately acquainted with the objects of the measure. The Kalgoorlie United Friendly Societies' Association, which is a corporate body having for its membership seven friendly societies in Kalgoorlie, has for the past 23 years, until 1914, depended for its medicines upon an arrangement made with a chemist in Kalgoorlie. That arrangement ultimately proving unsatisfactory, when in 1914 the business of Mr. Kelly & Co., chemists of Kalgoorlie, was to be dis-

posed of, the Friendly Societies Association, on behalf of the A.N.A., the Protestant Alliance, the Hibernian, the Manchester Unity, the Free Gardeners, and other friendly societies, met in conference with the M. Kelly Co. and agreed to take over that business. The price to be paid was £1,600, which with accrued interest totalled finally £1,750. The association, on behalf of the whole of their members in Kalgoorlie, took 500 fully paid up shares and 1,000 contributing shares at 4s. per share. Altogether they paid in £120. Then it was found they were not strong enough to take over the whole of the shares of the M. Kelly Co., so they invited individual members of the affiliated friendly societies to take up 700 shares from those friendly societies. This was done, those shareholders paying £680. That is to say, for an asset of £1,750, the shareholders in the association paid only £800. As showing what a good business proposition it was, I may mention that the other £950 has since been paid up out of the profits from the M. Kelly Co., the balance of the purchase money has been paid out of the profits since 1914. It is to be understood that this proposition was not taken up with the idea of gain. Since 1914 the prices of drugs have increased by from 100 to 500 per cent. The prices of goods supplied to members of the United Friendly Societies from this co-operative concern have not been increased, notwithstanding which huge profits have been made. The societies were unaware that they were doing something illegal. Under the Friendly Societies Act it is permissible for the United Friendly Societies' Association to hold a drug store for the benefit of its members, but it is not permissible to set apart funds to invest in a portion only of a concern of the class mentioned. The Kalgoorlie United Friendly Societies' Association was not strong enough to buy the company right out. There are several precedents in this State for the holding, by the United Friendly Societies' Association, of a dispensary to which all members of lodges go for their medicines, with considerable saving to themselves. The position is that there has been a constant exchange of correspondence between the Registrar of Friendly Societies and the secretary of the United Friendly Societies' Association in Kalgoorlie in regard to this dispensary, and the association has been asked to legalise the position. As the result of that correspondence, and at the suggestion of the Registrar of Friendly Societies and also of the Crown Law Department, it has been determined that a Bill such as this before the House should be brought in to legalise the action taken. I trust the Government will not ask for the adjournment of the debate. The enterprise is conferring great benefit upon the members of the Kalgoorlie Friendly Societies Association. It has put them on the same footing as the societies in Boulder and in Perth, except that in the case of the Kalgoorlie association it was not strong enough to buy the whole of the shares.

Mr. Foley: Was there not a stipulation that the shares should not be sold outside the membership of the association?

Mr. GREEN: That is so. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [8.11]: There is no desire on the part of the Government to ask for an adjournment. The Friendly Societies' Association of Kalgoorlie, acting, no doubt, in the interests of their members under the peculiar conditions which then prevailed, purchased these shares, thinking they were justified in investing the societies' money in the purchase. Of course, they desired in the abnormal circumstances then existing to purchase their drugs at as reasonable a price as possible. Quite recently it has been discovered that this investment was not authorised under Section 15 of the Friendly Societies Act. The House will be well advised to confirm the investment. It was not undertaken for profit. It may have resulted in profit, but it was undertaken solely for the benefit of the members of the association. In a matter of this kind the proper thing to do is to come to Parliament for its sanction. The hon. member has taken that course, and the Government have no opposition to the Bill. Personally I recommend the House to pass the Bill, which does nothing beyond validating the investment which was then required for the benefit of the members of the association.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

MOTION—QUARANTINING OF VESELS, TO INQUIRE.

Debate resumed from the 27th August on the following motion by Mr. Underwood—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that an inquiry be held into the quarantining of the North-West steamers 'Minderoo' and 'Bambra,' and the quarantine regulations at present operating on the North-West coast."

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [8.17]: I judged from the remarks of the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), when he submitted this motion, that he was not desirous of proceeding with it, except to ventilate one or two matters concerning the quarantining of the steamers "Minderoo" and "Bambra." I suppose he realised, as most of us do, that we as a State Parliament could not obtain an inquiry, which would be satisfactory, on matters entirely outside of our control. The quarantining of the "Minderoo" and "Bambra" at Fremantle was entirely a Federal

action, and therefore we cannot be held responsible for it. Neither could we hold an inquiry as to why those steamers were quarantined or how the quarantining was conducted. The hon. member would need to move some Federal member to obtain an inquiry through the Federal Parliament.

