a Judge of the Supreme Court, and his decision shall be final. Although we have all right on our side, and our view is concurred in by two of the great authorities of the land, we say as members of Parliament that we are not men enough, that we have not that confidence in ourselves, to protect our rights from encroachment, and to assert that we are going to enforce our rights on every occasion. This is the position. It is no use bringing in the question of there possibly being two members sitting, or the question of its only delaying the matter for another month, or bringing in party politics. That is beside the question altogether. The question is this: are we going to enforce those rights we undoubtedly have, or are we going to allow outsiders to dictate to us members of Parliament who have extreme power in this matter that we shall do or shall not do certain things? We have the right, and I appeal to members with all confidence to carry this motion to demonstrate to the country that we can pass laws, and farther that when we pass laws we are men enough to put them into force. The Attorney General concluded by trying to make out some imaginary case, and he went on to state that this motion will not have any influence on the High Court. It is undesirable that it should, and I do not anticipate that it will. It is true that this motion will not have any influence on the High Court; but while that is true, is it not a greater truth that no one should have an influence upon this Chamber? We have all power; we have all these privileges given us; and I appeal with all confidence to members to carry this motion, to demonstrate to the world at large that Parliament passed this Act to reserve to itself the right to decide these questions, and consequently I expect members to carry the motion to demonstrate that we are going to protect these rights.

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

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ayes | ... | ... | 14 |
| Noes | ... | ... | 23 |
| Majority against | | ... | 9 |

| AYES. | NOES. |
|---|---|
| Mr. Bath | Mr. Barnett |
| Mr. Bolton | Mr. Brebber |
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Brown |
| Mr. Daglish | Mr. Cowcher |
| Mr. Heitmann | Mr. Ewing |
| Mr. Holman | Mr. Foulkes |
| Mr. Johnson | Mr. Gordon |
| Mr. Lynch | Mr. Gregory |
| Mr. Scaddan | Mr. Gull |
| Mr. Taylor | Mr. Hardwick |
| Mr. Underwood | Mr. Hayward |
| Mr. Walker | Mr. Illingworth |
| Mr. Ware | Mr. Keenan |
| Mr. Troy (*Teller*). | Mr. McLarty |
| | Mr. Male |
| | Mr. Monger |
| | Mr. S. F. Moore |
| | Mr. Piesse |
| | Mr. Price |
| | Mr. Smith |
| | Mr. Veryard |
| | Mr. F. Wilson |
| | Mr. Layman (*Teller*). |

Question thus negatived.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at thirteen minutes past 10 o'clock, until the next day.

# Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 6th September, 1906.*



THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4·30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

## QUESTION—LIQUOR LICENSES, LOCAL OPTION.

MR. BATH (for Mr. Daglish) asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce during the present session a Bill to provide for local option in regard to licenses to sell liquor?

THE TREASURER replied: No. The intention of the Government is to bring down a comprehensive measure dealing with the whole question, next session.

## QUESTION — GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, HOW REORGANISED.

MR. BATH (for Mr. Daglish) asked the Treasurer: 1, In reducing the staff of the Government Printing Office, is any consideration given to the length of service, capacity, and conduct of the employees, or to the question whether they are married or single? 2, If so, to what extent? 3, By whom are decisions made respecting the retention or removal of the men—by the Government Printer himself, or by a subordinate officer?

THE TREASURER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The most competent men are retained. Length of service counts in a man's favour, and married men are given preference over single men, providing other things are equal. 3, The Government Printer.

## BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

## PAPERS—WATER RETICULATION, SUBIACO.

On motion by MR. DAGLISH, ordered "That all papers relating to the reticulation of Gloster Street, Subiaco, and the charge made against some of the residents there for such service, as well as the correspondence dealing with their application for a refund, be laid upon the table of the House."

## BILL—LAND TAX ASSESSMENT.

### RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by the TREASURER, Bill recommitted for amendments.

MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair; the TREASURER in Charge of the Bill.

Clause 10—Rebate of tax on improved land:

THE TREASURER moved an amendment—

That the words "of a municipal boundary," in line 1 of Subclause 2, be struck out, and "the boundaries of any municipality" be inserted in lieu.

As ward boundaries might be termed municipal boundaries, the words "outside of a municipal boundary" might be deemed to refer to certain lands in a municipality. The amendment would remove the ambiguity.

Amendment passed.

MR. BATH moved that the following be added as Subclause 4:—

No owner of land shall be entitled to the rebate as provided in this section, where the improvements are effected by a lessee of such land.

Especially in the city and in large towns, many business men held sites on lease, often for short terms, with the proviso that the tenant should effect improvements which at the termination of the lease reverted to the landlord, who should not be entitled to the rebate when the improvements were made solely at the tenant's expense. Some members argued that the rebate should be an encouragement to energy, industry, and enterprise; but none could argue that in such cases landlords displayed these qualities.

THE TREASURER opposed the amendment. The mover might have informed us how the subclause would work. How could an assessor ascertain who had effected the improvements on properties 30 or 40 years old, and improved every year? The Bill would tax land; and if the land were improved, the owner was granted a rebate. Parliament was not much concerned to ascertain who made the improvements, so long as they existed. It was fair to assume that a tenant under a building lease did not from philanthropic motives effect improvements, but rather in return for some concession. The amendment would be unworkable, and subversive of the whole principle of the Bill.

MR. MALE: After the brave fight put up by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) to tax certain Crown lessees, he now tried to deprive them of their privileges in respect of improvements. If the amendment passed it would be impossible for such lessees to take advantage of the improvement clause.

MR. LYNCH: The amendment seemed eminently fair, in view of the enormous power of a landlord over his tenant. A

tenant was sometimes obliged to make improvements for the sake of keeping pace with an extending business; and that he should not have a rebate in respect of improvements was manifestly unjust, for the cost of the improvements ought to have been borne by the landlord.

MR. BOLTON: There was much in the last speaker's argument; but many leases were granted subject to improvements, to cost thousands of pounds, some lessees agreeing to erect buildings on vacant land, and others to displace old buildings by new. It would be rather awkward for the Treasurer to arrive at a decision. The amendment would not affect the landlord, because the landlord would exact the tax from the tenant. There was no way out of the difficulty. If a lease was let for so many years, subject to a certain amount of improvements being carried out on the land in a given time, the tenant would be subject to the tax through the landlord. There were several properties with old tenements on them, possibly condemned buildings, let for a term of years, subject to the tenant spending a good deal of money on improvements. The amendment would prove dangerous. He would oppose it.

MR. WALKER: The amendment should be carried. Unquestionably in many parts of the State landlords had the advantage of the tenants. In Kalgoorlie, in some places tenants were paying, after constructing their own buildings, as much as 10s. a week per foot for ground rent; and in some cases the improvements made at the expense of the tenants, from which under this Bill the landlord would receive the benefit of the rebate, had cost enormous sums of money. In Kalgoorlie, for instance, Brennan Bros., with a 66-foot frontage, erected buildings costing about £9,000; the Alexandra, on an 80-foot frontage, cost £3,000; Pellew's, on a 36-foot frontage, cost £2,000; the York Hotel, on a 66-foot frontage, cost £8,000; the Exchange Hotel, on a similar frontage, cost about the same; the Britannia Hotel cost £1,500; while Pell's Auction Mart, with three shops, on a 50-foot frontage, cost £1,500. These were instances to show the money tenants had spent on improving landlords' properties. These added buildings would count as "improvements" to the landlord and secure to him rebate under this Bill through the enterprise of the tenant. In all such cases where improvements had been made at the cost of the tenant, the tenant and not the landlord should receive the benefit.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: In any case, the tenant would have to pay the tax.

MR. WALKER: Every step should be taken to prevent it. The landlord should pay a fair share of the burden of the tax.

MR. DAGLISH: The Leader of the Opposition had not given the amendment proper consideration. It was impracticable for other reasons than those advanced by the Treasurer. There was a wide definition of improvements. Supposing the amendment were carried, and the landlord had done a little fencing, cleared a few trees, or erected some stables or other improvements of a comparatively unimportant nature, that landlord would escape the extra tax. What was the difference between the man owning landed property and erecting buildings by the expenditure of his own capital or by the expenditure of money borrowed for the purpose and drawing an enhanced rent on account of the accommodation provided, and the man who, instead of erecting buildings himself, let the land unimproved at a nominal rent, thereby saving himself the interest he might pay on borrowed money, or retaining the value of what he might otherwise have spent and receiving in the shape of rent a much smaller amount of interest? The money must be found in some form by the landowner, or the owner must forfeit a certain amount of interest he might earn from premises if he invested money in improving the land. The owner who invested his own money or the owner who got someone else to improve his property for him for a small rent were equally just objects for taxation. That was altogether different from what would arise if the amendment were carried. By renting land on a building lease, the tenant received the advantages of an increased value that accrued through an increased population; and the owner, having parted with his property for 25 years perhaps, thereby gave away the unearned increment for that time. If

the amendment were carried, the owner of a block of land such as that occupied by Brennan Brothers would erect one or two rooms, which would at once improve the property; therefore the property would be partially improved by the owner and partially improved by the tenant; then what would be the position? The landlord would entirely enjoy the benefit of the rebate on the improvements. The Government would have all sorts of difficulties in enforcing this tax in the matter of improvements. The Bill was full of enormous difficulties in regard to administration, owing to the rebates. Still, if we were to have a principle adopted, it was absurd to interfere with it in half a dozen ways. The object of giving rebates for improvements was to encourage property-owners to improve their properties, or to encourage them to use their land or have it brought into use. Their liability in that respect would be fulfilled if they personally made the improvements or personally used the property themselves, or if they made an ordinary commercial arrangement with someone else to provide the improvements and use the property. The Leader of the Opposition should not persist in the amendment.

MR. BATH: The objections urged by the hon. member applied to the clause itself, and the hon. member should have been present when the clause providing for rebates was under discussion in Committee. Those who paid for building leases in Perth or Kalgoorlie would be considerably amused to hear the rent they paid characterised as nominal. In Kalgoorlie they paid up to £50 per foot rental; and if that was a nominal rent, it was hard to understand the meaning the hon. member attached to the word "nominal." The Treasurer failed to appreciate the position the landholder occupied in regard to this matter. There was no desire to claim that the lessees on business blocks were philanthropists or had any benevolent desire to confer a benefit on the landowners. They did it of necessity. The same conditions which operated to create the unearned increment also gave the landlords the opportunity to squeeze these people. The Treasurer stated that the unearned increment was created by the people, and he desired to secure a trifle of it to the State, believing that the State was entitled to it. As the position stood now, the landlord, by the terms exacted from tenants, was able to exact enormous rentals and compel the tenants to erect large buildings and hand them over to him gratis at the end of the term. Yet a provision, ostensibly designed to confer some advantage or to give a rebate on the land tax to those who had shown enterprise, was considered to mean that the landlords of these places in Perth and Kalgoorlie should have the advantage also. But what had they done to earn the rebate? They had simply remained idle, and by the operation of the unearned increment squeezed money out of their tenants and compelled them to erect buildings, which secured for them the rebate under the land tax. If there was any justification for rebates at all to encourage enterprise, there was no justification in giving a rebate to those landlords who had shown no enterprise. They should pay the full amount of the unearned increment demanded by the State on their land, and in no instance had they any just claim to the rebate. He had no intention to withdraw the amendment. It was only a matter of justice to the State and a matter of justice to the landowner himself.

Amendment put and negatived.

TIMBER LEASES—EXEMPTION.

Clause 11—Exemptions:

MR. TROY moved an amendment—

That in paragraph (*d*) of Subclause 1, all the words after "Mines Act 1904" be struck out.

