Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 2nd September, 1926.

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

QUESTION—WHEAT, PRICES TO FARMERS.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: What was the average yearly price per bushel of wheat paid to the farmers of Western Australia from 1910 to 1925?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: The available records disclose that the prices per bushel obtained were:—Season 1909-10, 4s. 9d.; 1910-11, 3s. 6½d.; 1911-12, 3s. 11d.; 1912-13, 3s. 6d.; 1913-14, 3s. 6d.; 1914-15, 7s. 2d.; 1915-16, 4s. 9d.; 1916-17, 4s. 9d.; 1917-18, 4s. 9d.; 1918-19, 5s.; 1919-20, 9s. 6d.; 1920-21, 9s.; 1921-22, 5s. 5d.; 1922-23, 5s. 0½d.; 1923-24, 4s. 8d.; 1924-25, 6s. 1d.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL LAND, PRICES.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, In what year was the price of land reduced to settlers? 2, What was the amount of reduction per acre on first class land? 3, What was the amount per acre of the old and new rates? 4, Which Government were in power when that was done?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, 1915: see Land Act Amendment Act, 1915, Section 2; and 1917, see Land Act Amendment Act, 1917, Section 21. 2, As the maximum price was not previously fixed by statute, the reduction varied in each case. 3, The maximum price previously charged was approximately 40s., but the maximum price charged subsequent to the Land Act Amendment Act, except in special cases, is 15s. 4, 1915, Scaddan Ministry; 1917, Wilson Ministry.

QUESTIONS (3)—COLLIE COAL.

Output per man.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Mines: What was the output per man employed underground in the Collie coal mines from 1914 to 1926?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Year 1914, 802 tons; 1915, 764 tons; 1916, 847 tons; 1917, 758 tons; 1918, 726 tons; 1919, 740 tons; 1920, 758 tons; 1921, 698 tons; 1922, 771 tons; 1923, 771 tons; 1924, 814 tons; 1925, 836 tons.

Increase in Prices.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: When did the Railway Department pay the latest increases as ordered by the Federal coal tribunal in the prices of coal to the Collie coal companies for fuel supplied?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 27th September, 1920.

Comparative Prices.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What was the average price per ton paid by the Railway Department for local Collie coal at the pit's mouth from 1910 to 1926? 2, What was the average price per ton paid by the Railway Department for Newcastle coal at ship's slings, Fremantle, from 1910 to 1926? 3, What was the railway rate per ton per mile charged by the department for the transport of Collie coal up to 200 miles in the years 1910 and 1926?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: (1, 2, and 3). The information is contained in the attached return, which is laid on the Table of the House for general information.

QUESTIONS (3)—RAILWAYS.

Bencubbin-Lake Brown-Kalkalling Extension.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: Is it his intention to lay on the Table the files dealing with the Bencubbin-Lake Brown-Kalkalling extension?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied: Yes.

Brookton-Dale River Extension.

Mr. C P. WANSBROUGH asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that failure to keep his promise regarding the construction of the Brookton-Dale River railway has caused considerable disappointment to the settlers concerned? 2, Will he inform the House why the amount of £131,000 allocated by the Federal Government for this railway in May last, under the State Tentative Migration Scheme, was transferred to the Pemberton-Denmark railway in the Albany electorate? 3, What induced the Government to take this action?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied: 1, No. 2, The Commonwealth Government decided to make this alteration because of the urgent necessity to construct this railway to serve a greater population on the large number of groups already established in the latter district. 3, Answered by No. 2.

Wheat and Superphosphate transport.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What was the railway rate per ton per mile charged for the transport of wheat up to 200 miles in the years 1910 and 1926? 2, What was the price charged per ton per mile for the transport of superphosphates, lime, etc., for the farmers' use in 1910 and 1926?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1 and 2, The information is contained in the attached return which is laid on the Table of the House for general information.

QUESTION—SHEEP DISEASE.

Mr. BROWN asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that a serious loss of sheep has occurred between Corrigin and Brookton? 2, If so, will he send an expert officer to inquire into this disease? 3, Is the pathologist, appointed last year, any nearer to determining the nature of the disease? 4, If so, what is the suggested remedy?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Some losses have been reported from several places around the Beverley district during the past fortnight. 2, The Veterinary Pathologist is already personally investigating losses. 3, The so-called Braxy-like disease is still being investigated, and prophylactic measures are being experimented with, but it is too early to give a definite opinion on this phase of the work. A report on the work already conducted has been printed. 4, It is too soon to comment on a possible remedy, but recommendations are contained in the report referred to, which, it is believed, will minimise losses.

QUESTION—NURSES' CONDITIONS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Cunningham): 1, Has he read a letter in the "West Australian" of the 27th August headed "Nurses' Conditions" by "Ex-Nurse"? 2, Are the statements correct? 3, If so, will he see what can be done to alter the bad conditions for probationers, qualified or semi-qualified nurses?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM replied: Replying generally to letter by "Ex-Nurse" in "West Australian" of the 27th ultimo, as the result of a recent conference between representatives of the larger metropolitan hospitals and the Medical Department, better conditions and an all-round increase in salaries both to probationers and general nursing staffs were agreed upon, and have since been given effect to.

BILL—METROPOLITAN MARKET.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.43] in moving the second reading said: This is not the first occasion when a Bill has been introduced in the House for the purpose of providing a market for the metropolitan area. A measure was introduced in 1922 by the member for Perth (Mr. Mann), which provided that the City Council should have certain powers and privileges with regard to the establishment of a metropolitan fruit market. That met with considerable objection in this Chamber, and was defeated. In 1924 the hon. member moved for the ap-

pointment of a select committee to inquire into marketing facilities in the city of Perth. On his motion a select committee was appointed consisting of the mover, the member for Canning, the member for Pingelly, the member for Leederville, and the member for Claremont. The select committee reported to the House, and the member for Perth moved, in November, 1924—

That in the opinion of this House it is advisable that legislation be introduced this session empowering the Perth City Council to establish markets for the wholesale disposal of vegetables, fruit, produce—other than grain and chaff—meat, fish, poultry and game, under the conditions recommended by the select committee for the establishment of markets in the metropolitan area.

An amendment was moved by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) as follows:—

Strike out the words "Perth City Council to establish" with a view to the insertion of the following words:—"Government to appoint a trust composed of representatives of the primary producers, consumers, and distributors to arrange for the erection and control of," also to delete the words "other than."

In keeping with the motion as amended in accordance with the proposal of the member for Katanning, the Bill now before hon. members has been approved by Cabinet. I think the legislation is such as should commend itself to the majority of the members who supported the amendment and gave those instructions to the Government. The Bill will apply to the metropolitan area, meaning the municipal district of Perth, except the Victoria Park ward and the endowment lands owned by the City Council. Victoria Park is eliminated from the metropolitan area because of its distance from the facilities to be provided. As we all know, Victoria Park is separated from the city by the river, and it is not considered desirable at present to include that ward within the metropolitan area, for the purposes of this measure.

Mr. Sampson: Is it proposed to interfere with the kerbstone markets?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will come to that later on; the hon. member is always in a hurry. The Bill provides that the boundaries of the metropolitan area may be extended by means of a proclamation issued by the Governor, if it be so desired. If the trust be appointed and marketing facilities provided for the city, and the desire is expressed by people concerned that the operations of the trust shall be extended to other parts of the city, this provision will enable the boundaries to be so extended.

Mr. Sampson: Who would be the people concerned that you refer to, the consumers or the producers?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: As I have indicated, the Governor may by proclamation extend the boundaries of the metropolitan area to include other areas in or beyond the proposed boundaries of the metropolitan area. The Governor in that instance means, of course, the Governor-in-Council.

Mr. Stubbs: Would it interfere with markets at Subiaco and other similar centres?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Subiaco is not in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Stubbs: But the Bill contains power to extend the boundaries.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Subiaco is not within the area controlled by the City of Perth. If a request for the extension of the boundary were received from people desiring to come within the scope of the measure, the Governor may do it by proclamation.