Mr. Underwood: The Premier could forward the motion to the Federal Government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, we might submit the motion to the Prime Minister and ask him to consider the question of holding an inquiry, but we ourselves could not hold an inquiry. The hon. member did not make out anything in the nature of a case against the restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of the influenza epidemic. While it is true we were unsuccessful in preventing its spread, notwithstanding that our restrictions were fairly drastic, we were hopeful of effectively isolating parts of the State to prevent the introduction of the disease. Having failed in that, there was nothing to be gained by continuing the restrictions, so far as they concerned the movement of people into an area already infected. Members will appreciate that we in Western Australia were in a rather difficult position. Owing to the demands made upon the medical profession during the war, there were many places which, in normal times, required the regular attendance of a medical man and which, for some time, have not had a doctor or even a nurse. Realising this, it mattered not if the restrictions were objected to, so long as we could avoid the spread of this epidemic to centres where doctors or nurses were not available. The restrictions, naturally caused comment and dissatisfaction and, in some cases, the disappointment of being detained for a period in quarantine quarters, probably not very desirable.

Mr. Underwood: When one has not got the disease.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not a doctor.

Mr. Underwood: Why was a pass required before one could come from the North-West?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot quite understand that, but in some places in the North there has been influenza.

Mr. Underwood: It has never been there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not going to pit my knowledge against that of the medical profession. When it was claimed that influenza had made its appearance in Perth, I had my doubts and the same applies in regard to the outbreak at Leonora, but I do not expect my opinion to carry any weight in a matter of this kind. It is a matter for the medical profession, and we must accept their dictum although we might hold a contrary opinion. It would be a serious matter if a layman, because he disagreed with the opinion of medical men on matters which they are specially trained to decide, refused to take action on the lines they advised. We should soon have a public outcry against an attitude of that kind. What we did was done with the object, if

possible, of preventing the spread of the epidemic, particularly in those parts of the State where medical attention could not be obtained.

Mr. Underwood: You were preventing us from coming to Perth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We were not doing anything of the kind. The Federal authorities quarantined the hon. member, together with many other people, because they were of opinion there was influenza on the boat by which they travelled.

Mr. Underwood: Because the medical department here demanded it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I asked the department officials whether they had had anything to do with the quarantining of these steamers, and the reply was—"No, it was entirely Federal action."

Mr. Underwood: Dr. Cumpston wired me that he had no desire to keep me in quarantine, and that it was only the State officials who were keeping me there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Dr. Cumpston might not have desired to keep the hon. member there, but he was under Dr. Cumpston's orders when he was in quarantine, and no one except the officers under Dr. Cumpston could have released the hon. member. I attempted to secure his release. When the hon. member rang me up from the quarantine station, I got into touch with the officials and asked what it was all about.

Hon. P. Collier: Is this all because the hon. member was quarantined?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I would not like to assert that. All these restrictions have cost the country a great deal but, if they had been successful in preventing the introduction of influenza, the money would have been well spent. However, it was largely a matter in which we had to be guided by the advice of medical men. Even now, I believe restrictions of somewhat the same nature as those adopted at the outset, are being imposed, but they are essential to protect the community in centres far removed from hospitals or beyond reach of medical attention. Let members think how serious it would be if influenza reached a place like Denmark, distant 50 miles from Albany, with a train service on one day in one week and two days in the next week, a place without a doctor and which it is impossible to reach by road except on horseback.

The Premier: I heard of 140 cases occurring where doctors were in attendance.

Mr. Munsie: The moral from that would be to keep the doctors away.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I would not suggest that doctors were responsible for the spread of cases when they were in attendance. I know the feeling of the residents in places which are without medical men, nurses or hospitals. They were keenly alive to the possibility of an outbreak, and naturally asked to be protected.

Mr. Underwood: We, in the North-West, are quite used to that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We do our best to provide doctors in all centres.

Mr. Underwood: You prevented us coming from a clean to an infected part.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I had nothing to do with the restrictions. We took the attitude that some of the restrictions were absurd and unnecessary, and finally removed them, but the hon. member cannot accuse the State department of preventing those steamers from coming to the wharf at Fremantle and landing their passengers. They were taken to the Federal quarantine station, and the State has no power to remove anyone from that station. I do not think the hon. member will, at this moment, assert it is desirable to ask the Federal Government to make an inquiry into this matter. If the hon. member thinks it is desirable, we have Federal members who should attend to such matters and who could move directly in the Federal Parliament.