This amendment would strike out all reference to the exemption of timber leases, and would give the Treasurer an opportunity to tax the unearned increment in connection with the timber leases. Notwithstanding the opposition of several members, we had already agreed to tax pastoral leases, and the same conditions should apply to timber leases as to pastoral leases. Timber lessees under the 1898 Act paid a rental of 7½d. per acre; but certain concessions were held by large corporations who paid only ¾d. per acre rental on their lands, which because of the influx of population and the expenditure of public money were of much greater value to-day than when they were granted. Those

lands should be taxed, so that the State might obtain a proportion of the unearned increment which it had itself created. The Committee had already decided that pastoral leases were to be taxed, and that being so there was no justification for exempting timber leases. A pastoralist had to improve his lease before it became of any value to him, and in many instances this meant converting what was practically desert land into promising property, which was an advantage to the State. During his tenure a pastoral lessee improved his holding by sinking wells, erecting windmills, and in other ways, and when in course of time the lease reverted to the Crown it was 100 per cent. more valuable than when it was taken up. On the other hand, the longer a timber lease was held and worked the less valuable it became, for a timber lease gave the holder the right to cut the timber thereon, and when that lease reverted to the Crown the timber, which was one of the State's best assets, was cut out. Again, timber lessees had been provided with facilities, by the construction of railways, for getting their timber to market; and these facilities were recommended to be increased by the Timber Inquiry Board. He understood this recommendation was likely to be entertained by the Government; if so, the timber leases would be enhanced in value, and consequently should be liable to taxation under the Bill.

THE TREASURER: This question had been fully dealt with last week when the hon. member took the opportunity of advancing similar arguments. Sufficient reasons had not been adduced in support of the amendment; therefore the Government could not accept it.

MR. H. BROWN supported the amendment as a protest against the distinctions made under the Bill. The member for Northam (Mr. Mitchell) had told his constituents practically that they were exempt from taxation under the Bill, and that the bulk of the tax would be collected from the city and towns. The Premier and the Treasurer had stated that timber licenses could be overridden by the granting of pastoral leases within their timber concessions; but specific instances in support of that statement had not been quoted. Sheep and cattle could not be placed on the Jarrahdale concession, at all events. The £50 rebate allowed to holders of town lands might, for all the use it was, have been eliminated from the Bill; yet an exemption of £250 was permitted to the holder of country land of the value of £1,000. Would Ministers who were now going round the country telling the people in the agricultural districts that they were exempted from taxation tell the people of Perth how the Bill would affect the holders of city land?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Perth had made the amendment another opportunity for attacking those members representing the towns who had supported the principle of rebates, and also of attacking Ministers for their utterance on this question.

MR. H. BROWN: The Minister seemed proud of it.

THE MINISTER: That was true; a man should be proud of anything which was reasonable and just. The attitude of the hon. member was one of uncompromising hostility to the Bill, whether the provision under review was a reasonable one or not. The tax would be paid where the value was; if the value was in the country the tax would be paid in the country, if the value was mostly in the towns, then the tax would be paid in the towns.

MR. H. BROWN: What about the difference in the two exemptions?

THE MINISTER: The reason for that difference was that the land to the farmer was equivalent to his tools of trade, whereas land was generally held by an individual in a town as an investment. The position of a timber lease was totally different from that in which a pastoral lease stood. The member for Perth had said that no pastoral leases had been granted within timber leases; but even with his (the Minister's) limited knowledge of the timber areas of the State he was acquainted with several such instances, and members representing the South-West could doubtless quote numerous cases.

MR. BATH: The remark of the Treasurer that the House had already threshed this question out, and that he had justified the exemption of timber leases, was humorous. A dialogue had occurred between the Treasurer and the member for Forrest; but no enlighten-

ment had resulted so far as the House was concerned. In this matter the energetic manager of the Combine seemed to have terrorised both the member for Sussex and the member for Forrest. Nothing had been said which justified the exemption of timber leases. One would imagine from listening to the member for Fremantle (Hon. J. Price), that the timber lessees had put the timber on their leases. Just as the natural grasses and other substances growing on the land and the water comprised the unimproved value of the land contained in a pastoral lease, so did the timber growing on a timber lease create the unimproved value of that land. The unimproved value of a timber lease was an intrinsic value belonging to the State which others were permitted to exploit under certain conditions. If it could be argued that the rents or royalties paid by timber lessees represented the true annual value of their leases, then there would be no justification for the imposition of a land tax; but that could not be argued. It was a case of making a special concession in favour of timber lessees, and the motive or influence which had been brought to bear to that end was difficult to understand.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The Leader of the Opposition was not happy in his comparisons. He had argued that there was no difference between the two classes of lease. A pastoral lessee had advantages in regard to herbage which grew on the land annually. Stock could subsist upon the pasturage, and there was also water. In the case of a timber lease, although the lessee did not place the timber upon the land, he was certainly taking it off the land. The lease existed for a certain time, generally 21 years, and there was no prospect of the timber growing within that time to be of any advantage to the lessee. We were taxing him now by way of rental, and if that was not sufficient we should tax him in a legitimate way, under the timber regulations.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: A pastoral lessee actually had the land. It was true that certain timber growing on the land was reserved, and it would not have been necessary to make that reservation if we had not given him the land. We gave him the land with everything growing on it that was not expressly reserved; therefore the pastoral lessee had something which could increase in value, and he should be taxed. The timber lessee had no other right than the right of entering upon the land to cut down or remove timber. If the Crown wished to do so it could let the land comprised within a timber lease for pastoral purposes; but how could the Crown do so if the land were in possession of the lessee? Had the Crown ever confiscated a man's title? The timber lessee was not in possession of the land, otherwise the Crown could not let it to another person. What possibility was there of the timber standing on the ground increasing in value, by reason of increase of population? Was there an unearned increment in respect of a growing tree?

MR. BATH: There were millions of acres of sandy waste in Australia which were of no use to pastoralists because there was no grass or water. The Attorney General had tried to differentiate between what was growing on land and really gave the land its value and the land itself. In the case of the timber lease it was the timber which gave it its value, and in the case of the pastoral lease it was pasturage and water which gave it its value. It was useless to argue that there was a difference between the pastoral lessee and the timber lessee. Exclusive rights were not given to the pastoral lessee. For instance, people could cut timber on a pastoral lease, they could search for minerals, and they could select land. The member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) had pointed out that the advantages on a timber lease were not recurring. The fact remained, however, that so long as the timber lesssee enjoyed the timber lease, he enjoyed an increment of value which accrued to it apart from any efforts by himself. If the Attorney General had attempted to show that we were exacting by the rentals and royalties the true annual rental for these timber leases, there would have been no argument for taxation; but the lessees were not paying the true annual rental. There was a difference between the rental they actually paid and the true annual rental, and that was justly taxable, as in the case of the pastoral leases.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Why exempt the mining lease?

MR. BATH had moved an amendment with that object, striking out the whole subclause. As to timber leases, the State had a right to tax the difference between the rental actually paid and the true annual rental, just as the Government proposed to tax the pastoral and the residential lease. No argument had been adduced to the contrary.

MR. LYNCH: A timber lease had a term of some 20 years; and time was needed to cut out the timber area, irrespective of whether any of the timber would deteriorate in 20 years. A pastoral lessee also needed time to exhaust his area. What might be called the limit of utility applied in both cases, and was equally indispensable. Value was given to each lease by the products of the soil, trees in one case and grass in the other; and the factor of time had no bearing on the subject. The Treasurer and the Attorney General disclaimed any intention to tax energy, yet endeavoured to tax the pastoralist, the economic value of whose property was returned to the State at the expiry of his lease, when the State could reappraise the property so as to secure the full benefit of the lessee's improvements. A good plan might be to reassess the pastoralists' rents when the leases fell in. The Government proposed to allow the timber lessees to escape the land tax, while imposing it on the pastoral lessees, some of whom were reached by the Dividend Duty Act, several companies owning property in the Kimberley division. When the Karridale timber concession was taken up the subscribed capital was only £28,000. When the company joined the Combine only £100,000 had been spent on that property; yet on the Combine's share list to-day it was valued at £260,000, on which sum the employees were asked to provide interest. The Imperial Jarrah Co. figured in the Combine's share list at £27,000; yet Mr. Teesdale Smith had valued the property at £14,000. Thus it was clear that the values of timber leases appreciated beyond all comparison with those of pastoral leases. The cause of the appreciation did not matter.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The preceding speaker argued against his own case. Section 145 of the Land Act provided that the pastoral lessee, when his lease fell in, was entitled to compensation for improvements. The timber lessee had no such right. Immediately the timber was cut out the land became useless to him, and his right to it ceased. The Land Act empowered the Government to let on lease any portion of the timber lease for any purpose other than timber-getting. Hence the timber lessee had not the advantage of the pastoralist, whose runs might during his tenure become much more valuable as time went on. The timber lease was like a mining lease. Its value was reduced as wealth was removed from it. Both mining and timber leases should be exempt, because neither was of any use to the lessee when the gold or the timber had vanished. This was not a question of taxation but of exemption. The comparison of a pastoral with a timber lease was unfair.

MR. HAYWARD: Before beginning to cut timber, thousands of pounds must be spent on buildings and machinery, which when the timber was cut out became practically useless. Moreover, the timber lessee must construct railways. In many cases mills closed down represented a dead loss.

MR. DAGLISH: The lessees did not return to the Government the land that was cut out.

MR. HAYWARD: They did.

MR. TAYLOR: The Attorney General's fallacies must not pass unquestioned. A pastoral lease was a lease for pastoral purposes only. Any holder of a miner's right could go on that lease and mine, and if necessary turn out the stock. Five thousand miners had a right to go there with double that number of horses and camels.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: They could enter on a freehold also.

MR. TROY: Well, it was proposed to tax the freehold.

MR. TAYLOR: Timber-hewers could enter the pastoral lease and remove the timber. The timber lessee had a lease to take timber. According to the argument of the Attorney General pastoralists could take up another pastoral lease. What was the difference between the two titles? One was for pastoral purposes; the other was for timber purposes. If there was any justification for the inclusion of

pastoralists in this measure, the same justification existed for the inclusion of timber lessees, unless the Timber Combine had a greater power over the Ministry than the squattocracy. There must be something behind the necessity for excluding timber lessees from this measure. The timber companies had done more to disorganise the good feeling existing among employees than the employers in any other industry; and we had this liberal-democratic Government sheltering those lessees and farther protecting them from the power of this House to deal with them. The Treasurer claimed to be a great representative of the workers; but the records of the Arbitration Court would show what good the Treasurer had done to the workers, and also what harm. Sufficient would be found in those records to laud the Treasurer as a people's man in the eyes of the people of any English-speaking country in the world. There were four leases granted by the Government: the pastoral lease, the residential lease, the special lease, and the timber lease; and the timber lease was the only one excluded from this taxation. Evidently the need for money to carry on the affairs of the country was not so great, in the opinion of those in charge of the measure, as the necessity to exclude the Timber Combine from taxation. We had from the Attorney General a lucid description of the pastoralist. The Attorney General said the pastoralist ate the land. [THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Possessed the land.] There were some races that ate earth. The hon. gentleman came from a country where the rapacity of the landlords left nothing to the people of the country but to eat the earth. The hon. member should remember that he was now in Australia where the rapacity of the landlord had not gone that far. The member for Katanning said that the pastoralists received compensation when the lease was resumed; but that was for values the pastoralist himself created in the way of fencing, sinking dams or wells. Those improvements could not be removed. They gave the land a value. Naturally the pastoralist was compensated for them when the land was resumed for smaller holdings or agricultural purposes; but the pastoralist received nothing for the unimproved value. That reverted to the Crown, and in that sense the Crown received the unearned increment. The timber lessee had only to dump down a saw-mill to deal with the timber, but the pastoralist to employ his land was compelled to put stock on it at a very high cost, especially in Western Australia, and to take steps to conserve water. When the timber lease expired the lessee had only to remove his mill to some other spot to carry on operations. There was very little hardship on the timber lessee as compared with the hardships borne by pastoralists. Members representing pastoralists should recognise the justice of the argument put forward by members of the Opposition. They should realise the unfairness of supporting a measure that imposed a tax on the people they represented, and exempted another section of the community represented in a large measure by members on the Government side of the House. They should protest against the Government taxing pastoralists and exempting people better able to pay the tax. We should take into consideration the distance of the pastoral areas from markets, the cost of bringing stock to markets by water or rail, or over hundreds of miles of dry and barren country. We should also consider the great risks taken by the pastoralists in droving stock, because the stock might perish from thirst in those barren stretches of country. The Government should take steps to open up stock routes to assist pastoralits. There was no comparison between the hardships pastoralists suffered and the manner in which the timber industry was carried on. The manager of a pastoral lease had to crowd a lifetime into a few years and had to take risks against dry seasons, a hot burning sun, and dangers from aborigines. Pastoralists did their pioneering under hard circumstances. Did those circumstances obtain in the timber industry? No. The timber companies had railways from the coast to their leases. It was a feather-bed occupation as compared with the pastoral industry. He (Mr. Taylor) had no brief for the pastoralists, but the justice of the amendment appealed to him, and he could not see why pastoralists should be taxed and the timber proprietors allowed to go scot-free.