Mr. Clydesdale: Such as the people of Subiaco, for instance.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The trust will not be able to extend the boundaries. It must be done by the Governor-in-Council, and the Government would have to take the responsibility. The purpose of the Act is to provide marketing facilities for the metropolitan area, and it is proposed to appoint a trust. It will consist of five members to be appointed by the Governor. One member will represent the producers, one the consumers, one will be nominated by the City Council, and two members will be appointed by the Government. One of the Government nominees shall be the chairman.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: There should be two representing the consumers.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then the Government will appoint the chairman?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. We propose to take away certain powers from the City Council regarding markets, and the Government consider, in view of that fact, it is obligatory upon us to give the City Council representation on the trust. Hence the proposal in the Bill. The Government have to find the money for the trust and therefore the Government should be represented by the chairman, as well as by another member of the trust. Each member

of that body shall hold office for three years but shall be eligible for reappointment. Each member of the trust shall receive such remuneration by way of salary or fees as may be fixed by the Governor, and such remuneration shall be a charge on the revenue of the trust. The purpose of the trust is to establish and maintain markets in the metropolitan area for the sale and storage of fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, eggs, butter, dairy produce, grain, straw, chaff, hay and other produce. The trust will have power to acquire land, machinery, plant, goods and effects.

Mr. Mann: You are asking for more powers than the City Council did.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, the hon. member should not anticipate. We are not doing so at all. In addition to that, the trust will have power to erect, maintain and repair buildings, to make roads, marketways, drains and approaches to the markets. If land should be required for the purposes of the trust, such land may be resumed in accordance with the Public Works Act, 1902. Under the Bill we take away from the council the right to establish markets under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, but with this limitation. We provide that, with the approval of the Governor, the council may establish marketing places for the sale of produce by retail, but not otherwise. There already exist within the area to be covered by the Bill a number of small markets at which commodities are retailed. It is not proposed to interfere with those institutions and power is reserved for the City Council, with the approval of the Governor, to continue those markets and they will not be interfered with unless the Governor-in-Council refuses permission for them to be carried on.

Hon. G. Taylor: Does that cover the kerbstone markets?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, the provision is inserted for that purpose.

Mr. Sampson: Those markets should be limited to the sale of goods by the producers only.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They are limited to goods sold retail. In order that we may not interfere with the existing kerbstone markets, power is given to the City Council to continue them.

Mr. Clydesdale: Can others be included as well in the future?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, with the approval of the Governor. We adopt and incorporate in the Bill the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act relating to the management and control of markets, so far as those conditions are applicable to the Bill. Subject to those provisions, the management and control of the markets will be regulated by the by-laws of the trust, and that body will be empowered to make by-laws for the general conduct of its business, the control of offices and the regulation of the markets. The Bill also provides that all dues, tolls, rents and moneys levied and collected by the trust shall be paid to the credit of an account in the name of the trust, at a bank approved by the Government, and all salaries, remunerations and other expenditure lawfully incurred by the trust shall be a charge upon the revenue of the trust. That body will have power, with the approval of the Government, to borrow money for the purposes of the measure, and may issue debentures and establish a sinking fund to liquidate such loans. It is also provided that the Treasurer may make advances out of moneys appropriated by Parliament to enable the trust to defray expenditure prior to, or after, the establishment of the markets. The trust will be required to cause books to be provided and kept, true and regular accounts to be entered therein, and such books shall be open for the inspection of the Auditor General, or any person authorised by him to inspect them. The trust will also be required to furnish to the Government once in every year, a true copy of the accounts so audited and the Auditor General's report shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament. These are the important provisions of the Bill and contain all that is necessary at the moment. The member for Perth (Mr. Mann) said that in proposing to monopolise the sale of commodities in the market, the Government are going further than the City Council desired. That is not so. We do not propose that corn, chaff, wood and such like commodities sold within the Government railway yards, shall come within the provisions of the measure. measure.

Mr. Mann: That is the only exception.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a distinct exemption. Furthermore, the hon. member's Bill provided that all goods of a value less than £1, brought into the city, had to be sold in the markets.

Mr. Mann: And you have that power here.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I have taken good care that we have

not that power. We do not interfere with goods taken to shops. If a man takes his goods to a shop he is not interfered with. What will be interfered with will be goods that are to be sold at auction. We set out that such goods must be sold in the markets. I need hardly indicate to hon. members the necessity there is for such markets in Perth. The provision of markets has been requested by large numbers of producers, whose letters I have on the departmental files. Markets have been suggested by the auctioneers carrying on business in Perth. In fact, there is a general demand for these markets. Perth is the only city in Australia where no provision is made for these facilities. The time is long overdue for the establishment of markets.

Mr. Mann: And Perth is the only city where the City Council has not the control of the markets.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot help that. As I pointed out to the Mayor and councillors the other day, the municipal authorities did not act. Their Bill did not receive the sanction of this House, for members did not approve of the legislation they sought to have passed. Parliament instructed the Government by resolution to bring down a Bill of the description now before members. I hope, in view of the urgency of this question, members will not adopt a hostile attitude because of some question regarding control. It does not matter who controls the markets. The member for Perth desired the City Council to have control, but despite his views and those I held, a majority of the members agreed to the amendment, thus instructing the Government to provide markets to be controlled by a trust. In view of the general desire for the markets, I hope the House will accept the Bill as it is before them. There is an urgent need for the markets and I hope the measure will receive favourable consideration. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 4:

Mr. THOMSON: I should like the Minister to give us the reasons for this.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Under the Act a boy 18 years of age is a man, and so has to pay into the Accident Relief Fund at full rates. It is in order that he should not be called upon to pay full rates that this provision, under which he is not a man until reaching his nineteenth birthday, has been inserted.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 5:

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister explain the reasons for this amendment?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Any position in or about a shaft is a very dangerous one. Under the principal Act a boy may be engaged anywhere in or about a mine. It is now proposed that he shall not be engaged in or about a shaft. The member for Mt. Margaret will appreciate the necessity for this.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Anyone with a knowledge of mining knows that in or about a shaft is not a place for any boy. Only adult experienced men should be engaged there, for it is a very responsible position.

Mr. WILSON: Anybody who has worked at mining will appreciate the necessity for the clause. A boy, in taking a truck from the cage, makes an unfortunate slip, with the result that some of the coal goes down the shaft and, probably, hits the man at work below.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 6:

Hon. G. Taylor: This is the whole Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Although we are told, and with truth, that this provision will not affect the working of the mines, since the seven-hour shift has been in operation for some time past, yet I cannot see why the limitation should be included in the Bill. Surely this should be left for the Arbitration Court. Of course, we have brought many other workers down to the 44-hour week.

Mr. Lindsay: No, the Arbitration Court has done so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And the Government, in some instances.

Mr. Lindsay: At all events, not we in this House.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Does the Minister think it wise or necessary to put this limitation in the Bill? In the Act the limitation is eight hours, and while that remains the Arbitration Court can fix any period less than eight hours. I do not know that men should work as long underground as men employed on the surface. Probably seven hours is quite long enough for a shift underground, but I do not think we should be asked to insert the limitation in the Bill. I understand that the Bill applies, not only to coal, but also to shale and clay. Will the Minister explain just why clay is included, and how far the Act will apply to men working clay in a brickyard? The Minister said that every clause in the Bill had been agreed to by both parties in the industry. That in itself is not sufficient reason for the passing of a Bill, for although people come to an agreement, agreements are very flexible and can be altered. Seven hours may be sufficient for men working underground, but I doubt whether it should be prescribed in the Bill, instead of being left to the Arbitration Court.

The Minister for Mines: The Bill will not apply to men working in brickyards or pits. It is for coal miners alone.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then is clay worked in coal mines?

The Minister for Mines: Yes. Fire clay under the coal.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is not a coal mine.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member might as well call a railway tunnel or a stone quarry a mine.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You can mine for iron, tin, copper, lead, coal, clay, sand or anything else.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Leader of the Opposition takes exception to the seven hours shift being included in the Bill. Why object to seven hours being included when we already have provided by Act of Parliament for an eight-hour day?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is the limit.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: So is this. For years we have legislated for hours. It has been done in England and on the Continent. At the Geneva conferences the need for legislating for hours is always being impressed upon the delegates. If we believe that a man should work not more than seven hours underground, what is the objection to inserting it in the Bill? Parliament is the place to determine the question. I could understand the hon. member's objecting if he thought seven hours too short a shift, but when he is satisfied that seven hours is reasonable, it should be inserted in the Bill. The 1902 Act provides a maximum of eight hours, and the only question is whether the eight hours should be retained or seven hours adopted in lieu. In view of the progress made since 1902, there should be no objection to legislating for a seven-hour shift.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But for the fact that the 1902 Act provided a limitation of hours, I would oppose a limitation being inserted in any Act. We have an Arbitration Court, and it is the work of the court to fix hours in accordance with the evidence submitted. Consequently there is no need for us to fix any limitation. In the Collie mines, all the work is done by contract, and so long as the output is maintained, I suppose it is all right.