Hon. P. Collier: Who are the Federal members; can you remember?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am afraid I may be drawn into the same trap as the member for Menzies to rely on my memory, and that might fail me. These are matters that the Federal Parliament can deal with, and I hold the view it is undesirable for the State Parliament to seek from the Federal Parliament an inquiry into a matter that only the Federal Parliament can handle. If our Federal members are not alive to the interests of the community here they should be prompted by the member for Pilbara, or through one of the political organisations of which there are enough in the State. I do not propose to deal with the other restrictions mentioned by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin). We attempted, even to the extent of practically permitting the medical profession to do anything they desired, to keep the influenza out of the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I disagree with the Minister there. You withdrew the State restrictions.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Only when we discovered that they had not been effective, and it was useless to continue restrictions which had not proved successful in application.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They were successful.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They were not and, in the circumstances, we thought it inadvisable to continue to compel the people of the State to submit to them, seeing they were imposed merely for a period in order to keep the epidemic out. We failed to do that, but it was not due to any want of action on the part of the department or to any want of backing by the State Government. If anything, I think we rather exceeded the bounds by imposing restrictions which were sometimes resented by the community, but the whole object was to endeavour to keep out the influenza. I hope the hon. member will not press his motion, because I cannot see that any good can come

at this stage from the Federal Government holding an inquiry and, so far as the State restrictions are concerned, they have been practically removed.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [8.29]: Regarding the question of quarantine generally, I was rather surprised—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss quarantine generally under this motion.

Mr. FOLEY: Speaking on the motion generally—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will be in order in discussing the desirability of holding an inquiry into the quarantining of the "Minderoo" and "Bambra" and the regulations on the North-West coast.

Mr. FOLEY: Speaking to the motion generally, I may say I was rather surprised to hear the arguments used by the Minister for Mines.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was no argument at all.

Mr. FOLEY: He referred to these two boats—

Mr. Lambert: When were they painted last?

Mr. FOLEY: And the fact of passengers being quarantined at Woodman's Point. If the Commonwealth Government were responsible in every sense for the quarantine regulations that were put into force in this State, they should also be responsible for the cost connected therewith. These boats were brought to Fremantle but were not tied up at the wharf. They were kept out in the stream, not because the Federal quarantine regulations prevented them from being brought alongside, or because of any desire on the part of the Federal quarantine department to have them brought in, but it was at the express wish of the State authorities that they were not tied up at the wharf in the same way as another boat on which were influenza cases was brought in. The question of how the people were taken to Woodman's Point is another one on which we should have some information. There is more information available than we have yet been given. At the time of the quarantining of these persons at Woodman's Point, the whole question was under Federal control. The State did take a hand, in that, although the Federal Quarantine Department had sole control, the State Government have to foot the bill for something over which they had no control.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion deals with the quarantining of the North-West ships "Minderoo" and "Bambra." It says nothing about the passengers. I do not know if it was the intention that passengers should be discussed. The hon. member is in order in discussing the quarantining of these ships and of the operation of the quarantine regulations of the North-West coast.

Mr. FOLEY: This deals wholly and solely with the passengers on the various boats going there.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not concerned about that. I am concerned about the motion, which deals with the quarantining of the ships "Minderoo" and "Bambra." There is no mention in the motion of passengers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They were part of the ship for the time being.

Mr. FOLEY: I have no desire to flout your ruling. I am speaking about the quarantine regulations at present operating on the North-West coast.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is in order in doing that.

Mr. FOLEY: These regulations are such as to prevent people from taking a passage on any of the boats under certain conditions. The State quarantine regulations allowed these people to travel to the metropolitan area by these two boats. They came to Fremantle, but the quarantine regulations prevented the "Bambra" from coming alongside the wharf. Although those on board were not suffering from influenza and not running temperatures, some of the officials of the Quarantine Department thought those who were there constituted a risk of infection for others, and those passengers were put to the inconvenience and expense of having to go to Woodman's Point under the protection of the Quarantine Department. The State Government were also obliged to pay part of the expense. If this was done at the instance of the Federal Government, they should foot the bill. There is one case in which the State had some hand in the quarantine regulations. Two boats called in at Albany carrying troops. There were cases of influenza on board one vessel but none on board the other. The Federal quarantine regulations did not prevent a doctor from ordering those persons on the infected vessel into quarantine, nor did the State regulation prevent a man who owned a launch at Albany from, first of all, taking the contacts to the island, and afterwards taking a picnic party down the river.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are these regulations on the North-West coast?