MR. WALKER: The sympathy shown to the timber lessee was remarkable. The member for Katanning had twitted the Leader of the Opposition with not using arguments cogent to the case; but the retort could apply with better justice to the member for Katanning, whose arguments really supported the amendment. The hon. member had pointed out that the pastoralists improved the land and made it more valuable to the State. The improvement effected by the pastoralist was one to which an increment could be added for posterity. If anyone should not be taxed, it was the man who left the country the better and richer for his efforts. In the case of timber, the lessee went on land rich with timber, containing a vast asset of this State, and was granted permission to remove the timber, not for the benefit of the State, and not always to be used by our own citizens, but to ship it away to other countries; and when he had done with this rich part of our territory, all its wealth was taken away, and if any profit was derived from the land denuded of its wealth, it was gained not by the citizens of the State but by the shareholders in the timber companies. We gave timber companies the extraordinary right to take away the country's wealth without paying anything in return for it except a small rental, which was a mere song and did not in any way compensate the State for the perpetual loss to the country. Why was there so much sympathy for the timber companies? Was there no honesty in the Treasurer's statement that money was needed to meet our finances and the tax required? Why not tax those who did the most harm to the country and lessen the burden on those who did most good? The agriculturists and pastoralists were benefactors, and permanent benefactors. They added to the permanent wealth of the State. The timber companies were marauders taking the wealth of the country to fill their own exchequers, not ours, and robbing us of the assets we could never recover. If there was any wisdom or justice in taxation, those who robbed us of our permanent wealth should be mostly taxed. What was the return we obtained from the timber companies in comparison with the timber they took from us? What claims could they have to the special consideration of Parliament? He had only one sympathy in that industry, and that sympathy was with the workers who were employed cutting down the timber to make money for the masters, in order that workers could get a bare wage. These timber companies asked the country to reduce freights to carry our timber out of the country. They asked for concessions here and there. Was not one of the purposes of the tax that the Government would make people improve their land, put fences round it, and turn the soil to use? The timber companies had vast reserves of timber lying unused, locked up, within easy access of the coast and the ports; and they were using only those leases that were far away, and where freight was costly. What was the purpose of this? Was it not to show that their expenses of working were such that the Government should come to their assistance, and that the State should pay them for robbing us of this permanent asset? They could use the reserves close at hand if they chose, but they kept these, waiting for an increase in price. Why were these timber companies protected against the citizens of the State? The owner of a small allotment in Perth was taxed probably more than he could afford; but the timber companies inflated their capitals so that dividends did not show; that it might appear on paper that a low rate of profit was being obtained from the industry. Yet these companies were to be specially favoured. This fact should be recognised, that every year these companies were in active operation the country was becoming poorer in what this country ultimately would require. Did these companies show any patriotism for the State or any regard for our people? Did we not know the Timber Combine would not sell timber at a cheap rate to the farmers? The Combine would not sell rough timber to a farmer to enable him to build a shed; they would rather burn this timber. Was not the robbery of our timber a denudation of our national wealth? We were poorer by all the timber the companies shipped from the ports.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Were we poorer by the gold taken out of the country?

MR. WALKER: Of course.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: What were we going to do with the country at all?

MR. WALKER: Keep all the wealth we could in it. He would not impoverish the State for the purpose of enriching a few companies. If there was any section of the community that should have a tax placed on them for privileges granted to denude us of the national wealth of the State, it was the timber companies. These persons were licensed only to take wealth from us, not to add wealth to us. The pastoralists increased our wealth and improved our land, but the timber hewers made our land poorer. We taxed pastoralists, and allowed the men who denuded the land to go scot-free.

HON. F. H. PIESSE would not have spoken had it not been for the remarks of the member for Kanowna, who said there was an extraordinary sympathy on the part of some members with the timber companies. There were too many inferences drawn in the House, in regard to members and their actions. The time had arrived when these should cease; for inferences and charges were becoming too common. Because a man was prosperous through his own energy and hard work, and because he was trying to do something for his own benefit as well as for the benefit of the people, many ulterior motives were attributed to him; and he was not given credit for that honesty of purpose which every member who took a seat in the House should recognise was the proper way to carry out his duties. So much to-night had been said about setting the pastoralist against the timber lessee. The member for Mt. Margaret had been a warm advocate of the pastoralist as against the timber lessee, and he (Hon. F. H. Piesse) had spoken in the first instance because he thought his remarks might be of some advantage; for a member should not put forward arguments for self-gain or self-laudation, but should try to do his best to elucidate matters for the benefit of the country. But when we found so many accusations, insinuations, and charges made and levelled against members, then we might not be considered to be doing our duty to the country. He had never said in regard to any member one word which could have been taken to be a charge or insinuation. No one could accuse him of detracting from the advantages mining had given to the country. As one who did not possess a knowledge of mining, he had not intruded his opinions on that subject in the House; but he had helped that industry in the past. Exception was taken to the remarks of the member for Mt. Margaret, in placing the pastoralist against the timber lessees. That member's object in supporting the amendment was not because of his sympathy with the pastoralist, but because he was against companies which the member for Kanowna said had done so much to devastate this country of its wealth. The member called it our timber. It was our national timber, until it was brought into use for commercial purposes. No one sympathised with the worker more than he did, and he had tried to help him in every way. He had shown that in his own concerns. But if it had not been for the money expended in developing our gold mines, timber, and other resources we should not have made the advance we had. He believed in a proper wage being paid, and in regulated hours, and in everything being done for the benefit of the working people; but the working people should do justice to the persons by whom they were employed. In regard to the charge made of a company burning timber and not supplying farmers, he had not known of an instance. Timber was much cheaper now than it used to be. The rise which had taken place was consequent upon the increase of railway rates. He did not like these accusations made or charges levelled. The member for Kanowna said, "If the Treasurer would speak frankly in this matter," "if he would deal honestly with this matter." There was too much use of these words as to dealing honestly. It was unparliamentary to accuse members of not dealing honestly.

MR. WALKER: Not in the slightest degree had he accused the Government of acting dishonestly. [MEMBER: The Treasurer.] He was asked the question why, and he said, "Perhaps the Treasurer could tell us if he chose to be frank," or something to that effect. He had never accused the member for Katanning of acting dishonestly. The hon. member might take a leaf out of his own book and not accuse others.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: A note was taken by him immediately the words

were spoken. The hon. member said, "If the hon. the Colonial Treasurer will deal honestly;" and afterwards he said, "If he will only deal frankly." In the heat of argument sometimes words were used which were not intended to convey the meaning they did convey.

MR. WALKER: The words used by the hon. member acquitted him; for the hon. member had stated that he said, if the Minister would act honestly in this matter certain things would follow. That was quite a different thing from the charge the hon. member had levelled against him.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The hon. member's explanation was one he was ready to accept. The sort of things referred to should not be said, because after all it was a question of members trying to do their best. There were too many of such expressions and inferences which should not be used.

MR. TAYLOR: The hon. member should not be too ready to take them to himself.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: That was another accusation. The member for Mount Margaret found himself in a position to-night which he did not occupy before, in extolling the virtues and sympathising with the vicissitudes and drawbacks of the pastoralists. Who had been more opposed to the same class of people than the hon. member? It was only done with the object of putting that side of the question against the Timber Combine, with whom he (Hon. F. H. Piesse) had no sympathy. He had more sympathy with the pastoralists, and a few evenings ago he fought for them in this House, but he did not see any ground for placing pastoralists in the same category as a Timber Combine, whose conditions were different.

MR. TAYLOR: The pastoralists had not been used by him as a lever to crush the Timber Combine. He had not made any accusations against any member of the House, but if the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) was surrounded with anything suspicious, and his straightforward utterances had hurt him, he could not help it. He had heard accusations levelled at the hon. member for Katanning by the Premier of this country of that day. He was not going to repeat them, but if the hon. member was going to sling anything off at him he (Mr. Taylor) would read *Hansard* for the last six or eight years, and let the country judge whether the hon. member was not justified in taking any straightforward utterances in this House to himself. No matter how close the hon. member's association might be with the Treasurer, that would not in the least influence his (Mr. Taylor's) statements in the House. Those two gentlemen were in the past at daggers drawn, and had fought with keen-edged weapons in this Assembly. Although there was a change, he (Mr. Taylor) would not give any reasons for the change.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not impute motives.

MR. TAYLOR: Motives were not imputed by him, but the hon. member imputed motives when he said that he (Mr. Taylor) took up a position to-night which he never took up before. He had taken up the position of advocating the squatters' claim purely from a sense of justice, and not from any friendly feelings for squatters more than for any other people; and he was not going to allow the timber lessees to go scot-free and other sections to be taxed who were dealing with the Government on similar lines by leasing Crown lands. The Treasurer was at one time the representative of the Timber Combine, and he represented the Timber Combine in the Arbitration Court. He (Mr. Taylor) was not going to impute motives, but if members on the Government side or on the Opposition side hurled down the gauntlet, he would fight them. He was never known to give a challenge or refuse one.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The hon. member could have one any time he liked.

MR. TAYLOR: His political and private career would stand any test. He had defended the workers against the rapacity of the pastoralist, and was prepared to do so again, and he would defend the pastoralist against a Government largely ruled by combines in the timber and mining industries. A representative of the Chamber of Commerce, a representative of the Chamber of Mines, and a representative of the Timber Combine, sat on the Treasury bench, and he (Mr. Taylor) was here as a representative of labour and he tried to do justice to all, to give utterance

to sentiments in this House, and did not sit like an Egyptian mummy and vote for anything without having reasons for doing so. Having taken up that attitude in his political career, was he going to let a gentleman from the apple orchard at Katanning get up and impute motives to him?

THE TREASURER: Was the hon. member in order in speaking as he was doing now? Had it any reference to the motion?

MR. TAYLOR: What was the point of order?

THE TREASURER: Reference to "apple orchard" and "a representative of combines."

THE CHAIRMAN: If a question was raised in debate, a member was in order in discussing the question that had been raised.

MR. TAYLOR: The hon. gentleman by his interruption on what he called a point of order thought he would throw him off the track.

THE TREASURER: Not at all. He wanted to keep the hon. member on the track.

MR. TAYLOR: There was no danger of his being thrown off the track by any member. The long experience he had had in the interior of Australia would have enabled him to immediately get back to the track if he had happened for a moment to be off it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine himself to the question.

MR. TAYLOR: Although the member for Katanning was one of the oldest members of this House, one would advise him not to be too anxious to support taxation of any section of the community when he was not prepared to support such taxation on another section of the community. One would farther advise the hon. member not to be too anxious to take to himself personally any statements that were made in debate as an illustration to urge an argument.