Mr. WILSON: To my knowledge the Arbitration Court has never dealt with the question of hours for coal miners. Many years ago the Victorian Parliament stipulated the hours of labour in an Act of Parliament.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is no Arbitration Act in that State.

Mr. WILSON: Our Arbitration Act was passed before the Coal Mines Regulation Act, which was introduced by the Forrest Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: All good things were done by the Liberal Government.

Mr. WILSON: Do not let us spoil a good thing. During the war there was a big fight with the Newcastle miners over the bank-to-bank system, and although the Federal Coal Tribunal gave the men an advance of wages, they did not stipulate hours. It remained for the Parliament of New South Wales to set out the hours in an Act. In 1919 a conservative Government in the Old Country approved of seven hours for coal miners. We desire to have the seven hours included in the measure because otherwise an exploiting company might come on the scene and say, "It is not set down in the Act what the hours shall

be and we intend to get Jugo-Slav or some other labour to work our mine."

Hon. G. Taylor: Oh, go on!

Mr. WILSON: Some exploiting companies will come at anything, and we desire to protect Collie miners from being undercut in that way. This measure refers to mines, not to open faces. Morwell has a deposit of 700ft. of brown coal which is worked by navvying and not by mining operations.

Mr. Teesdale: But the men get miners' wages.

Mr. WILSON: I am not aware that they do. The Committee would be well advised to act on the judgment of men who have been engaged in the industry.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I hope my attitude will not be misunderstood. I have no complaint against the coal miners on the ground that they are working only seven hours. It is quite long enough, and it is the subject of an agreement between the miners and the company. My objection is to putting it in an Act of Parliament. We have already invested the Arbitration Court with power to regulate hours and if we provide a minimum of seven hours, it might be regarded as a sort of indirect instruction to the court that we favour a seven-hour day generally. No action of ours should tend to influence the court. Further, we should not legislate for a small section of people at Collie. The member for Collie spoke of the British Government having introduced legislation to regulate the hours of coal miners, but they were doing only what we did 20 or 24 years ago. Eight hours has been the established working day for many years in Australia. The Imperial Parliament has lengthened hours as well as shortened them. We have referred those functions to the Arbitration Court, and this Chamber should do nothing whatever to influence the Court. We should not leave it open to advocates in the Arbitration Court to say that Parliament has declared itself in favour of a working day of any particular number of hours. The idea of bringing in Jugo-Slavs to undercut the Collie miners is simply preposterous.

Mr. Wilson: Did you read in the newspapers this week that it had already been done?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No.

Mr. Wilson: I will produce the papers to you.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not think the idea is to undercut the Collie miners. That is altogether too far-fetched. I daresay the Jugo-Slavs will follow their ordinary avocation of cutting wood.

The Minister for Mines: In Jugo-Slavia there are plenty of mines.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister for Mines would bestir himself if he thought Jugo-Slavs were coming here to replace our miners either through accepting lower pay or working longer hours.

Mr. Wilson: The eight-hour law of 1902 was passed after the original Arbitration Act.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes, because the original Act gave the Court no power to fix hours. The first Arbitration Act was an experimental Act, a skeleton Act.

Mr. Sleeman: Yet hours were fixed in the Factories and Shops Act.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That Act regulated the hours during which the doors of shops could be kept open. I stated at the time that hours were being so regulated as to make it impossible for the small shopkeeper to survive.

Mr. Panton: Now you are talking rubbish.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Formerly the employees of large emporiums were overworked. For that reason the hours were reduced, but those reduced hours were also applied to small shops employing one assistant. This caused the small shops to close up. As regards mining, I consider that six hours underground would be quite long enough; but I would not express that in an Act of Parliament. The proper place to settle the question is the Arbitration Court.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not for a moment insist that miners should work eight hours underground, but I strongly object to any declaration by this Chamber that coal miners shall work seven hours a day. The Factories and Shops Act provides that a male worker shall not be employed for more than 48 hours per week, or a woman or boy for more than 44. Further, the Coal Mines Regulation Act contains the following provision—

> No person shall be employed below ground in any mine for more than eight consecutive hours at any time, or for more than 48 hours in any week, except in case of emergency

The accepted or standard working week throughout Australia is 48 hours.

Mr. Panton: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. THOMSON: If it is not so, why is the Federal Arbitration Court at present dealing with the question whether 48 hours shall be worked or 44? By passing this clause the Chamber will accept the principle that the recognised working day in Western Australia is to be seven hours. Last year the Government introduced a measure for that purpose, but it was defeated in another place. The Government's nominee in the Federal Arbitration Court is now adducing evidence to show that it is more beneficial to work five days per week than to work six. So possibly we are being asked to subscribe to the principle of a 35-hour working week. I am not prepared to accept that responsibility. It is a responsibility which belongs to the Arbitration Court. How long has the seven-hour day existed at Collie?

Mr. Wilson: Since 1920 or 1921.

Mr. THOMSON: Then no exception has been taken to that system for five or six years. Yet we are now asked to embody the principle in an Act of Parliament.

Mr. Wilson: I have been trying for five or six years to secure an amendment of the Coal Mines Regulation Act.

Mr. THOMSON: No exception whatever has been taken to the existing system.

Mr. Wilson: Why will the hon. member persist in telling damned lies? Cannot he speak the truth sometimes?

Mr. THOMSON: When the member for Collie accuses me of telling a damned lie, I must ask for a withdrawal of the statement.

Mr. Wilson: I will withdraw the word "damned."

Hon. G. Taylor: You must withdraw unreservedly.

Mr. Wilson: I withdraw, but I say that for the past five or six years I have been trying to get the Act amended.

Mr. THOMSON: Since the seven-hour day has existed at Collie for five or six years, I fail to see the necessity for including this clause in the Bill. The member for Collie said he wished the agreement to be embodied in an Act of Parliament so as to place Collie in a position where it could not be undercut by exploiters. That, however, would not justify the Chamber in passing a clause which restricts the hours of labour. The hon. member has said he wants to make sure that the Collie people, who are in a happy position to-day, will not be undercut in the event of another mine being opened up—which means that there will be no possibility of reducing the price of Collie coal either to the public or to the Railway Department. That is a wrong argument to bring forward. I am not in any way objecting to the work underground being limited to seven hours, or even less. That is a matter for the miners and owners themselves. But why should the Collie mine owners and miners be placed in a position superior to that of those employed in other industries in the State? The member for Collie was rather unfortunate in his remarks dealing with the Act passed in the Old Country in 1919, when he said that the then Government reduced the hours of labour in the coal mines to seven. He gave that as an illustration. He said also that the miners were then promised that they might even get a reduction to six hours. What do we find to-day? We are faced with the position that the Old Country cannot compete with the outside world in respect of its coal production, and at one time coal was one of its greatest exports.

Mr. Wilson: And the coal owners are getting thousands of pounds out of it.

Mr. Sleeman: You deliberately leave that alone.

Mr. THOMSON: I am quite prepared to debate that aspect, but at the present time I am not going to be drawn off my argument. Unfortunately to-day there is a spirit of unrest in the Old Country which has been in the throes of a coal strike for many months. We find now that hundreds of coal miners are anxious to come out to Australia because of the instability of the coal mining industry in England. An Act of Parliament has been passed there repealing the Act of 1919, and reverting to the eight hours. The question of the reduction of hours should not be brought into the hurly-burly of party politics because ill-feeling may be created. We have provided a tribunal presided over by a permanent judge, with representatives of the employers and employees, for the special purpose of dealing with matters of this kind. All workers can approach that court, and get an award, which is just as binding as an Act of Parliament. I regret that the Government are endeavouring to pass this Bill to reduce the hours. There is no justification for it and therefore I intend to oppose the clause.

Mr. CHESSON: If the member for Mt. Margaret and others who have spoken agree that seven hours is quite long enough to work underground, how can they object to the inclusion of that fact in the Bill? If it is agreed that a period of seven hours

underground is long enough, we have a perfect right to give the court a lead. And if the court takes it as a direction, there should not be any complaint.

Hon. G. Taylor: Why do we not transfer our authority to the court?

Mr. CHESSON: In 1902 we provided by statute that eight hours should be worked.

Hon. G. Taylor: We were then confirming an old-established principle.