Mr. FOLEY: I contend that there was something wrong if this kind of thing could happen. The State Steamship Service should not be called upon to foot the bill when it was the desire of the Federal Quarantine Department to make regulations affecting our boats running on the North-West coast. If an inquiry is held into the matter, we shall probably not get all the information the member for Pilbara desires, but we shall see how we stand so far as quarantining is concerned. I am satisfied that the State will find out that it will cost a great deal of money to fall in with the wishes of the Federal authorities in regard to the North-West coast. If they desire to inflict the regulations upon us, they should also be asked to foot the bill. The Minister for Mines stated that if these cases could be isolated it would be a good thing. I should like to have said something about the quarantining of Leonora.

There are many places in this State which have to thank the local quarantine department for keeping the influenza away from them, and other places have to thank it for minimising its effect. The Minister also said that certain hardships have occasionally been inflicted on the people which were resented by many of them. No doubt at a later date members will have an opportunity of criticising these matters.

Mr. ANGELO (Gasecoyne) [8.40]: The Minister for Mines stated that the quarantine regulations had been removed. I am pleased to say that such is not the case. When the "Kwinana" and "Bambra" left for the North-West the other day the passengers had to submit to a medical examination. I hope that will continue. There is still a chance of keeping from the North-West the more severe form of this disease. The Government did all they could to keep it out of Western Australia, and I trust they will continue in their efforts to keep it out of the North-West. There are cases of ordinary influenza in Carnarvon, but there are not, up to the present time, any cases of the dread disease itself. I have only risen to ask the Government to continue their efforts to keep the pneumonic influenza out of the North-West, and not to dispense with the regulations compelling passengers to submit themselves to examination before embarkation to North-West ports.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara—in reply) [8.42]: When I moved the motion I stated that I thought the inquiry should go further. I am still of opinion that an inquiry into the whole of the quarantine regulations that have been in force in Western Australia should be held. I have said that I did not desire to do that while we are in trouble. When we have got rid of the disease and have had time to go into the matter, I contend that the best possible thing we can do is to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into all the quarantine regulations, not only those imposed from outside the State, but those imposed within the State, whether by the Leonora local authority or any other. I am convinced that these regulations and the fear that is instilled into many people have caused a great deal of harm. We should avoid that if we possibly can. It is regrettable that the Minister for Mines has not had time to go into the matter. I would point out that the Bill for the quarantining at Woodman's Point in connection with the passengers and crew of the "Bambra" amounted to over £1,200. There were 75 passengers and 75 members of the crew concerned. There are also the wages of the crew for three weeks that have to be taken into account. I was pleased to see that the seamen won their case. This is a somewhat serious position. Such a course should not be taken for the future unless there is strong reason for doing so. The Minister

has stated that the Government were endeavouring to keep the influenza out of the State. We in the North-West came from the only part of the State which is clean. It is the only part of the State to travel to which we must get a certificate. We have never had influenza there. That is proved by the fact that there is no influenza there now. The Minister for Mines spoke about what the Government did at Leonora and about the ravages of the disease. Wherever influenza has occurred there have been deaths. There has never been a death on the North-West coast, or any part of it, from this disease. When we were quarantined we were quarantined chiefly for the reason that the Government had a big quarantine ground at Woodman's Point, they had a splendid staff, the treatment was all that could be desired, and all that they needed was some patients. They took us. The Minister for Mines will persist in saying that the State had nothing to do with it. We passengers wired to Dr. Cumpston, and the doctor replied—I am sorry I have not the telegram here, but it has been published—saying, "I think that you should not have been quarantined, and I am prepared to release you at once if the State Government will agree." In fact, on the strength of that telegram the State Government gave in and let us out two days before our time. I am convinced that an inquiry is absolutely and urgently needed as soon as the opportune time for it comes. There was a sort of panic, and the Government established a huge institution comprising doctors, nurses, labourers, and waiters, and including even a military guard of 50 or 60 men, on fairly good pay, to see that we poor Nor'-Westers did not escape. Having that big organisation, the Government felt that they must have some patients.

The Minister for Mines: Were the patients made to pay?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No; the State Steamship Service paid. We came down on a clean ship from a clean country where influenza will not live. There were ships from Europe in the harbour. The doctor came straight off those influenza infected ships to our clean ship, and the thermometer he had just put into the mouths of passengers from infected ports he stuck into our mouths. There is urgent need for inquiry at the proper time, but that inquiry should cover more than my motion includes. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) has expressed the hope that the quarantine regulations will be continued so as to prevent influenza from reaching the North-West. It is quite right that no one should go aboard a ship without a clean bill of health, without a certificate that he is free from influenza and from any other disease. But take the case of the "Minderoo," which had been three days out, whilst in order to escape quarantine she should have been five days out. Thus there were two days' quarantine to go. The doctor stood on the gangway with all

the available police force, consisting of two men, and the passengers came off. The passengers included 45 shearers; and the doctor said, "There is a big double-gee patch handy. I will get those shearers in the centre of that, and then I will sneak their boots. That is the only way I can see of keeping them in quarantine." One of the passengers who came down on the "Bambra" had to put in three weeks at Woodman's Point. He remained here about a week, and then returned to Carnarvon. On arrival at Carnarvon he was again quarantined as a contact. I hope regulations which lead to that kind of thing will not be continued. They are utterly useless and absurd.