THE CHAIRMAN: What had this to do with the question?

MR. TAYLOR: A little advice to the hon. member would not be out of order. The position he (Mr. Taylor) had taken up in relation to taxing timber lessees was forced on him on account of the justice of the amendment which had been moved that the timber lessees should be taxed equally with the pastoral lessees in this State.

At 6·30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.
At 7·30, Chair resumed.

MR. BARNETT: Would the 447,000 acres held by the timber companies as concessions be exempt from taxation?

THE TREASURER: The old concessions granted prior to the passing of the Land Act of 1898 would not be exempt. On Tuesday last the Committee struck out the concluding words of the subclause, so as to make these concessions subject to the tax. He regretted that the debate had assumed, to put it mildly, a very warm tone prior to the tea adjournment. Members could not be assisted in coming to a correct decision by losing their tempers and accusing one another of unworthy motives. He gave all credit to members opposite who advocated the claims of the squatters; and the Government when trying to exempt timber leases should be given credit for honesty. The Leader of the Opposition had accused him of being under the terrorism of the manager of the Combine. He had not seen Mr. Teesdale Smith for several months, and had never mentioned a single word to him in reference to this Bill. He did not know, nor did he care, what were the opinions of Mr. Teesdale Smith on this question; but was here to voice his own opinions and those of the Government. He might retort by asking what influence had been brought to bear on members opposite, who had advocated the squatting interest?

MR. BATH: Opposition members were not advocating that interest. They had said pastoralists should be taxed.

THE TREASURER: This kind of discussion was out of order. The member for Mt. Margaret insinuated that his (Treasurer's) previous connection with the timber industry and with the Combine would have some influence in his attitude. He had never been connected with the Combine. He had for eight or nine years been connected, he hoped honourably, with the timber industry; but for the past three or four years, since the Combine was formed, he had not sixpence worth of interest in the timber industry of this State. Surely his pre-

vious connection with the industry would not bias his judgment any more than the hon. member's mind would be biased by his long connection with squatting pursuits in another State. The hon. member had also referred to his (Treasurer's) utterances on the Arbitration Court bench. When on that bench he carried out his duties to the best of his ability. Later on he represented a certain section on the floor of the court; but he defied anyone to show that he had acted dishonourably. To brand him as incapable of carrying out the duties of Treasurer because of his previous connection with certain industries was unfair. Reference had been made to his connection with the member for Katanning, a family connection.

MR. TAYLOR: That had not been referred to.

THE TREASURER: One of his daughters was married to the son of the member for Katanning; that was all. There was nothing more in it. The hon. member had no right to use such an argument.

MR. TAYLOR had referred to the political connection of four to six years ago, in the old Parliament.

THE TREASURER: Possibly; but at one time he had sat on the same side as the hon. member (Mr. Taylor). The question whether timber leases should be taxed or not could not be advanced by dragging in such issues. The debate should proceed without these acrimonious personalities.

MR. TAYLOR: Members on the Government side started the personalities.

THE TREASURER: Such tactics did not tend to increase the respect in which the House was held by the outside public. Members should not allow such offensive personalities to influence the voting.

MR. H. BROWN supported the amendment, but only because we had already decided to tax the pastoralist. When it went abroad to other countries that we were taxing Crown lands, people would wonder what we were coming to. If one section of Crown lessees were to be taxed, all should be taxed. Twenty years ago the Government gave certain persons leases of lands at specific rents. Now the Government, being hard up, was looking for more rent; and in spite of the lease agreements, an indirect tax was to be imposed in lieu of an increased rent. If we taxed one lessee we should tax all.

MR. FOULKES: Comparisons were drawn between pastoral leases and timber leases; and the Attorney General tried to persuade the House that the two were quite different in character, the latter giving a right to the timber only, while the former gave a right to occupy the land. But the timber lessee did not need to have the sole occupancy of the land; for the presence of other persons did not prevent the removal of timber. A pastoral lease would be of no value unless the lessee had the sole right of occupancy. Trespassers would make it valueless. If it was necessary in order that the timber licensee could work his lease that he should have sole occupation of the land, undoubtedly the holder of that lease would be allowed by law to have that sole right. The reason the sole right of occupation of a timber lease was not given to the timber lessee, was because it was not necessary for him to have the sole right to the occupation of the land. The timber lessee could cut the timber without having the sole right to the land. It was different with regard to the pastoral lessee. It was absolutely necessary that the pastoral lessee should have the sole right to the land, and for that reason it was given him. There was no distinction between the rights of the pastoral lessee and those of the holder of a timber license. Neither held the freehold. One was entitled to cut timber on the lease, and the other was entitled to consume the herbage on his lease. Practically both merely held the surface rights. The member for Katanning contended that the pastoral lessee could be more justifiably taxed than the timber licensee, because the property of the pastoral lessee increased in value. One must disagree with that argument. Quite true the pastoral lessee's improvements increased in value, but the lease was only for a term of 50 years; and as time went on the value of the lease diminished every year as the lease ran out, until, during the last year, the lease became of no value except for the value of the improvements. The lessee was entitled to compensation for the improvements, but at the end of his term received nothing for

the value of the lease itself. The pastoralist, it was true, had a pre-emptive right to take the lease on again, but the land was always liable to resumption. One agreed with the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) that no distinction could be drawn between the pastoral lease and the timber lease; but the whole Bill was full of inconsistencies. [MR. TROY: Hear, hear.] The hon. member must see that the Bill taxed one class of property, and exempted another class of property. For instance, we had drawn a distinction between one class of holder and another. We had decided that the man holding property in the town was entitled to exemption to only £50, while if he held property in the country he would be entitled to exemption of £250. We had a division on that subject, and Opposition members insisted on having that distinction drawn, by voting against the amendment he (Mr. Foulkes) tabled.

MR. BATH: But an amendment was moved later by the Opposition to reduce the exemption on agricultural land to £50.

MR. FOULKES: When it was pointed out that no distinction should be drawn between one class of property and another, the Opposition voted against the amendment that the exemption on town property should be increased to £250.

MR. BATH: The Opposition were fighting against exemptions, and could not vote to increase them. That was the argument of the Opposition.

MR. FOULKES: Taking members as a whole, it was agreed that a distinction should be drawn between the man holding £50 worth of property in one district and the man holding £250 worth of property in another district. Now we were asked to do another inconsistent thing. Having agreed that the pastoral lessee should be taxed, we were now asked by the Government to exempt another class of people whose title was exactly the same as that of the pastoral lessee. The Bill dealt unfairly with a certain class of owners. Quite true the Treasury was in need of revenue, but the Treasurer should have taxed all classes in the community equally impartially. He (Mr. Foulkes) regretted not being able to support the amendment, because, though an injustice was done to the pastoral lessee, it could not be remedied by asking the House to agree to this amendment, and inflict an injustice on the timber lessee.

MR. TROY: The Treasurer was inclined to dismiss this amendment in the hon. gentleman's usual airy fashion, without discussing it fully and giving reasons against it.

THE TREASURER: No. The point was that the matter was settled on Tuesday.

MR. TROY: Yes; but without much discussion. Holding that the decision on Tuesday was wrong, the earliest opportunity had been taken by him to bring the matter again before the House, and he was entitled to bring it up at every opportunity. There was no justification for taxing pastoral leases, because they were Crown lands, and Crown lands should not be taxed. However, since members had agreed to tax pastoral leases, and since it was decided that we were justified in doing so, we were equally justified in taxing timber leases, which were exactly on the same basis as pastoral leases; and if members voted against this amendment they voted in contradiction to their vote in regard to taxing pastoral leases. He (Mr. Troy) took this stand, not because among his constituents there was a few pastoral lessees, but because he had always advocated a tax on unimproved land values without exemptions, and because he desired to be consistent. If we were to carry out the idea of no exemptions timber leases should not be exempt. It was said that timber lessees had not the same advantages as pastoral lessees. That was wrong. Timber lessees had advantages over the pastoral lessees. The member for Katanning pointed out that a pastoral lease could be taken up over a timber lease. That might be so; but no agricultural area could be taken up on a timber lease. The timber lessee could prevent agricultural settlement on his timber lease. Four men in the Wellington district had tried to take up farms on some cut-out land owned by the Timber Combine, but had found that their applications were vetoed by the Combine.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: They could get garden blocks.

MR. TROY: The hon. member was sadly in need of argument. Of what

value to these men were garden blocks? They wanted farms. It showed that agricultural areas could not be taken up on timber leases.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Because the land was not suitable.

MR. TROY: The Combine had absolute right to the timber on the areas. The pastoral lessee held ground on lease by paying a yearly rental to the Government, but had no right to everything grown on the lease. The pastoral lessee had no right to the timber grown on the lease, nor could he veto an agricultural area being taken up on the lease. Therefore there were two instances in which the timber lessee had advantage over the pastoral lessee. In one district of this State there was a mining township in the centre of a pastoral lease taken up before the discovery of gold in that district, with the result that although a pastoralist held the lease, that lease was not of the same value as it was when taken up. He knew two places where this had occurred. Of course it was better for the country, but there was the disadvantage to the pastoralist. It had been proved conclusively that if the pastoral lease should be taxed, so should the timber lease. It had been said the pastoralist had made a big profit in past years, and he (Mr. Troy) believed he had. At the same time the timber lessees had made a big profit. Some members said that the timber companies had made no profit, but according to the Timber Inquiry Board the profit made by Millars last year was £96,000. If members were averse to taxing property because no profit had been made in the past, these figures showed that no exemption should be allowed. The longer a timber lessee held his land and the more timber there was cut out the less valuable was the lease to him. It must be remembered, however, that certain timbers were maturing on the land, and although these timbers might not mature during the currency of the lease the lessee had the chance of obtaining a renewal of his lease. When a pastoralist took up land he could not see a profit in front of him at once. His land was of no value until he improved it, and when he had effected the improvements he might be visited by a drought. If it was reasonable and justifiable to tax the pastoralist, so was it equally reasonable and justifiable to tax a person who held a timber lease. After all we were not taxing people because they were engaged in a certain industry; we were taxing the unearned increment, and the timber lessee had, by the development of the State, secured unearned increment. There was the expenditure of money on railways, and these railways enabled the timber lessee to get his timber to a port or to a township where he could sell his timber.

MR. A. J. WILSON: In speaking the other night this particular clause was brought under the notice of the Premier and the Treasurer, and he (Mr. Wilson) said he thought something ought to be done to put a tax on the timber areas that were being held to the exclusion of those who desired to utilise them, and which were not in use by the present lessees. We had the assurance of the Government that the difficulty would be overcome in the new Land Bill now before the House. As to timber leases and licenses he was not one of those who thought we had the right to tax these holders under the Bill, nor did he think that they were precisely on the same footing as pastoral lessees. The other night when it was decided that the pastoral lessee should come under the taxation clause of the Bill, it was pointed out that the rentals at which the pastoral leases were held were a long way out of proportion to the true value of the leases to-day. These leases would not fall in for some time and the rents could not be increased in the meantime. The pastoralist was entitled to have the exclusive grazing rights over a thousand acres of ground for the sum of 10s. per annum.

MR. BATH: Up to £1.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Put it even at £1; the timber lessee paid £20 for 640 acres. We had the assurance of the Government that the concessions did not come under the Land Act of 1898. If these particular concessions were granted prior to the introduction of this particular Bill it was clear they would be exempt. Let him emphasise the position in regard to persons utilising Crown lands under timber licenses granted under the Land Act Amendment Act of 1904. In these cases the tenure had

been entirely altered, and instead of putting a fixed sum on the area, a charge was made on the timber recovered of 1s. per load, and in many timber areas of the State that 1s. per load would amount to a considerable sum. What was wanted to meet the difficulty suggested by the member for Mt. Magnet in regard to agricultural holdings on these areas was not to tax the people for keeping agriculturists off, but to amend the existing Land Act so that the Government would be able to get greater control over the granting of agricultural holdings on these areas. If that were done the difficulty would be overcome. So far as grazing areas were concerned anyone could get a grazing area on any of the timber leases granted under the Act and proposed to be exempt. When one compared the two positions it was seen they were not analogous. The charges levied on the timber companies were sufficiently high without imposing any farther burden.