Mr. CHESSON: We thought then that eight hours' work was long enough. Now, if we are in accord that seven hours' work is long enough for any miner underground, there is no reason why the fact should not again be included in an Act of Parliament. The period of seevn hours has reference only to men working underground. Miners underground are engaged on piece work, and no man works harder than does the coal miner underground. The position that prevails in a coal mine also prevails in a shale mine; the miners have to contend with similar gases. Therefore, when we talk about coal mines, we can hardly leave out shale mines. Believing conscientiously, as we do, that seven hours is a long enough period to work underground, we should be prepared to embody the fact in the Bill.

Mr. LINDSAY: It is my intention to oppose the clause. Although the Bill deals with coal mines, the general discussion has been on mining generally. The Bill states "in any mine." I have done a bit of mining, certainly a good many years ago, and I am not prepared to agree with some hon. members that seven hours below ground in some mines is worse than eight hours above ground. I am prepared to admit, though, that in some mines it may be a hardship to work eight hours, but from practical experience as a miner, certainly not in deep mines, I would prefer to work underground than on the surface.

Mr. Chesson: Then you have not had much experience.

Mr. LINDSAY: Speaking generally, I suppose if I had continued to work in a mine——

Mr. Panton: You would not be as good a man as you are now.

Mr. LINDSAY: I suppose if I had worked with rock drills, I would probably have been dead long ago. There are some mines in Western Australia, and in other parts of Australia also, in which I would prefer to work underground than on the surface. The reason I object to the clause is that it gives a lead to judges that seven hours a day and no more shall be worked in a mine. I have been making inquiries and trying to learn all I can from the awards of judges of Arbitration Courts, and I have read with a good deal of interest Judge Beeby's report on 44 hours. I have also read the reports of other judges, and it has been stated by them that they have followed the express wish of Parliament, and that it was for that reason that they had given their award. At the present time the Act here states that a man shall not work more than eight hours. We know that it is possible to convince a court that in an occupation that is not healthy, it is not advisable that eight hours should be worked, and in those circumstances an award can be obtained for less than eight hours. We now say to the court, "You must not award more than seven hours." This will apply not only to coal mining but to all mining in Western Australia, and because of that I oppose the clause. The member for Collie says that the three parties concerned have agreed to the provisions of the Bill, and that it should be allowed to pass. Other people in Western Australia were not represented at the conference, and we have a right to express what we think are their views. The companies in Collie have a monopoly over the supply of coal to the railways, and the users of the railways have to pay an increased cost accordingly. The hon. member says that the seven-hour day agreement has ben in operation since 1920, or the early part of 1921. He also said there had been no increase in the price of Collie coal since the hours were reduced. The figures show that in 1920 the cost was 15s. 5d. per ton. That was when the agreement was made. In 1921 the cost was 17s. 7¼d., and in 1926 it was 18s. 5½d. Parliament should not set it down in an Act that the miners shall work not more than seven hours a day. This will be taken up by miners in other parts of the State, and they will ask the court to apply the principle to them. This must greatly influence the court in the matter, whether it is economically right to have these hours or not.

Mr. WILSON: In 1919 the Federal tribunal ordered that the price of Newcastle coal should be increased by 3s. a ton. That increase was put on to every contract in the Commonwealth. The Western Australian Government also had to pay 3s. extra. The Federal tribunal then ordered that the

same increase should apply to Western Australian coal. In September, 1919, an agreement was made providing for the seven-hour day work, and there was to be a ballot as to whether this should come into operation from the 1st January, 1920. In the following year the Federal tribunal gave another increase in the price of Newcastle coal. The maximum price that can be paid for the best quality of Collie coal at the pit's mouth is 19s. That is based on the value of 10,000 B.T.U's. Newcastle coal, however, costs 47s. a ton. There has been an increase of 1s. 6d. during the past few weeks, but no corresponding increase in the case of Collie coal. The Cardiff company is receiving only 17s. 5d. per ton. Never by reason of the decrease in the hours have the Collie miners asked for an increase in their rates. The Railway Department has never paid a penny in increased cost unless it has been ordered to be paid by the Federal tribunal.

Mr. Lindsay: You mean that the hewing rate has not been increased.

Mr. WILSON: That is so. The hon. member did not quote the figures regarding production. As a fact, the output has increased under the seven hour basis over that which appertained when the men worked eight hours a day.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This is not a question of output. I am getting tired of the member for Collie continually upraiding anybody who has anything to say against Collie. If there is any section of the community that has been coddled by Governments it is that connected with the Collie coal industry. There is still owing to this State a matter of £66,000 in royalties, and the debt has been further increased. Governments have never studied any other part of the State as they have studied Collie. That place has been so much coddled that it wants still further coddling. The coddling it has had in the past has stimulated the member for the district to place in this Bill a provision for a seven hour day exclusively for these miners. Their hours are already fixed by agreement, and we have no reason to suppose that this agreement will be altered. I should like the Premier to give his views as to whether this State is receiving a fair deal for the Collie coal that is supplied.

Mr. George: Do not put too hard a task upon him.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier knows more about it now than he did. His latest remarks on the subject are not too favourable towards the virtues of Collie coal. I am tired of listening to the member for Collie. He would not allow another mine to be opened up within two or three miles of Collie.

Mr. Wilson: That is a deliberate lie, and I ask that it be withdrawn. Why utter such an untruth. It is not fair. Name the mine.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If I cannot conduct a debate in the House without conforming to its rules, I will walk out.

Mr. Wilson: I ask for a withdrawal of the statement. I have never prevented any mine within two or three miles of Collie from starting.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I will withdraw the remark.

Mr. Wilson: Name the mine.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Wilga.

Mr. Wilson: I ask the hon. member to withdraw his reference to Wilga or any other mine.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is nothing offensive in using the word "Wilga." It may be offensive to the hon. member. It is dangerous to him, because Wilga is a good coal field, and has been vouched for by the best authorities in the Mines Department. It is an injustice to the people concerned in that district that they are not allowed to compete with Collie. It is an injustice to Western Australia that we have not other coal mines, from which we may get coal for our railways at a reasonable price.

Mr. Sleeman: Would you be in favour of nationalising Wilga?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Members must keep order.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes. The coal ought to belong to the State. I refuse to be bluffed or side-tracked by interjections.

Mr. Teesdale: Go it, you pack!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have repeatedly called for order. If I do not get it I shall have to take action. Members keep on interjecting after order has been called. They must obey the Chair. Speakers have had more latitude than they ought to have had. They must adhere to the subject before the Chair. I will not allow any further digression.

Mr. Wilson: I want to say——

The CHAIRMAN: Members must keep order.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am somewhat heated over the constant interjections. I have no desire to oppose any reduction in hours to any workers in the country, let

alone those in Collie. I am not, however, going to allow it to be put on the statute-book. The member for Collie has drawn me off the track.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Prior to the tea adjournment I was replying to the remarks of the member for Collie. Some of the statements made by him regarding those opposing the clause were uncalled for.

Mr. MARSHALL: I support the clause. The contention of those who claimed that the question of hours should be left to the Arbitration Court rather startles one.

Mr. Sleeman: They must find some excuse.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is strange that members who have had a long experience in industrial matters and of arbitration courts, should use that as a lever to influence the Committee against the clause. Repeatedly Arbitration Court judges have asked Parliament to say what they desired should be the working week. On more than one occasion Mr. Justice Higgins expressed that view and so did Mr. Justice Rooth.

Mr. Sampson: What is the Arbitration Court judge for?

Mr. MARSHALL: Arbitration Court judges have claimed that it was not their function to fix hours.

Mr. Sampson: Who said that?

Mr. MARSHALL: It has been stated repeatedly. Such statements have been referred to in this House before. In fact, one judge, when President of the State Arbitration Court, announced from the Bench that it was unfair to ask judges to adjudicate upon industrial matters because their legal training did not fit them to decide industrial problems.

Mr. Thomson: Do not judges decide on the evidence placed before them?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, and Mr. Justice Rooth said that he could not adjudicate upon such evidence.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then he could not adjudicate on a charge of murder or robbery!

Mr. MARSHALL: That is quite different. An Arbitration Court judge has to make laws to regulate, among other things, hours of labour, whereas an ordinary judge has to interpret laws.

Mr. Stubbs: What is Parliament for?

Mr. MARSHALL: The Arbitration Court judge frames laws that are binding——

Hon. G. Taylor: Just as the workers will allow them to be.

Mr. Sleeman: Or the employers, too.

