**FOOD AND DRUGS ACT AMEND­MENT BILL 1916**

**House of Assembly, 10 November 1916, pages 2059-60**

Second reading

**The MINISTER of INDUSTRY (Hon. R. P. Blundell)—**This is a very innocent little Bill dealing with the reduction of the strength of whisky to be supplied by publicans. Mr. Smeaton pointed out some time ago that for a long time there had been an agitation that the strength of spirits should be reduced from the proof point of 25 to 35; and at a recent deputation it was pointed out that the licensed victuallers and the temperance party were unanimous in the matter. I think it will be an advantage to reduce the strength of spirits. One effect will be that a number of men who drink spirits will not take as much alcohol as they did under former circumstances. Generally speaking it will be admitted that it will be an advantage that the strength of the spirits should be reduced.

Mr. Robinson—It means that a man will have to pay 6d. for water instead of whisky.

The MINISTER of INDUSTRY—I am not entering into the question of prices now, but it seems to me that this is a real temperance reform. The Bill deals only with spirits, and not with “pinky”. The only difficulty suggested was that the Commonwealth Go­vernment have some control over this question, but we understand that they will not raise any objection if this measure is passed by the State Parliament. The reduction will be a little less than that mentioned in the clause, because the hotelkeeper will protect himself against any mistake which might involve him in an offence against the law.

Mr. ROBINSON—I support the Bill, because it will do a great deal of good and not any harm. The publicans have had a hard time lately in consequence of the early closing and other restrictions which have been imposed upon them, and this will give them the opportunity of making a little profit out of a business which is not too profitable now.

Mr. SMEATON—One of the most satisfactory features of the deputation which I introduced to the Minister recently was that both the temperance people and the licensed victuallers were strongly in support of the proposal that the strength of spirits should be reduced. You cannot dilute whisky too much. I was very glad to have the assistance of the licensed victuallers in seeking temperance reform. There is a good deal in this measure which will be of benefit to the people. We have no legislation by which the price of spirits can be controlled. There are many people who take spirits at certain hours each day, and if they take less alcohol when they have their usual nobbler it will be of benefit to them.

Mr. GUNN—The best way to bring about temperance reform is to reduce the percentage of alcohol in intoxicating liquors. If the temperance party had concentrated their efforts upon scuring a reduction of the percentage of

alcohol in beer and other intoxicating liquors instead of endeavoring to close the hotels earlier and to restrict the sale of liquor they would have done more to bring about temperance reform than they did. Even although they have been successful in 6 o’clock closing that has not brought about the reform that many of them desired. The trouble is in the liquor itself. The individual may be weak because of the society in which he is placed, and the only way in which we can help him is to reduce the percentage of alcohol, and to protect him from the liquor which weakens him.

Bill read a second time and passed remaining stages. It was returned from the Council without amendment.