MR. DAGLISH: Although supporting the amendment, be entirely agreed with the member for Forrest so far as the exemption of persons holding timber licenses granted under the 1904 amendment Act was concerned, and if the amendment as submitted by the member for Mt. Magnet was carried it would be necessary to have a subclause framed that would apply to those persons who were paying what amounted to a considerably higher scale than £20 a mile. The Committee should do something to tax the timber leases, because, among other things, they were a hindrance to our policy of land settlement. A large proportion of the leases was entirely unworked, whereas a licensee was compelled to do a certain amount of work as one of the conditions of his license. One could give instances to the Committee of persons who had sought to take up timber land included within a timber lease that had been cut out, and it had been found impossible, owing to the dog-in-the-manger policy on the part of the timber company, to obtain access to the land for cultivation purposes. In regard to the tax on the timber leases the argument of the Attorney General seemed to be that because we were giving a right over the timber that grew on the land instead of giving a right over the pasturage that grew on the land, the land tax would not apply in the case of timber though it applied in the case of grass. In other words if we gave the right to utilise the timber growth we were wrong in attempting to bring any person holding that right under the land tax. But if we gave the pastoralist the right to use the grass, we could rightly bring him under any land tax measure. One was unable to see the force of the Attorney General's contention. He did not want to argue in favour of the pastoralist or anyone else being exempted, because that was not the point. The point was, should these timber lessees be required to contribute? The Attorney General referred to the advantages pastoralists enjoyed, as against the holders of timber leases. The pastoralist, however, could not even grow a fruit tree legally on his pastoral lease. Supposing he planted an orchard, when the term of his lease expired he would have no claim against the Lands Department in regard to the improvement made. His rights were as narrowly limited or more narrowly limited than were those of the timber leesee. The member for Forrest contended that the timber companies were already fully taxed by means of their rent. If that were so, let the Committee adopt the amendment of the member for Mt. Magnet, and have a provision similar to that made the other night, at the instance of the Leader of the Opposition, in relation to pastoralists.

MR. BATH: That would apply to all leases, therefore it would apply to these.

MR. DAGLISH: That was something he was glad to hear. The Treasurer had spoken time after time, at Busselton and in other parts of his district, in regard to the necessity of doing something to compel the timber companies to use the land they were holding, or relinquish it. What better opportunity was there to make people utilise the land they held than that of taxing them? The rent was not sufficient at present to induce them to utilise fully the land they held. Whilst favourable to the amendment as far as it related to leases, he agreed that those holding timber lands under different, more stringent, and more expensive conditions should be exempted from any taxation under this measure.

MR. McLARTY: The debate had shown not so much that the timber leases should be taxed, as that pastoral leases should be exempt. He wished that pastoralists had previously had the same amount of sympathy from the other side of the House.

MR. BATH: Pastoralists had been exempted, to the extent of the rent they paid, by the amendment moved by him. Had the hon. member no gratitude for that?

MR. McLARTY: Members were anxious to tax the timber stations, yet only a week or two ago we were trying to get farther concessions in the way of railway freights, and it was shown that the timber companies were in a very bad way. If a man took up a timber concession, he saw the timber growing, and knew exactly what he was going to do. And although the member for Forrest had stated that the timber lessee paid £12 for 640 acres, there must be on that 640 acres, at a low calculation, 2,000 loads of timber; and putting that at £3 a load, it was worth £6,000. [MEMBER: Not on the ground.] Say 20s. a load; that would give the sum of £2,000. In the case of the pastoralist, it was not all skittles and beer. He had droughts for three or four years, and then came bush fires, and destroyed the whole of his run.

MR. BATH: There was no desire on his part to refer to what took place before the tea adjournment, except to say that no member liked to be mentioned, even when there was some justification for it. And members certainly resented that to a greater degree when the lecture was given without any justification whatever. It was not the part of members on the Opposition side of the House to justify the case, but rather the duty of the Treasurer and his colleagues to justify the exemptions in regard to one form of leases, whilst other forms of leases were taxed. Members on the Opposition side did not hold any brief for the pastoralist, and that was exemplified by the fact that when the question was considered, they advocated the taxation of pastoral leases on the difference between the unimproved capital value represented by the rent paid and the unimproved capital value represented by the fair rent. The member for Forrest stated that timber lessees were already paying certain rentals and royalties. The whole question hinged upon whether the amount they paid annually represented the fair annual rental for the unimproved value they enjoyed. If it did, the State had no right to step in and tax them. But we should not have a provision to exempt them from assessment whereby to determine whether they paid a fair rental or not. If the amendment by the member for Mt. Magnet were passed, timber lessees would not be unjustly treated, for they would be taxed only in relation to the difference between the rental paid and the fair rental, precisely the same as other lessees. It had been shown that the pastoralist enjoyed no greater privileges than the timber lessee, and he had many disadvantages in common with the timber lessee, disadvantages which must be taken into consideration in assessing the unimproved value of his property. Under certain clauses which had been passed, the measure of justice desired had not been secured, but that was no reason why the House should perpetuate a manifest injustice.

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

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ayes | ... | ... | 17 |
| Noes | ... | ... | 19 |
| Majority against | ... | | 2 |

| AYES. | NOES. |
|---|---|
| Mr. Bath | Mr. Barnett |
| Mr. Bolton | Mr. Brebber |
| Mr. Brown | Mr. Cowcher |
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Davies |
| Mr. Daglish | Mr. Ewing |
| Mr. Heitmann | Mr. Gordon |
| Mr. Hicks | Mr. Gregory |
| Mr. Holman | Mr. Gull |
| Mt. Johnson | Mr. Hayward |
| Mr. Lynch | Mr. Keenan |
| Mr. Scaddan | Mr. Layman |
| Mr. Taylor | Mr. Male |
| Mr. Underwood | Mr. Mitchell |
| Mr. Veryard | Mr. Monger |
| Mr. Walker | Mr. S. F. Moore |
| Mr. Ware | Mr. Piesse |
| Mr. Troy (*Teller*). | Mr. Price |
| | Mr. F. Wilson |
| | Mr. Hardwick (*Teller*). |

Amendment thus negatived.

SUBURBAN LANDS.

THE TREASURER moved an amendment—

That the words "outside the boundaries of any municipality" be inserted after "lands," in line 1 of Subclause 3.

MR. H. BROWN opposed the amendment. Some market gardens were in municipalities. The Perth market gar-

dens, particularly those in Duke Street, utilised land wholly unfitted for building purposes. Those gardens had been devastated by insect pest inspectors; and a land tax in addition to the high rents would prevent the owners from any longer competing with the market gardeners, mostly Chinese, outside the city.

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

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ayes | ... | ... | 24 |
| Noes | ... | ... | 12 |
| Majority for | ... | ... | 12 |

| AYES. | NOES. |
|---|---|
| Mr. Barnett | Mr. Bolton |
| Mr. Bath | Mr. Brown |
| Mr. Brebber | Mr. Daglish |
| Mr. Cowcher | Mr. Holman |
| Mr. Davies | Mr. Lynch |
| Mr. Ewing | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Foulkes | Mr. Taylor |
| Mr. Gordon | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. Gregory | Mr. Veryard |
| Mr. Gull | Mr. Walker |
| Mr. Hayward | Mr. Ware |
| Mr. Hicks | Mr. Heitmann (*Teller*). |
| Mr. Johnson | |
| Mr. Keenan | |
| Mr. Layman | |
| Mr. McLarty | |
| Mr. Male | |
| Mr. Mitchell | |
| Mr. Monger | |
| Mr. S. F. Moore | |
| Mr. Piesse | |
| Mr. Troy | |
| Mr. F. Wilson | |
| Mr. Hardwick (*Teller*). | |

Amendment thus passed.

Bill reported with farther amendments.

## BILL—LAND TAX.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Land Tax Bill (to impose a tax).

### SECOND READING.

### INCIDENCE OF THE TAX—EXAMPLES.

THE TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): In moving the second reading of this Bill, it will not be necessary for me to traverse the whole of the arguments used when introducing the Land Tax Assessment Bill. I shall briefly draw members' attention to the amount of the proposed tax on unimproved land values. That amount is 1½d. in the pound; and my intention to-night is to point out as briefly and concisely as possible what will be the result of this tax. As members are aware, we expect to derive from it this year a total sum of £60,000; and in order that I may explain clearly how we arrive at that estimate, I must refer to certain events of last year when members now in Opposition were in power. At that time land taxation was part of the policy of the Government; and through the Statistical Department a request was sent to all roads boards and municipalities for certain information, in order that the Treasurer might ascertain as nearly as possible what were the unimproved values of land as assessed by those bodies. A few of those local bodies omitted to comply; but all the remaining bodies' returns were duly filled in and sent to the department. The figures I am about to read have been compiled from those returns; and where returns were omitted to be furnished, the figures have been computed as accurately as possible by officers of the department. I may explain that the returns commenced with lands of a value under £400, and from that figure the valuations rose to sums like £1,000, £2,000, and so on. Our Land Tax Assessment Bill, already dealt with, provides for the exemption of lands having much lower values than £400; therefore the Statistical Department, not having the valuations of agricultural lands under £250 in value and municipal lands under £50 in value, have had to supply the deficiency approximately, as best they could. The figures pan out as follow:—Estimated unimproved value of freehold municipal land is £8,614,315; and if we deduct from that the exemptions which are calculated as £490,421, we have a total on municipal lands of £8,123,894. The estimated unimproved value of freehold land in roads districts is given by that return as £5,831,267; and the exemptions calculated upon the exemption clause in the Assessment Bill are worked out to equal £1,256,385, leaving a total unimproved value for the land held in roads districts of £4,574,882.

MR. DAGLISH: Does that exempt conditional purchase areas for three years, or not at all?

THE TREASURER: No; I do not think it takes that into consideration. I do not know that we have the values of conditional purchases at all. I suppose we will have that in the roads districts if the conditional purchases are valued in the return which was prepared for the

hon. member himself during his term of office. They may be included in these exemptions. I am not quite sure on the point. The total taxable unimproved value of freehold land in municipalities and roads districts is therefore £12,698,776; and this is what it is estimated we shall derive. The amount derivable from a uniform tax on that value at ¾d. in the pound is £39,684. The estimated amount derivable from a uniform tax of ¾d. in the pound on Crown leaseholds, which would include all leaseholds covered by the Assessment Bill, is £3,300. The estimated amount derivable as extra taxation on absentees—absentees being calculated as representing 5 per cent. of the total value, and of course that is only an approximation — is £1,074.

MR. JOHNSON: Does that include companies?

THE TREASURER: No.

MR. H. BROWN: But you get £1,300 on Mr. Paterson's figures from one estate alone.