Hon. G. Taylor: Perhaps so.

Mr. MARSHALL: The newspapers contain reports of hundreds of breaches of the Arbitration Act by the employers.

Hon. G. Taylor: Not breaches of the Act, but of awards.

Mr. MARSHALL: I regard them as an Act, because they represent the law of the land. Arbitration Court judges have asked Parliament to give an indication of what should be the working week for the workers of Australia. Members of Parliament say that they approve of a seven-hour day, but they will not accept their responsibility, preferring to shuffle it on to the Arbitration Court. Here is what Judge Higgins said—

> I have waited for years for Parliament to speak, but they have not spoken.

Now we desire to speak.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But that is in "Hansard."

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, and I know it to be correct. The member for Toodyay said that if the Committee supported the clause, it would be taken as a direction from Parliament to regulate the daily hours of work. The Mines Regulation Act contained a section stipulating that men could not be employed underground for more than 47 hours a week. The Arbitration Court gave an award specifying 44 hours a week, despite the provision in the Act. If what the member for Toodyay said was correct, the Arbitration Court would have acted in accordance with the Act. It is all a matter of submitting evidence to substantiate a claim for fewer hours than those specified in the Act, which merely prescribes that hours shall not be worked in excess of those mentioned in the Act.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is not the seven-hour day fixed by the Arbitration Court now for the coal miners?

Mr. MARSHALL: That is included in an industrial agreement registered with the Arbitration Court, but we should not be influenced by that fact.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why should we single out one class of worker, and not fix the hours of work for anyone else?

Mr. MARSHALL: If the Leader of the Opposition introduces a measure prescribing seven hours a day for all workers, I will support him.

Mr. Thomson: What right have you to say they should be seven hours?

Mr. MARSHALL: My experience in the industry. The member for Katanning is an encyclopedia on all matters, but members who agree that seven hours is long enough to work in a coal mine, should take the responsibility of placing that provision in an Act of Parliament.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is not the argument. Is not the Federal Arbitration Court trying to fix the hours of the working week now?

Mr. MARSHALL: Arbitration Court judges have repeatedly said that that was the function of Parliament.

Mr. Thomson: Then why is the Federal Arbitration Court dealing with the question now?

Mr. MARSHALL: In that case there is a dispute.

Hon. G. Taylor: This question should be regarded as sub judice, seeing that it is before the court now.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is the duty of Arbitration Court judges to take into consideration all matters in connection with an industry and to issue awards prescribing, among other things, the hours to be worked. In no other way can any special industry be dealt with. If a judge is to be instructed by Parliament as to the hours to be worked in each industry, it can reasonably be said that his occupation, to a large extent, is gone. In the past the functions of the Arbitration Court have been usurped by Governments, and now Parliament is asked to usurp them.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The hours of work throughout the world have been fixed by Parliament.

Mr. SAMPSON: Hours of work were prescribed in Acts prior to arbitration courts being set up, but now that necessity does not exist. If the clause be allowed to remain, it will be taken by the Arbitration Court as a suggestion from Parliament that seven hours should constitute a day's work in every industry. There is one other industry in which seven hours is ruling today: but that was determined by the Arbitration Court after due consideration of the conditions of that industry.

Mr. LATHAM: I oppose the clause, not because I object to seven hours for underground work, but because I think the provision should not be in the Bill. The other night the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) informed the House that the mineowners and the miners had agreed to this. That is a dangerous policy, for whilst we know those two sections of the industry are important sections, still the public generally ought to be considered in this matter.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Does not this House represent the public?

Mr. LATHAM: But why should it be put up that because the owners and the miners have agreed upon this principle we should necessarily adopt it? The fixing of the hours of employment is a function of the Arbitration Court, and it would be dangerous for us to set up a precedent by including this limitation in the Bill. I contend the public should be represented even in the Arbitration Court.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How could that be effected?

Mr. LATHAM: By having an advocate representing the public. At present we have in the court only two sections; and when the employers' advocate says "If the hours are to be shortened, we shall have to increase the price of our commodities; do you agree?" the men's advocate agrees accordingly. Then it is that the public should have a say. I hope the House will not agree to the clause.

Mr. TEESDALE: With the permission of the members for Menzies and for Murchison I should like to say a word; but it is getting to such a pitch here that a member on this side is not allowed to sneeze.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must discuss the clause.

Mr. TEESDALE: I have not heard a single reason advanced to-night as to why this provision for seven hours should be included in the Bill. I know just as much about underground work as do some of the dry blowing members who pose as representatives of the miners. I have seen some of the biggest coal mines in the world.

Mr. Panton: Where, at the pictures?

Mr. TEESDALE: There is the member for Menzies again, going for his life. He is like a 12-inch gramophone record, but he is not going to put me off what I have to say. When this Labour-appointed tribunal, the Arbitration Court, was first created I thought Labour members would be satisfied; but they now want to establish a precedent here that may influence the court. It is distinctly an attempt to

establish something that can be pointed to in future so as to influence the court in the fixing of the hours of labour. A little while ago the member for Menzies interjected with great glee that the Government were not responsible for including this seven hours provision in the Bill. But on looking up the Bill of last year I find in it no mention of seven hours. It looks as though the Government had inserted the provision in this Bill for a special purpose: as though it had been deliberately put in by the Government in order to add one more to that list of slaughtered measures they are so ready to call attention to when it suits their purpose.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a pity the hon. member who has just sat down did not peruse last year's Bill before claiming that there were differences between that measure and the Bill under consideration. This Bill is exactly the same as that of last year.

Mr. Teesdale: Is the seven-hour provision in last year's Bill?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Hon. G. Taylor: No.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have last year's Bill here. It is the same, word for word and letter for letter, as the Bill before us. Actually only one objection has been raised to the clause, namely that the Arbitration Court should not have any direction from us as to the hours of labour. Yet hon. members had no objection to the inserting of eight hours in the parent Act.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was 22 years ago: and it was inserted because the Arbitration Court then had no power to deal with hours.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In the parent Act it is provided that no man shall work for more than eight hours.

Mr. Thomson: It does not say he shall not work less.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nor does the Bill say he shall not work less than seven hours. Will the hon. member contend this is a direction to the court?

Mr. Thomson: Of course it is.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is idle to say the clause constitutes an instruction to the court. Practically all members agree that seven hours is sufficient for work underground. The only member who objects to the seven hours is the member for Toodyay.

Mr. Lindsay: Yes, I have been accustomed to working 16 hours a day.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But only for yourself. We have all done that. The hon. member would not work 16 hours a day for anybody else.

Mr. Thomson: These coal miners are working for themselves.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are working on contract getting coal for someone else. If they are content to work for seven hours and are paid on the results of seven hours, what is the objection to putting it in the measure? Members opposite pretend to see something dangerous in this provision, but their alleged consideration for men who work seven hours will not carry much weight outside the House.

Mr. LINDSAY: Quite a lot of matters have been introduced that I would have preferred to discuss on a straight-out motion for a reduction of hours. Judges of the Federal Arbitration Court have expressed the opinion that the economic position of the industries of Australia would not allow them to reduce the hours of labour.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is not their function; they have no right to interfere in that problem.

Mr. LINDSAY: Let me quote Judge Beeby's report on the proposed reduction of the standard working week from 48 to 44 hours. Judge Beeby included the following extract from the remarks of Mr. Justice Higgins in dealing with the builders labourers' application for a reduced working week:—

> In establishing generally a limit of 48 hours for the week, Australia has achieved a result which is the envy of many other nations.

Then Judge Beeby remarked—

> Taking the highest prices received for raw commodities as the basis for comparison, this State and the whole Commonwealth have been prosperous during recent years, but looking at the quantities produced, the position is sufficiently alarming to call for the serious attention of all classes of the community. The sudden fall in prices to anything approximating pre-war rates would leave the State and the Commonwealth unable to cope with their financial obligations . . . . The general conclusion to be drawn from this evidence is that the need for increased production is serious, and that any improvements in labour conditions are only safe if accompanied with special efforts to achieve compensating increases in output.

Mr. Panton: That was an indication that more efficient machinery was required.