Mr. Angelo: That was bad administration.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Then I hope that kind of administration will not continue. However, I do not desire to press the motion, because I do not think the proposed inquiry would go far enough, and because I do not regard the present time as opportune for holding an inquiry.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member desire to withdraw the motion?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

MOTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AND GENERAL INSURANCE.

Order read for the resumption of the debate on the motion of Mr. Underwood, "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Government establish a general insurance fund in connection with the Workers' Compensation Act."

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam): [8.51]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

The PREMIER: I consider that the debate on this motion should be adjourned, and adjourned for some considerable time. The mover did not make out a case, and the subject is certainly one which needs a great deal of inquiry. I do not propose to discuss it at any length to-night. It is all very well to suggest that the Government should start all sorts of enterprises, but I hope the House will not agree to the motion in its present form. Time ought to be allowed for the necessary inquiries, and I ask that time should be given.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [8.52]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: On a point of order, has a quarter-of-an-hour elapsed since a similar motion was moved?

Mr. SPEAKER: No. I cannot accept the motion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [8.53]: I hope hon. members will not take the advice offered by the Premier. We have now had three or four years' experience of the operation of the workers'

compensation fund. Most members are aware that the Labour Government established an insurance fund for the express purpose of meeting all risks in respect of all Government employees, including the employees of the Fremantle Harbour Trust and also of the various hospitals assisted by the Government. That fund has proved a decided success. It has shown that the Government, employing thousands of men in various occupations and in all parts of the State, can cover the risk of accident and death at rates considerably lower than those charged by private insurance companies. As a matter of fact, the contribution of the Government to that fund is less by one-third, proportionately, than the rates paid by private employers to insurance companies. Moreover, during the time that fund has been in existence the whole of the claims arising, whether as the result of accident or death, have been met, and the fund now shows a surplus of about £30,000.

Mr. Underwood: About £35,000.

The Premier: Were the claimants satisfied in all cases?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Always.

The Premier: I saw one that was not satisfied.

Mr. Underwood: But that case was not carried into court.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: My reason for supporting the motion is not so much that this Government fund has proved a success, as that Parliament has passed legislation rendering it compulsory for every employer of labour either to pay to an accident insurance fund or else to be prepared himself to meet claims arising out of accidents to his employees. The employer who is not able to carry the risk himself, goes to an insurance company. Seeing that Parliament has created this position, it is the duty of Parliament to make the burden on the employer as light as possible. If we compel a man to adopt a certain course of action, and if we know that course can be taken at considerably less cost through the State than through private enterprise, we are failing in our duty unless we give that man the advantages of State enterprise. To-day the private employer is debarred from getting the benefits of State insurance. I hope that eventually the system of State insurance which we have initiated will go further. I believe it can be applied with advantage in other directions besides that of workers' compensation. The time is not far distant, moreover, when the amount to be paid for accident insurance will increase considerably. We will have to see that the rates of compensation are raised so that the man who meets with an accident will receive sufficient to enable him and his family to live. The present payments do not suffice for that. Again, the amount payable in case of death will have to be raised sufficiently to provide for dependants. These things will prove additional

burdens on the employers of labour unless the Government take action on the lines suggested by this motion. I am very much surprised to find the Premier opposed to the motion. I have always looked upon the Premier as a man at all times willing to promote the development of Western Australia. But he will not develop this State if he pursues a policy of sending out of Western Australia money paid to insurance companies.

Mr. Smith: But there are local companies doing accident business.

The Minister for Mines: Local companies with their head offices in Melbourne.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Most of these companies are foreign companies, and they are reaping a handsome profit from covering Western Australian employers against liability under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. Pickering: They do not admit that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government of this State have in their service almost every class of employee except miners.

Mr. Pickering: That is the worst class of risk.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the number of miners is small in comparison with the number of other workers. The House would be well advised in not only carrying this motion but also compelling the Government to introduce a State insurance Bill. I shall be very glad to see State insurance extended to cover other classes of risks besides that of workers' compensation.

On motion by Mr. Pickering debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 4th September, 1919.

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

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Health Act Amendment.
- 2, Pearling Act Amendment.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.