THE TREASURER: The return was made before the alteration in the Assessment Bill to which the member for Guildford refers. The amount derivable from extra on land insufficiently improved, being based at 25 per cent. of the total, as an approximation is £11,015. Thus there would be a total tax derivable of £55,073. The area of land alienated or in process of alienation outside municipalities may be set down at 12,300,000 acres, which at 10s. per acre would represent an unimproved value of £6,150,000. But the estimated unimproved value of such land based on the returns furnished by the various roads boards was £5,831,267, as I have previously shown; so members will see the average per acre is not 10s. according to the roads boards valuations. We shall have to a great extent to depend, this year at any rate, on the valuations of these public bodies, because we certainly will not have time to get the department into working order and appoint assessors and have a complete valuation made of the whole of the land in the State for this assessment purpose in the current financial year. We must of necessity take the valuations of these local bodies to a great extent, but there will be some opportunity of assessing some land, such as town lands which do not come under municipalities, that is towns in road districts, and probably agricultural lands adjacent to municipalities. We roughly estimate that we shall be able by these means to get another £5,000, bringing the total to be derivable this year under this Land Tax Bill to £60,073. I may just briefly refer to a remark that fell from the Leader of the Opposition on Friday last. He said that if the exemptions were done away with and struck out of the Assessment Bill—[MR. BATH: Exemptions and rebates]—that course would bring in some £30,000 extra. [MR. BATH: Yes.] I have not gone into the question of rebates. I thought that the hon. member dealt with exemptions only. I have had the exemptions calculated, and the amount only comes on this calculation to £7,000, and not £30,000.

MR. BATH: I based my remark on the figures the Premier gave in the speech he made in this House.

THE TREASURER: Did the Premier say it was £30,000?

MR. BATH: No; but he set out the unimproved values, and on that basis the tax would amount to £90,000. I have made no mistake, because I have been over the figures again.

THE TREASURER: The figures are as follow, and I think members will be able to see that they are correct:—The exemptions in municipalities amount to £490,421, and in roads districts to £1,256,385, or a total of £1,746,806. The amount derivable from a tax at ¾d. in the pound on exempted properties would be £5,459, and if we add the extra for absentees and insufficient improvements amounting to £1,638, the total would be £7,097. That is all that the exemptions can amount to, at any rate so far as this taxation is concerned during the present year. There has been a considerable amount of discussion and uncertainty with regard to the burden that will be thrown upon individual agriculturists or property owners in the cities and towns by means of the tax we now propose, some people having been needlessly alarmed; and I am very much afraid that alarm has been accentuated by alarmist speeches and remarks by some members of this House.

MR. FOULKES: Do you not think that your letter caused some alarm?

THE TREASURER: It allayed a good deal of alarm. I wish to put a few examples before the House, and in doing so I hope they will be noted by the Press. I have had these worked out in connection with the different classes of people who would come under this taxation proposal. They are just suppositious cases, of course, but hon. members will see that they fairly well fit in with the different classes of people who will be taxed; and they may be taken, I think, as an illustration of what will occur under this taxation proposal. First, I have an example of a rural freehold of 250 acres. It will escape taxation. If we suppose that the capital value of 100 acres out of the 250 acres is £1 per acre, the land being used for grazing purposes, that comes to £100. If the 150 acres remaining is used for agricultural purposes, and has been improved so that it is worth £2 per acre, that equals £300, or a total value of £400 for the estate.

MR. H. BROWN: Are these parcels adjoining?

THE TREASURER: Yes; in one estate.

MR. H. BROWN: Then the unimproved value of the improved land is worth no more than that of the other land.

THE TREASURER: If the hon. member will wait until I have finished the illustration he will find that the improvements are dealt with. To get the unimproved value you must value the estate as you find it, and then you deduct the amount of improvements, and by that means get at the unimproved value. The total value of the estate is £400, and the improvements are set down at £150, leaving £250 as the unimproved value; and that will come under the exemption clause we have passed in the Assessment Bill. So this settler at any rate will escape taxation altogether. Take another rural freehold of 400 acres; the capital value of 250 acres used for grazing at £1 per acre is £250, and the balance used for agriculture is worth £3 per acre, amounting to £450; so the total value of this estate would be £700. If we deduct improvements to the amount of £200 there is an unimproved value of £500. The exemption, according to the Assessment Bill, would be £250, and with this deducted it would leave an amount taxable of £250. But as the improvements amount to one-third of the unimproved value of the estate, a rebate of half of the tax is allowed under Clause 10 of the Assessment Bill, and the tax would be ¾d. in the pound on £250, equalling 15s. 7½d. Take another estate of 500 acres. If the capital value is worth £2 per acre, this estate would be worth altogether £1,000; deducting £250 for improvements would leave £750, and again deducting the exemption of £250 would leave an amount taxable of £500; and as the improvements would be sufficient to earn the rebate under Clause 10, the total amount payable by the settler would be £1 11s. 3d. under this land tax. Take a rural freehold of 240 acres which has been improved to a considerable extent in the way of establishing an orchard; if 100 acres of that is valued at £1 per acre, being used for grazing purposes, that would be £100; if another 100 acres is cultivated and is worth £5 per acre, that would be £500; then if the settler has an orchard of 40 acres, which is worth £30 an acre, that would be £1,200. Thus there would be a total capital value on this estate of £1,800; but as extensive improvements have been made in the shape of planting the orchard and fencing the property generally, the improvements would amount to something like £1,350, and the unimproved value would be £450. This, with the exemption of £250, would leave £200 taxable; and this at ¾d. would be 12s. 6d. to be paid by the owner of the estate. I quote this so that members may know that the tax is not going to be such a terrible burden as some people imagine. Take a rural freehold of 300 acres valued at £500, with improvements to the extent of £150 and with the exemption, this would leave only £100 taxable, and the tax would only amount to 6s. 3d. Turning to more valuable estates and taking a rural freehold of 4,000 acres, the capital value of which is put down at 10s. an acre, with 3,000 acres at £1 an acre used for grazing, and 1,000 acres used for agriculture at £4 an acre, the capital value would be £5,500. If the improvements are put down at £1,500, there remains £4,000 as the unimproved value of the estate, and the tax on that at ¾d. in the pound would be £12 10s. That, I venture to say, is not an ex-

cessive illustration of what would occur in an estate of that sort, and the tax cannot be considered any great burden. Another illustration which has been worked out represents a large estate of 10,000 acres, and we have presumed for the purposes of this example that the owner has been absent from Australia for more than twelve months; the capital value of the estate at £2 per acre would be £20,000; improvements, *nil*. He is holding the estate (say for the sake of argument) for the unearned increment, a rise in values, a speculation. The unimproved value would be £20,000, and the absentee would have to pay 2¼d. in the pound on the £20,000, which would amount to £187 10s. I do not think hon. members will consider that is out of the way for an owner who is holding £20,000 worth of land in order that its value may advance while he is away from the State. Take a holding comprising 320 acres of conditional purchase and 160 acres free homestead farm, selected say in 1901. The requirements of the Land Act having been duly complied with, the capital value would be—conditional purchase, 320 acres at £2, £640; homestead farm, 160 acres at £3, £480; total value, £1,120. Supposing the improvements on this property amount to £250, the unimproved value would be £870, with the exemption deducted £250, leaving £620 as the taxable amount, which at ¾d. in the pound would be £1 18s. 9d. That is a fair illustration of the effect of the tax on land held under those conditions. Then let me mention the instance of a pastoral lease of 100,000 acres: annual rental say 10s. per thousand acres, fair annual rental 25s. per thousand; annual rent payable £50, unimproved value prior to assessment £1,000; the tax payable at ¾d. in the pound on £1,000 would be £3 2s. 6d.; unimproved value subsequent to assessment £1,500, and ¾d. in the pound on £1,500 would be £4 13s. 9d. I need not go on giving many illustrations of these pastoral leases, though I have several here. This one case will serve to show what will occur under pastoral lease conditions. Then take a special lease of 10 acres: annual rental payable would be £10 per acre; supposing the fair annual rental was £25 per acre and the improvements £1,000, the annual rental payable would be £100, annual rental proper £250; the tax payable at ¾d. in the pound would be £6 5s.; and as the unimproved value subsequent to assessment was £3,000, the total tax would be £9 7s. 6d. Next take an illustration of suburban land, say a quarter-acre block with cottage on it: value of the whole £350, improvements £250, unimproved value £100; the tax payable on that land with cottage would be 6s. 3d. Or suppose a half-acre block with a villa on it: capital value £1,800, improvements worth say £1,500; the owner would have to pay on £300, and the tax on that would be 18s. 9d. These serve to illustrate the classes of taxation and the amounts which will probably be collected on ordinary suburban land in half-acre and quarter-acre blocks upon which people have established homes. Vacant building allotments may be instanced. Suppose the owner is not absent from Australia, and the capital value of the lot is £400, that improvements such as fencing only have been done on the block—this gentleman also holding the land for an advance in the market value; then suppose the value of the fencing is £40, there would be £360 upon which he would have to pay the tax of 1½d. in the pound; seeing that improvements have not been done on the block to the necessary value, the tax payable in this case would be £2 5s. per annum. In the case of an owner who has been absent from the State or from Australia for more than twelve months, and who owns a valuable building allotment valued say at £1,000 with no improvements on it, he would have to pay a tax of 2¼d. in the pound, equalling £9 7s. 6d. These appear to me to illustrate exactly what will take place with regard to properties of that description. I have one other illustration here, with regard to city premises. Supposing the capital value is £7,500, and it has £2,500 worth of improvements on it, the tax of ¾d. in the pound would be collectable on £5,000, which would mean £15 12s. 6d. per annum. And last but not least—I do not wish to weary the House by quoting many more examples——

MR. LYNCH: What improvements did you allow on that city block; £50 per foot frontage?

THE TREASURER: It was £2,500 value. Take a large city business premises having a frontage of 150ft. and the capital value of which is £60,000; the improvements on that block are £10,000, leaving an unimproved value of £50,000. The rebate in that instance would come under the foot frontage, Section 10, the improvements exceeding £50 per foot of the main frontage. The owner of that block would pay ¾d. in the pound on £50,000, and his tax would be £156 5s. [MR. BATH: Only a gentle zephyr.] The House will agree with me that this tax we propose to impose on unimproved land values is not the heavy load which some have sought to show it will be on either town properties or rural properties.

MR. A. J. WILSON: What would the collection cost?

THE TREASURER: The collection, it is calculated, will not exceed 5 per cent on the £60,000. I have had one estimate made of the necessary officers; but the matter has not been gone into very closely, and I do not propose to read out the details of it, because it would convey very little. It certainly appears to me that we can safely estimate that the cost of collecting this tax in Western Australia is not going to exceed the cost which prevails in other States for the collection of the income tax and the land tax.

MEMBER: Are there any rebates there?

THE TREASURER: No rebates.

MR. GULL: They collect the two taxes together, which lessens the cost.

THE TREASURER: I admit that; but the hon. member will see that I am allowing as much as it costs in the other States to collect both the land tax and the income tax, I am allowing as much as 5 per cent. for the collection of the land tax alone here. There is only one State I think in Eastern Australia where a land tax is collected apart from an income tax; and I remember quoting on another occasion the amount—2½ per cent. I think it was—for collecting that one tax. In all the other States they collect a combined income and land tax; and the cost of that collection is 5 per cent. and under. I have no reason to suppose we shall not be able to keep within that estimate so far as Western Australia is concerned. At any rate, all the information I have obtained up to the present—I admit it is not full and complete—tends to confirm me in my opinion that we shall be able to collect this tax under the Assessment Bill for 5 per cent., or somewhere about £3,000. I appeal to the House that this proposal for a tax of 1½d. in the pound is not an unreasonable one; it is not a tax which ought to deter land settlement; and it is not a tax which is going to bring anything like the ruin on city property-holders which it has been said it will bring. I commend the Bill to the House, and move the second reading.

On motion by MR. BATH, debate adjourned.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: Recommendations by State Battery Board.

## BILL—MINES REGULATION.

### IN COMMITTEE.

Resumed from the 28th August; MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair, the MINISTER FOR MINES in charge of the Bill.

Clause 27—Notice of accident to be given:

An amendment had been moved by Mr. Holman to add the following subclause:—"On receipt of notification of an accident, the Inspector, Mining Registrar, or Secretary for Mines shall give notice to the representative of the Miners' Association in the district where the accident occurred."