Mr. LINDSAY: The judges consider it is not right for them to reduce hours below the present level. I know of no other country that has placed in an Act of Parliament provision for a maximum of seven hours a day. It has been argued that the Legislature should give the courts a lead. If we retain this provision in the Bill it may be concluded that we, the representatives of the people, consider that industry can stand a working day of seven hours. In my opinion we cannot stand a reduction of hours unless it is possible to secure a corresponding increase of out put. The Collie coal miners have an agreement registered in the Arbitration Court and this clause will not alter the position. By including it, however, we might establish a precedent, and it is my honest opinion that this is a determined attempt by the Government to provide for something in the future.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is the function of Parliament to direct what hours shall be worked in industry. True, it involves a question of economics, but it is for Parliament to determine that. Right through the ages reductions of hours have been brought about at the direction of Parliament. It is impossible for the Arbitration Court to deal with hours in industry.

Mr. Thomson: The court does it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Federal Parliament created a special tribunal to deal with hours, but ever since the establishment of Arbitration Courts Parliament has accepted the responsibility. There has been no reform in the matter of hours unless Parliament has directed it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is wrong.

Mr. Mann: Did not Judge Rooth bring in a 44-hour week for the employees of the Midland Workshops?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But Parliament over and over again has declared itself on the 44-hour week.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It has not.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member's Government introduced an amendment of the Factories Act which stipulated a 44-hour week for women and children.

The Minister for Lands: And the Arbitration Court did not take it as a direction that 44 hours was to be awarded in all industries.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Of course not. The member for Northam did not trust the court to deal with women and children employed in factories. He said in effect, "It is a matter of public policy and we must legislate to protect women and children." The same thing applies to coal mining. The parties interested have come to the conclusion that a working shift of seven hours is the correct one. That has been accomplished by agreement, but it is difficult for an advocate to get the court to recognise the seven-hour day. It is only by drawing comparisons with other industries that the court can arrive at a decision, and how can the court do that unless it reviews all industries? The court cannot do that; it is a matter for Parliament.

Mr. Mann: The Arbitration Court does consider the question of hours.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: But to a limited extent only. It is generally recognised that one cannot get a ruling from the court on the question of hours. We have been told that the question of hours is essentially one of public policy and that Parliament should give a direction as to its desires.

Mr. Thomson: How did the 44-hour week come to be given to the Midland workshops?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It was given after the war period. Men enlisting were promised on all hands that there would be a reconsideration of industrial conditions after the peace. The returned soldiers considered that the only possible means of improving the industrial position was through reduction of hours. Pressure was used to obtain for the returned soldiers what had been promised them. Only Parliament can review the question of hours from an economic point of view.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The soldiers had nothing to do with the question of hours. They went and fought, and then came back and worked, and refrained from making trouble. The Factories and Shops Act provided 44 hours for women and boys, to protect them.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why should not we protect the coal miners?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is a different thing. It cannot be contended that this Chamber is better qualified than the Arbitration Court to deal with the question of hours. No body of men in Western Australia are so keen to get votes as the men sitting here; and if the question of hours were referred to Parliament, it would not be so much a matter of what was good for the workers as of what was good for members. Mr. Justice Rooth awarded a 44-hour week, and only recently the Minister for Labour declared that the court was the proper place in which to have hours fixed.

Yet this Bill is brought down by the Government. The eight-hour day was recognised by this State 24 years ago. The passing of the clause will not make the slightest difference to the hours worked by the Collie miners, who probably earn more per hour than any other class of miners. Moreover, the Collie miner is on piece work. In many ways the coal mining industry is better treated than any other. A great proportion of Collie's output is sold to the Government of this State, who purchase on the basis of a monopoly, each miner thus getting a percentage of the sales to the Government.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Guildford emphasised that Parliament, and not the Arbitration Court, is the place in which to regulate hours, because Parliament alone is capable of dealing with the economic aspect of the question. Collie coal, however, is sold practically to only one purchaser, the Government, being used for running the State railway system. If there is one commodity which affects our industries more than another, it is coal; and Collie is our only source of supply. If Parliament were to decide the question of hours for Collie, it would have to decide without evidence except for scraps here and there, and the arguments of members would be such as to suit their own particular case. The Arbitration Court, on the other hand, would hear evidence and arguments from both sides. Therefore the court is infinitely better qualified to decide the question than this House is. Were it not for the purchases of the State, the Collie mines would have to close down. If we regulate the hours of Collie miners as proposed by this Bill, it will be open to the court to say, "The largest customers of the industry have decided upon certain hours, and they should know." The arguments of the supporters of the clause condemn it without any further opposition from this side.

Mr. GEORGE: Why does Clause 6 as appearing in this new Bill omit the last words of the clause as it stood in the original Bill—"except in the case of emergency"? I take those words to mean that, where there is anything threatening the workings or the machinery or employees' lives, men may be employed to put things right.

Mr. LATHAM: I was surprised to hear the member for Guildford say it is not a function of the Arbitration Court to fix hours. The previous measure amending the Arbitration Act, which measure was introduced by the present Government last session, provides—

> The court shall have jurisdiction of its own motion to deal with and determine all industrial matters.

And "industrial matters" is interpreted as meaning—

> The hours of employment, sex, age, qualification, status of worker, etc.

Plainly, therefore, this clause is unnecessary. The fixing of hours is a function of the Arbitration Court, who are the best judges of the matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is no need for fear regarding the point raised by the member for Murray-Wellington. The employers see no necessity for the inclusion of the emergency provision. I have already informed members that representatives of the employers, of the union, and of the Mines Department discussed the Bill and the measure represents the agreement arrived at between all parties. It is hardly conceivable that the employers would agree to ignore the reference to emergencies if they thought such emergencies would arise.

Mr. GEORGE: There is no argument in saying that the employers have raised no objection to the omission of the phrase I refer to. Frequently occasions have arisen when the exercise of the emergency provisions have been necessary.

The Minister for Mines: The position is dealt with later. Read Subsection 3 with the amendment in the Bill.

Mr. GEORGE: Accidents have occurred in coal mines and I am sure the member for Collie, as a practical miner, will agree to the necessity for the inclusion of the emergency provision. Should the roof of a mine give indications of falling in, and it becomes necessary to timber up the workings to make them safe, are the men to walk off, merely because they have finished their seven hours' shift? It is the duty of both the employer and the employees to see that the mine is in a proper condition before miners are allowed to work in the affected section. If the words I suggest are not retained, they may lead to trouble and litigation.

[*Mr. Panton took the Chair.*]

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If Parliament takes this question out of the hands of the Arbitration Court, a dangerous precedent may

be set up. In the course of time members on the Government side of the House will oppose what they are advocating to-night. I have heard them claim that the Arbitration Court was the proper tribunal to carry out this work. If a reactionary Ministry were to take charge of the Treasury bench and seek to prescribe a 50-hour week, where would the howl come from then? We would then hear Labour members saying that Parliament should not fix hours. I am confident that even Government supporters recognise the danger. I will not be a party to taking out of the hands of the Arbitration Court the duty of fixing the hours of work, for that would be a retrograde step.

Mr. GEORGE: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of proposed new Subsection 1, ater "hours," the following words be inserted: "Except in cases of emergency."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is no necessity for the amendment. In cases of emergencies, there are plenty of men to be employed to cope with the difficulty, other than those who have worked their seven-hour shift. The Bill provides by an amendment to Subsection 3 of Section 6 that the manager, the overman, the deputy, the engineer, the mechanic, the electrician and the pumper shall be omitted from the operations of the clause under discussion.

Mr. SAMPSON: When the Day Baking Bill was before Parliament reference was made to an alleged arrangement between the master bakers and the union.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Swan is out of order. He must confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. LATHAM: I support the amendment. There can be no harm in agreeing to it.

Mr. WILSON: I am surprised to hear the arguments advanced in favour of the amendment, particularly in view of the provision already made for the exemption of certain people who would be available in case of emergency. May I tell hon. members who do not know anything about coal mining, that a staff of men go down the mine every day to do the timbering up, and they would be able to tell in a moment whether there was any danger. In addition, the Inspector of Mines has power to prohibit men from going into a mine. If there were an explosion or some serious accident, there are always men ready to go on shift.

Mr. George: But time would be lost in changing shifts.

Mr. WILSON: Seeing that Mr. Montgomery, the Inspector of Mines, two mine managers and experienced union representatives consider it unnecessary, it is an insult to those men to suggest the necessity for the inclusion of the amendment.

Mr. Mann: Well, why bring the amendment before Parliament at all?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. WILSON: The men I refer to consider it superfluous to include the provision referred to by the member for Murray-Wellington, because sufficient men will be available to cope with emergencies.

Mr. Latham: Does the member for Collie know of any abuse of that provision?