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The clause related to notice of accident to be given, and made it compulsory on the manager to serve notice at once to the Inspector of Mines of any accident. The amendment proposed that the Inspector of Mines, the Mining Registrar, or the Secretary for Mines should send notice of an accident to an secretary of the miners' union in the district. At the present time the practice was adopted by the department of giving every facility to the unions to obtain full information; in fact, in many cases, notice was sent. But it would be peculiar to place in the Bill a provision making it, by legal enactment, compulsory that when an accident occurred an officer of the department should serve the secretary

of the union with notice of an accident. It would be preposterous. He had not seen anything of a similar nature in Acts of the other States, and he trusted that no such thing would be placed on the statute-book here. If we had to send a notice to the union of the workers, why not also to the union of employers? And why not do so in the case of engine-drivers? And there were other unions. The State Mining Engineer told him that the different inspectors had for a long time past been advising representatives of the miners' associations of any accidents. [MEMBER: Some of them.] Where it was convenient at all he (the Minister) was only too pleased to give instructions to that effect, but we should not insert a provision in the Bill making it compulsory to serve a notice on the secretary of the union. If we were working in only one large centre, that might be feasible, but we had an immense district in which mining was being carried on, and there might be occasions when it would be impossible to serve such a notice.

MR. HOLMAN: The object of the amendment was as far as possible to stop the increase in accidents which had been going on in the past few years. We not only wanted those who at present notified associations in case of accidents to do so, but to compel others to do it. The more publicity that was given to an accident, and the greater the number of persons who inspected the place to inquire into the cause, the less probability was there of accidents occurring. Many accidents had occurred owing to carelessness on the part of those supervising work on the mines. In 1901, when 17,879 persons were engaged in the mines, the total number of injured and killed was 175; whereas in 1905, when the men engaged numbered 17,792, the number of injured and killed was 304, an increase of about 80 per cent. Miners' associations looked after the families of those persons injured or killed, and seeing that they had that responsibility the State should take the responsibility of giving information to the unions or organisations. It was wrong that members of the House who had practical experience on the subject of mining should have to talk to empty benches and to vote against a solid mass of members who would not take interest in one of the most vital subjects in the State. Out of 15 members on the Opposition side of the House 13 were now present. He would beg members who represented agricultural districts to come to the aid of those who were practical men in the mining districts when they were asked to do so by the almost unanimous vote of those who represented the workers on the goldfields.

MR. WALKER: The Minister practically admitted the principle was good; therefore what harm could there be in embodying it in the law and making it compulsory? The hon. gentleman was anxious to administer his department in an enlightened and humane manner; but he might not always be in the position, and it would be well to make sure of the continuance of those good offices he himself had inaugurated. The union took a great responsibility upon itself with regard to its members, receiving contributions, and in the case of accident looking after the family of the injured person, and in case of death making provision for burial. Moreover, the union came to the aid of a person who brought an action under the Workers' Compensation Act. The funds of the union were involved, and from that selfish standpoint alone there could be no harm in embodying a provision of this kind in the Bill. But there was something farther, for the lives and safety of all the workers were involved. An accident which resulted in death or very serious injury might be a very serious menace to all the workers who had to go down that mine. As notice was often given voluntarily, why object to its being made compulsory? Admittedly the practice was harmless. The matter was exceedingly important to unionists and non-unionists alike.

The MINISTER: In case of accidents, the miners had to send notice to their unions.

Mr. WALKER: Not immediately. This was not a question of gratifying the curiosity of the union representative, but of enabling the union to obtain, for the benefit of the victim, accurate information of the circumstances of the accident. The Bill protected the property of the mine-owner. Why not protect the lives of the miners?

The MINISTER: The whole Bill was for the protection of the men, not of the property.

Mr. WALKER: The Bill protected property also. The Minister's objection to the amendment was sentimental.

Mr. TROY supported the amendment. Experienced persons knew the need for a workers' representative to look after the interests of the injured. The Minister objected that no statute contained such a clause; but this Bill contained other provisions not found in any statute. The injured miner could not look after his own interests; but the employer was under no such disability, and always learnt immediately of the accident. At Day Dawn a worker was recently injured by a fall of stone. When he reached the hospital, a clerk of the mine, accompanied by the inspector, visited him and took his statement. The man was not fit to make a statement, for he was suffering from shock. He was now suing the company; and to his surprise the strongest evidence against him consisted of admissions in the statement he had signed. These he had no recollection of making. The union looked after the wives and families of the injured, and therefore should be allowed to inspect the scene of the accident. The Minister might think it beneath his dignity to give the secretary of the union notice of an accident.

THE MINISTER: Did not the secretary receive notice from the injured unionist?

MR. TROY: Not immediately. In the event of an accident, the first person summoned was the inspector. The miners could not leave work to notify their secretary. Often the injured man was not a unionist; yet the union always acted on behalf of such men, as if they were members. Miners frequently travelled from camp to camp, and though not financial members of any union, called on local unions for assistance in the event of injury. Hence it was but fair that the union should be advised of all accidents.

MR. COLLIER had intended to give reasons for the amendment; but to do so was useless, as no Government supporter who could be convinced was present. Ministerial members waxed indignant to-night because personal motives were imputed to them. Here was farther evidence of the truth of the charge. When the interests of property were discussed, Ministerialists crowded to their seats. When we discussed measures for saving life and limb, the Government benches were occupied by two or three out of a total of thirty. The Minister had always promised to treat this Bill on non-party lines. On this amendment how could the Committee divide on such lines? How could Government supporters, now outside, vote on the merits?

MR. TAYLOR: Is was a farce for mining members to urge the necessity for a clause to give workers the opportunity of having a representative at the scene of an accident as soon as possible after it occurred. He could not understand why the Minister should oppose it.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member had a short memory to forget the Bill introduced last year.

MR. TAYLOR: We were not dealing with last year's Bill. The arguments of Opposition members were not answerable. In any case there was no one on the Government side to answer them. Out of 34 members supporting the Government, there were only three Ministers and two agricultural members present. No—he was pleased to say the member for North Perth had just entered the Chamber. The division bell would soon ring to show how members voted, yet the Minister hoped the matter would not be decided on party lines. This was a matter to help the miners at the scene of an accident; but if it had been a question affecting boodle every seat on the Government side would have been filled. It was only a case of flesh and blood of the workers of the State, so members on the Government side absented themselves and came in to vote as a machine.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member's remarks were peculiarly entertaining. The hon. member had a great objection to setting his mind back 12 months when a similar Bill was introduced by the Labour Government, of which the member for Mount Margaret and the member for Murchison were members. They presumably had helped to draft that Bill. Now they sought by every possible means to include all sorts of amendments in this Bill The question was whether we should place on the statute-book special powers for the purpose of unions. The department did all it possibly could to assist the various unions by notifying them of accidents; but this amendment would make it compulsory whenever an

accident occurred for the Mines Department to send notice to the various unions. Why?

MR. HOLMAN: The amendment on the Notice Paper would show that.

THE MINISTER: So that the union secretary could go in and see the scene of the accident.

MR. HOLMAN: No.

THE MINISTER: The hon. member never knew anything.

Interjections from MR. HOLMAN and MR. TAYLOR.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

THE MINISTER: The member for Mount Margaret, when Minister, could not understand his own Bill, let alone others.

MR. TAYLOR: The Minister should keep his temper.

THE MINISTER: The object of this amendment was to enable the secretary of a union to go in when an accident occurred, and do what it was the duty of the Government inspector to do. The second amendment was to provide for that power to be given to the secretary of a union.

MR. TAYLOR: There was no mention of a secretary to a union. The Minister should not mislead the House. It was the representative of the union that was mentioned, and not the secretary of the union.

THE MINISTER: This showed that the hon. member could not understand what the "representative" of the union meant. As Minister administering the department, he (the Minister) would take it as meaning the secretary.

MR. TAYLOR: Not necessarily.

THE MINISTER: The member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) made some remarks in reference to the number of accidents, and said there was a huge increase. The statistics of the Mines Department showed that the fatal accidents in 1904 were 42, as against 34 in 1905, while other accidents amounted to 270 in 1905, as against 152 in the previous year. That considerable increase in other accidents was due to a certain mine manager having been proceeded against for neglecting to report an accident. From that time almost every accident, no matter how slight, was reported. The increase was due to the fact that it became more widely known that all accidents had to be reported, and many accidents that had formerly been disregarded were now reported. The department had no objection to giving every assistance to unions, but no reason was adduced for this amendment. According to the rules of the unions, and according to the working of their system, as soon as an accident occurred the matter was reported to the unions. The task of reporting these accidents to unions really belonged to the men themselves. If the amendment were passed and an accident occurred in an outside district, the department must find out the representative of the union and notification would need to be sent to him, no matter how long the delay might be. There was no request for anything of this sort to his (the Minister's) knowledge, and he could see no special reason why we should give this special preference to any organisation.

MR. TAYLOR: It was the only organisation that controlled mining.

THE MINISTER: Was there not an employers' union? The State, he had always argued, should step in between the employer and employee, and he intended to adhere to that principle. The Government should not take one side or the other. We should frame a measure for the protection of the men and see that it was administered by proper officers. But he failed to see why we should put this amendment in the Bill.

MR. HOLMAN: The Minister had not given any argument against the amendment. All the Minister had done was to deliberately mislead the House by stating that a Bill had been introduced by a Ministry of which the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) and he (Mr. Holman) were members. That was incorrect. It was characteristic of the Minister on every occasion to make incorrect statements.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should not make a statement of that kind.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, the Minister should not make use of lies.

MR. HOLMAN: If one could not say that the Minister made an incorrect statement, what could one say?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member had said that the Minister deliberately intended to mislead the House. That

statement could not be admitted by the Chair.

MR. HOLMAN withdrew it. The Minister, without deliberately doing it, had attempted to mislead the House. When speaking on the second reading the Minister either intentionally or unintentionally put words into his (Mr. Holman's) mouth which never came out of it. He (Mr. Holman) had refreshed his memory from *Hansard*. The Minister had said that the member for Murchison went so far as to say that union secretaries would make good inspectors because they were not in the pay of mine managers. He (Mr. Holman) deliberately denied making that statement.

THE MINISTER explained that he did not know whether *Hansard* had made a mistake, but it was the member for Mount Magnet who had made that statement, that union secretaries would make better inspectors.

MR. TROY: The Minister accused him incorrectly, because he (Mr. Troy) never said that the inspector of mines was paid to look after the manager's interests.

THE MINISTER: That was not what was said. It was that union secretaries would make good check inspectors.

Mr. TROY admitted having said that.

MR. HOLMAN hoped the Minister would have the matter corrected. Incorrect statements should not be put into one's mouth. In many districts it was necessary to appoint secretaries who had not been workers, because time after time representatives of miners' unions had been sacked for taking office in a union. The Minister for Mines came down with a measure solely put into his mouth by the Chamber of Mines. Last January the Minister sent the State Mining Engineer to interview the Chamber of Mines as to what should be put into this measure; and now the Minister twitted the Opposition with not understanding the clauses in the Bill. The Minister knew nothing about it. All that man knew about mining was learnt in a public-house at Menzies, or in a tinker's shop. On the other hand Opposition members had worked all their lives underground, and knew what it was to see their mates taken away sometimes in sacks from alongside them. He himself had helped to gather up the remains of a mate with whom he had talked only a few minutes before. Yet we had that man (the Minister) saying that we did not know what we were talking about.

THE CHAIRMAN: The member knew he should not speak of the Minister as "that man."

MR. HOLMAN: Then he would withdraw "that man" and say the Minister. It was necessary that the unions who represented the workers on the goldfields should be notified, because the Minister had said that even at present it was the custom of inspectors to notify the association on every occasion. Some of the inspectors did that, but a large number were not up to the standard, and we were trying to compel these inspectors to inform the representative of the workers. He had shown that the statements made by the Minister were in a great measure incorrect. Before the Bill was redrafted by the Minister it was placed before the Chamber of Mines by the State Mining Engineer, who wished to get information as to what was the best measure to suit the mine managers. And we had the miserable spectacle of a measure approved by the Chamber of Mines before the Committee, and the Minister was using his brutal majority to pass that measure.