Mr. GEORGE: I am sorry the member for Collie seems to take umbrage regarding hon. members who may not see exactly eye to eye with him. I come from a coal country in the centre of England and I have known of many accidents in coal mines, necessitating men working for 16 or 20 hours without a break, struggling to extricate men who had been imprisoned below ground. It is because of my knowledge of that sort of thing I wish to see the amendment inserted. If there were to be an accident at Collie, would the member for Collie raise any question if the men worked eight or ten or twelve hours in the emergency? I fail to see why there should be any objection to an amendment that imposes no disability on the men, but merely provides that, should emergency arise, it shall be properly met. It seems to me there must be something behind the opposition to the amendment.

Mr. WILSON: The hon. member says his sympathies are with the men working in mines where explosions occur. My sympathy is just as much with the men working at Collie. The managers at Collie, together with the Mines Department, know what they are about, and they have fully safeguarded the men. The words proposed to be added are just so much nonsense, the object being to defeat an important provision in the Bill.

Amendment put and negatived.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	16
Majority for	3

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lamond
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Collier	Mr. Millington
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heron	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Miss Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Kennedy	(*Teller.*)

NOES

Mr. Barnard	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Brown	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Taylor
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Mann	Mr. C. F. Wansbrough
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. Latham
	(*Teller.*)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Angelo
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Maley
Mr. Withers	Mr. Denton
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Richardson
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Davy

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 6 and 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Amendment of Section 15:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Provision is made here for the appointment of a special inspector to deal with coal. Why does the Minister want this inspector?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Because there is no inspector there now.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not under the Weights and Measures Act?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, the only inspection made there now is an inspection under the Weights and Measures Act on behalf of the railway authorities. The same officer can do the work required in the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 and 10—agreed to.

Mr. THOMSON: Will the Minister say why Section 18 is to be repealed?

The CHAIRMAN: In what clause is that?

Mr. THOMSON: In Clause 10.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 10 has been passed.

Mr. THOMSON: Well, I was on my feet when you passed it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not.

Mr. THOMSON: I say I was.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You must accept the Chairman's ruling.

The Premier: Surely the Chairman's ruling must be respected!

Mr. THOMSON: But I say I was on my feet when the clause was passed.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chairman says you were not, so there is no more about it. The next clause is Clause 11.

Mr. THOMSON: Well, I will remain on my feet in readiness for Clause 12.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will resume his seat. I inform the hon. member that the Chairman requires that a little respect be shown to the Chair, and in this instance he is going to have it.

The Premier: The hon. member has shown only gross disrespect.

Clause 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Amendment of Section 21:

Mr. THOMSON: It is here proposed that a subsection be inserted as follows:—

2 (a). A certificated manager under this Act shall have control and management of one mine only.

It has been repeatedly stated that by working shorter hours greater efficiency will be attained. The Bill is legislating for the existing coal mines alone. It is not in the best interests of the State. Mr. Kingsley Thomas, the Royal Commissioner appointed by the present Government to inquire into the gold mining industry, said this in his report—

Each manager is jealous of his position and authority, unwilling to seek information outside, and responsible only to his board of directors some 12,000 miles away. There are seven managers, seven mine offices, seven London boards of directors, seven everything that goes to the working of a mine except modern appliances and labour-saving machinery, and an appreciation of up-to-date mining practice.

In Part III. of his report he recommended the amalgamation of properties, and made the following comments:—

The seven properties at present being worked on this field do not, together with additional ground in the neighbourhood as may be considered necessary, such as the Associated Northern Blocks, Paringa, North Kalgurli, etc.,

cover an area that would be considered unwieldy if incorporated in one concern. On its present tonnage basis, or even with twice its present tonnage, as gold mining goes nowadays, it would be considered by no means a large mine. It could be controlled by one manager instead of seven, one mine office instead of seven, and one London office instead of seven, and would have the advantage of one clear policy. It is evident that the lack of policy and existing state of stagnation, drift and apathy have already placed some of the mines in a precarious position, and an amalgamation such as I have indicated should not be difficult to accomplish.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: He was dealing with mines, not with mine managers.

Mr. THOMSON: Really! What an enlightening interjection! The Royal Commission on gold mining recommended one manager instead of seven managers. Yet this measure proposes one manager for every mine. It is absurd. Surely it would be possible to have several mines under one manager.

Mr. J. H. Smith: There is only one general manager at Collie now.

The Minister for Lands: One general manager, but this refers to mine managers.

Mr. THOMSON: Why is it necessary to insist upon having a certificated manager to control each mine? Is it not possible to have two or three mines conjoined and supervised by one manager? The trend of all public business is in the direction of amalgamation under one manager. Prior to federation we had a tobacco factory at Fremantle, but when the Customs barriers were swept away the factory was closed in order that the business might be concentrated in the East.

Mr. Latham: This is some more of that restrictive legislation of which we have had so much.

Mr. THOMSON: We are asked to pass legislation based on an agreement which, while suitable to the conditions of Collie, might hamstring or prevent the development of coal mining in other parts of the State. Another coal field might be discovered which would have to be worked under vastly different conditions from those obtaining at Collie.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	16
Majority for ..	3

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lamond
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Collier	Mr. Millington
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heron	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Miss Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Kennedy	*(Teller.)*

NOES.

Mr. Barnard	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Brown	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Taylor
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Mann	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. Latham
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Angelo
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Maley
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Davy
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Withers	Mr. Denton

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 13 to 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—Change house:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is provided that an area of not less than 5 square feet shall be provided in each change room for every person employed underground. Why 5 feet?

The Minister for Mines: We must stipulate some area.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A man could not be accommodated in that space.

Mr. Wilson: All of the miners would not be there together.

The Minister for Mines: We are satisfied with this area.

Mr. Teesdale: They want to be generous now. Don't block them, for God's sake!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Five feet seems to be a ridiculous area to stipulate for a man.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 21—Amendment of Section 72:

Mr. WILSON: Subclause 2, relating to the relief fund, empowers the Minister to reopen for consideration any case that may have occurred within seven years prior to the passing of the measure. I desire that the term be made eight years so that some

of the old miners might be brought under the provision. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of Subclause 2 "seven," be struck out and the word "eight" inserted in lieu.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Collie seems to be of opinion that eight years is a period short enough in which something may be held in abeyance before being reopened. I presume this clause deals purely with the fund.

The Minister for Mines: Their own fund.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Why is eight years necessary?

Mr. WILSON: We had better make it nine years to be certain. Some seven or eight years ago a mine manager was killed, and his relatives were left without any compensation. It was only by an oversight that he was not a contributor to the fund. A sum of about £4,000 exists in the fund, and it is desired to do justice to the widow and seven children of the deceased.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have no objection to justice being done to people who are suffering, but I do object to making retrospective legislation. I should prefer that something be inserted in the clause to cover this specific case, and no other.

Mr. WILSON: This is the only case that has been brought under the notice of the trustees of the Accident Relief Fund. The Crown Law Department said the Act was faulty, and we want the Minister to have authority to deal with this one case.

Mr. J. H. Smith: How does the hon. member know that no other cases will be dated back eight years?

Mr. WILSON: Before the trustees of the fund can deal with a case a claim must be put in within a certain period. This is provided in the regulations governing the fund.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This is a most accommodating Bill. It appears to contain clauses that meet any sort of case. Apparently someone was killed a few years ago and his relatives have no claim upon the fund. I take it that only people who contribute to it can claim against it. If this unfortunate individual had no legal claim upon the fund at the time, I am doubtful if we are establishing a case for his relatives by passing this clause. I do not see that it will make any difference. Are we going to order the trustees to acknowledge the claim?

Mr. Chesson: The trustees are willing to pay the money when they have authority to do so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not think this clause gives the relatives any legal claim upon the fund.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The clause only empowers the Minister to authorise the reopening of a case for consideration. If any person has been cut out from a claim upon the fund he or his relatives must establish the claim. If it is not established it will not be met.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We are to give the Minister power to over-ride the law. If a person has no claim against the fund at the time of an accident, this clause cannot give it to him.

Mr. Wilson: This man should have had a claim.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is extraordinary that we should be asked to deal with a matter that happened eight years ago.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am not satisfied with the Minister's explanation. It is bad legislation to go back eight or nine years. Perhaps the clause could be redrafted to apply only to this specific case.

Mr. WILSON: The Act says, "Every coal miner working in Western Australia shall contribute to the Coal Miners' Accident Relief Fund 1s. per fortnight." This applies to every employee. The manager I have mentioned was an employee, but the Crown Law Department says he was not one.

Mr. MANN: The clause goes further than stated by the Minister. It is qualified in that a case must have been brought under the notice of the committee or trustees of the Accident Relief Fund, who shall grant such compensation as may be deemed necessary.

Mr. Wilson: That has been done.

Mr. MANN: The Minister was astray in his explanation. There is another point. Does the clause mean that the report must have been made to the committee of the accident relief fund at the time of the passing of this measure or at the time the claim was made?

The Minister for Lands: The clause says "prior to the passing of this Act."

Mr. MANN: The clause can be read either way. It is highly ambiguous.

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

Clause 22—Aged and infirm coalminers' superannuation:

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Under this clause would an employee 19 years of age be an adult?

The Minister for Mines: Yes.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: And would he be classed as an adult for the purposes of the fund?

The Minister for Mines: Yes.

Mr. WILSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of paragraph (a) of proposed Subsection 3 "two" be struck out, and "four" inserted in lieu.

I wish to lengthen the period from two years to four because of the many men who come to Collie from the goldfields suffering from miners' phthisis. They get work in Collie, but unfortunately they find themselves knocked backwards and forwards. The special object of the amendment is to enable some young men to obtain relief. Their invalid pension amounts to only £1 per week, and the desire is that they should receive an additional 12s. 6d.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I support the amendment, and think it right that Parliament should give every assistance to the committee administering the fund.

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

Clause 23—Amendment of Schedule:

Mr. THOMSON: In Subclause 5, proposed rule 16 says that the word "eighteen" shall be inserted instead of the word "seventeen." But the Act already says "eighteen."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is a misprint. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause 5 the word "eighteen" be struck out, and "seventeen" inserted in lieu, and that in line 2 the word "seventeen" be struck out and "eighteen" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. THOMSON: As to Subclause 6, would proposed rule 51 apply to a clay-getter working underground, and would he need two years' experience? It seems to me that "clay-getter" should be deleted from the clause.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Under the interpretation section of the parent Act, Section 3, there is no danger of what the member for Katanning suggests.

Mr. WILSON: I move an amendment—

That in proposed rule 51 after the word "person," line 1, there be inserted "gold and metal miners excepted."

Mr. THOMSON: There is pipeclay mining at Baker's Hill, and I fail to see the need for bringing that sort of mining within this measure.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. LINDSAY: I understand that this clause will apply to shale mines and underground workings for clay.

Mr. Wilson: Fireclay.

Mr. LINDSAY: Shale, for instance, is got not only in coal mines. We have been told that the Bill represents an agreement arrived at between those interested in coal mining and that their point of view has been incorporated in the Bill. Were those who will also be affected by the Bill, consulted regarding its provisions? I do not know why shale and fireclay mines should be brought in at all.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Toodyay has never worked in a kerosene shale mine or he would not have advanced his argument. If any such provision were to be made, it should be made in the Coal Mines Regulation Act.

Mr. THOMSON: At Baker's Hill there is a fireclay mine where firebricks are also made. Were those interested in that mine consulted?

The Premier: Yes, they have agreed to it.

Mr. THOMSON: I asked the Minister for Mines.

The Premier: I replied for him.

Mr. THOMSON: We should not bind others. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of proposed new Rule 51 the words "or clay" be struck out.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Clause 24—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £831,000

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [9.51] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill of one clause and merely seeks to continue the

operations of the Act of last year and of the year before. It is practically a continuation Bill. I endeavoured to make the Act permanent, but in another place it was thought that it should not be made permanent. The Bill relates to the revenue from sandalwood, and provides that 10 per cent. or £5,000, whichever be the greater, shall be set aside as a fund for the regrowth of sandalwood. It may be interesting to hon. members to know that although the measure has been in operation for two years only, the fund already amounts to £5,184.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is that without this year's contribution?

The PREMIER: Yes, that was the state of the fund as at the end of June last. That means to say that in two years the expenditure has been considerably less than half the amount paid into the fund.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then with this year's contribution the fund will amount to over £10,000.

The PREMIER: Yes. That will indicate to hon. members that the amount set aside is more than ample for the expenditure necessary.

Mr. Sampson: Would it be practicable to go in for the reforestation of sandalwood in a serious way?

The PREMIER: We are doing so.

Mr. Sampson: You are not spending much.

The PREMIER: But we are only beginning our activities. It is anticipated that the expenditure will be greater as the years go on. It is practically only within the last two years that a commencement has been made with these operations. Even with increased expenditure, the amount provided will be sufficient for all requirements. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [9.55]: I take it, from the information furnished by the Premier, that the revenue from sandalwood has amounted to about £98,000 during the last two years.

The Premier: The gross revenue each year has been £52,000 for the past two years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then we have had £94,000 paid into General Revenue during those two years. That is on the basis of 6,000 tons at £9 per ton royalty. That is very satisfactory.

The Premier: The net revenue from sandalwood last year amounted to £46,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In 1919 the revenue was £1,500.

The Premier: That was when the royalty was 5s. a ton.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, it was subsequently raised to £2 per ton, and later to £9 per ton. On the last mentioned royalty basis, the revenue on 6,000 tons would be £54,000. I presume the arrangement made when tenders are called will be the same as during the past year.

The Premier: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then I will not discuss the Bill any more, particularly in view of what happened when we made the contract that was so much criticised.

The Premier: It may be that if that contract had not been made, an equal sum would have been received in some other direction.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course, the Premier never knows what will happen! At any rate, by the time the present Bill runs out, it will be the fourth year's operations under our arrangements. I am grateful and flattered by the knowledge that the arrangement made three years ago has been continued.

Mr. Heron: You could not get out of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, because the arrangement was made year by year. If we were not honest in our criticism, let us be honest now and admit that the arrangement was a good one for Western Australia. I support the Bill because the revenue from sandalwood is enormous, and so little of it can be spent. I agree with the Premier that the measure should be made permanent, but the Upper House decided otherwise. The Minister for Lands agreed to their proposal readily. I remember that when on an earlier occasion I objected, I got into serious trouble with the Minister. However, the Premier has been wise in time on this occasion, for he asks for only one year.

The Minister for Lands: I told you once before that a good man always carries out his instructions.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: However, I will support the second reading.

Hon. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [10.1]: I supported the Premier when he brought down the Bill last year. It was rejected by another place, but I would support the Bill

again this time, even if it were brought down in the same form. I am satisfied that the sum of £5,000 is quite ample for some years. That has been proved by the Premier to-night. I do not wish to complicate matters by trying to go into the general administration of sandalwood, for I will have an opportunity to deal with that at a later date.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.2]: I recall a visit I paid to the Northern Goldfields with the member for Leonora (Mr. Heron). I was amazed to find the misgivings in the minds of the people up there over what they termed the "scandalwood" business of the Government. However, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, perhaps that can be passed over at this juncture. A tribute should be paid to the then Minister for Forests, Mr. Scaddan, for his action, which has produced such gratifying results. The sum is a big one, and since it has been saved to the people of the State, it is only fair that reference should be made to what Mr. Scaddan was able to do.

Mr. Thomson: He had a pretty strenuous fight to get it through.

Mr. SAMPSON: He had, and a great deal of odium was heaped upon him.

Hon. G. Taylor: You people never got into the backwash of it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I was at Leonora and Laverton, and I can say that all the places up there were reeking with scandal about sandalwood. I wondered at the time if there was something at the back of it. I now know that what was at the back of it was the very wise thought that has produced so very large a sum of money for the State.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

BILL—WYALKATCHEM RATES VALIDATION.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 24th August; Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Validation of rates (partly considered):

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) has intimated that there is a wrong date in the Bill. It occurs in line 2 of this clause, where "1926" should be "1925." I move an amendment—

That, in line 2, "1926" be struck out and "1925" inserted in lieu.

Mr. LINDSAY: I said before that the figures were wrong, and I am glad the Minister has found that I was correct.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Will the Minister tell the Committee in what way the board transgressed. Why is the Bill required?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Under the Act a road board can rate on the unimproved value and, with the permission of the Governor-in-Council can rate any given portion of its district on the annual value. The board transgressed in rating a portion of its district on the annual value without first securing the permission of the Governor-in-Council.

Mr. LINDSAY: In the previous year the board had permission to rate on the annual value in a prescribed area, which was duly proclaimed. Last year again they rated on the annual value, but omitted to proclaim the area. The Bill is to rectify that omission.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.