MR. HEITMANN: It appeared that members were ready for the fray. The Minister had objected to the amendment, but he should give some reason for the objection. It was only right when it was attempted to take a new departure in the mining laws that some reason should be given for an objection to a proposal. Because there was no provision of this kind in any mining Bill that was not a disqualification. If members representing the mining constituencies thought it necessary in the interests of the miners and the mining industry to have this provision, it was right for the Minister to give some consideration to the proposal. The Minister admitted that the conditions of mining now were much better from a workman's standpoint than they were a few years ago, and he would admit that the miners' unions and miners' representatives had done all they could for the mining industry, both from the manager's standpoint and the

worker's standpoint. The Minister had stated that it would be necessary to also inform the manager or the mine representative, for it was desirable that inspectors should visit the scene of the accident to get all the information possible. This was done. The Minister objected to a representative of the workers being in attendance when inquiries were to be made, yet at least one of the inspectors in this State always took with him a representative of the mine to make inquiries when a man had been injured. That had taken place time after time, and the evidence obtained was used to the detriment of the man injured. This provision should be inserted so that we should look after the interests of the men when an accident occurred. A short time ago an accident occurred at Day Dawn, and the inspector of mines took with him, when visiting the injured person, the accountant of the mine where the accident happened, and this man was secretary of the Chamber of Mines on the Murchison. If the Chamber of Mines and the mine owners could be represented, it was only fair that the workers should have a representative present. The Minister had stated that in one year 42 fatal accidents occurred, therefore we should do all we possibly could to avoid these accidents. We could not go too far so long as the men did not prevent the inspector from doing his duty or did not increase the cost of the department.

MR. WALKER: It was necessary to take notice of the statement made by the Minister that he would not be a party to going between the employers and the workers—as if this amendment meant that. It did not mean anything of the kind. The Minister also used as an argument that if information had to be sent to the union it would also be fair to send information to the employers. But was not a representative of the employer always on the spot, on the mine? Was not every boss on the mine a representative of the employers? Therefore the representative of the mine owner knew immediately of an accident, but the representative of the miners could not know immediately. The rule of the union was that the steward should be informed of any accident. The object of the amendment was to provide for speedy and reliable information being received by the representative of the miners in cases of accident. It was desirable that the secretary of the union, as the representative of the workmen, should see the place of accident immediately, for it was not past human nature to conceal some of that evidence which might inculpate the management.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Notice of the accident might not reach the department for a fortnight.

MR. WALKER: What was there to prevent notice from being sent to the workers' representative simultaneously with that sent to the inspector of mines? There was no going between the employers and the men in this matter. The Minister had admitted that what was asked for by the amendment was already done by the department wherever practicable; wherein therefore lay the cause for objection? Mere sentiment should not interfere in a matter of this nature.

MR. JOHNSON: The Minister, in his prejudice against unions, appeared to desire to influence the Committee against the amendment. Of the men killed in mines during the past five or six years 75 per cent. had been members of the unions. In the case of the appalling disaster at the Great Boulder, four of the five men killed in that smash had been members. The union secretary, in cases of fatal accident, comforted those bereaved, and tried to protect those entitled to compensation from any encroachment on their claims. In all cases they looked to the union secretary. Having been secretary of one of the largest goldfields organisations, he knew the many calls made on the unions; and in cases of accident he had been unable to go personally or to send his wife to comfort the widows and orphans, owing to his not having been notified until after the inspection, when it was practically too late for the union secretary to do any good. Mining members in Opposition did not sit as representatives of unionists but of miners. They represented the whole of the unionists on the goldfields. The member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan), who was supported unanimously by the miners in his constituency, was complimented on all sides of the House for his second-reading speech on this Bill. In that speech he

had specially emphasised the necessity for check inspectors. But what support did he get when he moved the amendment? It was difficult to keep one's temper on finding that members who had remained in the corridors during the discussion came in to vote down the amendments. The Opposition were not seeking special privileges for unionists, but asking the House to protect the lives of miners on the goldfields, and to help their widows and orphans. It was idle to say that fellow-workers could notify the secretaries. Most accidents occurred immediately after the change of shift, and the men below could not for five or six hours notify the union. By that time everything at the scene of the accident was altered. The union secretary did not use his position to injure the mine owner. The amendment would provide that the secretary or other representative of the workers should inspect the scene of the accident and use the information obtained to protect the injured and to obviate farther accidents. The subject of this Bill was the vital question on which goldfields members were elected; and when they became heated it must be borne in mind that this was a matter that directly affected them as the miners' representatives. Government supporters should not swallow all that the Minister said, but should support the Opposition in this endeavour to protect the lives and limbs of the workers.

MR. GULL supported the amendment, realising that there could be no objection to a union secretary, steward, or ordinary member, actuated by humanitarian instincts, visiting the scene of the accident, whether the victim was or was not a unionist. He (Mr. Gull) took strong exception to some remarks made about the Minister in this discussion. The use of such expressions was the worst possible method by which Oppositionists could try to obtain assistance from the Government side.

MR. BATH: Members not well acquainted with mining matters might find it difficult to understand the warmth with which mining members spoke on this point. The departmental statistics did not show the results of accidents. Let members picture what accidents meant to those deprived of their breadwinners, and they would realise the motive behind the amendment. In most cases of accident a family was left practically dependent on charity. Under the Workers' Compensation Act the maximum sum recoverable was £400, if the widow and children had no one to depend on. But even that sum did not insure their future livelihood. Owing to their lack of experience they could not start any business. Many goldfields businesses where in the hands of big firms, with whom a small business could not compete. The £400 could therefore be regarded only as a means of temporary subsistence. When the cost of living on the goldfields was taken into consideration, £400 would not assure to them a subsistence for many years. Perhaps a collection was made, but the whole amount put together meant that in a few years these people would have to face the world. That was the result of these accidents. There was a slight reduction in the number of fatal accidents last year, as compared with the previous year. Still the number, over 30, meant a serious increase to the large number of dependents every year; and if the fatal accidents of previous years were added, it meant that a great many widows on the goldfields were struggling against great difficulties and great odds, for their livelihoods. The Minister was not right in saying that the increase in accidents, other than fatal, was due to more accidents having been reported that previously would not have been reported, being of a trivial nature. The increase was due to the greater disregard for safety, because year after year there was a continually increasing pressure brought to bear on the men to have a greater amount of work done. The source of this information, which was more accurate than that of the Minister's, was those possessing the best knowledge of what these accidents meant to them, because there had been a considerable increase in the accident pay of the unions, which was a severe drain on their funds. One would imagine from the remarks of the Minister that members of unions were roaring lions going round seeking whom they could devour.

THE MINISTER: What had been said against them by him?

MR. BATH: The Minister's opposition to the amendment would lead one

to imagine that unionists were going to do something dreadful beyond what any human being would do. What were the facts? Secretaries of unions were men of humanitarian instincts, and they would make no discrimination between the injured unionist and the injured non-unionist. It was simply marvellous what union secretaries had to do. They acted like boards of advice. Unionists and non-unionists went to them for advice, and to air their grievances. It was to them that the widows turned for consolation and advice. The union secretary must be a man of infinite tact and patience, and a man of humanitarian instincts to keep his position. The amendment, if carried, would entail no loss of dignity on the part of those who were obliged to notify the representatives of the unions. It would not mean that the representative of the union would have an opportunity to interfere with the business of the mine, or do anything to confer any injury on the mine owner. The inspector who in the long run had to make inquiry into the matter would have acumen enough to discriminate between statements that were true and statements that were untrue, and between statements that actually described the occurrence, or statements that were overdrawn for some ulterior purpose.

MR. COWCHER supported the amendment. There was no answer to the arguments advanced that it was right for some person appointed by the union to inspect the scene of an accident. There was no argument against allowing it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The amendment was of a general character. It would apply to any accident.

MR. HOLMAN: To any serious injury.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: A serious injury was defined as one that would result in preventing the person from following his occupation or earning his ordinary remuneration for two weeks or more. The Minister had correctly pointed out that it would be some considerable time, in some instances, before it would be known whether it was a serious accident or otherwise. Judging from the speeches of hon. members opposite, it seemed to be intended that the union secretary should be notified when an accident of something more than a trivial nature occurred, and in all cases when a fatal accident occurred. If it were compulsory for the inspector to notify the representative of the union in all cases where an accident occurred of a fatal nature, leaving it to his discretion to do so in any other accident, it would meet the case; but to compel him to notify the representative of the union of every accident would be to put on the inspector a duty that might be difficult for him to discharge. The inspector might not always hear of an accident immediately after it occurred.

MR. JOHNSON: The inspector received information by telephone.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was only at Kalgoorlie, a small section of our mining world. It would be foolish to frame legislation on the facilities and circumstances of any particular locality, without having regard to the requirements of the whole of the State where the industry was carried on.

MR. JOHNSON: In the country districts, certainly an inspector did not know of an accident for some days, in some cases; but the majority of accidents occurred at Kalgoorlie.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It should be made compulsory on the inspector, when notified of a fatal accident, to take the most speedy steps to send a communication to whoever was appointed by the union to receive it. He presumed that in some cases it might take days. There should be some distinction in regard to minor accidents. One request seemed legitimate, and he was sure the Minister for Mines would consider that; but in the other case the duty was too much to place on the shoulders of the inspectors. It had been suggested that when an inspector went to the scene of an accident he did not carry out his duty to the fullest extent. It was to be regretted that reflections of this kind were made. The inspectors of the department discharged their duties fearlessly and honourably to the State. He did not know of exceptions; but he was sure if it were proved to the satisfaction of the Minister that an inspector did not carry out his duties, the Minister would see that the inspector did not remain longer in the department. Where a fatal accident occurred, by all means make it compulsory as soon as possible

for the inspector to notify those who represented the injured worker's union.

MR. SCADDAN: The manager should be compelled to do that in such a case.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The manager might not have the same communication with the unions as an inspector would. The manager was obliged to take steps to at once notify the inspector, and the inspector would discharge his duty immediately. If it were left to the manager, it might be suggested that he might put off the notification to a suitable date. If we wanted to frame a Bill which was not liable to be changed, or held up to ridicule, or afterwards attacked, let members frame it on lines of common sense. The Minister could only be asked to consider this matter in the light he (the Attorney General) had pointed out.

[MR. DAGLISH took the Chair.]

MR. HOLMAN was very sorry if he had allowed himself to be carried away when heated. He was of a rather impetuous nature, and at times became heated and said exactly what he meant. Frequently he was sorry for what he had said. He would not have made the remarks which had been taken exception to if it had not been for the sneers of the Minister for Mines, who had said that the member for Mount Margaret and himself did not understand what they were talking about; and the Minister had put statements into his (Mr. Holman's) mouth which he had never made, and had farther stated that the member for Mount Margaret and himself were Ministers in a Government which introduced a similar measure to this. When statements of that kind were made he would resent them. The Attorney General now stated that notification should only be made in case of fatal accidents. In a great many cases serious accidents occurred which were often worse than fatal accidents. A man was made a cripple for life. Men were seen on the goldfields with their spines injured as the result of accidents. A man would suffer for 12 or 18 months, and during that time would be a burden to his wife and family. At the end of that time the man might die. That was a fatal accident really, but according to the Attorney General such a case should not be reported to the association. A few years ago, on the Great Fingal mine at Cue, and at this time he (Mr. Holman) was secretary to the workers' association, a man named Cooke was working in the shaft when the cage fell on top of him and he was killed. The accident occurred at about the change of shift. The man was married and had a family. The body was carried to the change-house of the company, and left there for some time. He (Mr. Holman) happened to be at a function at this time, and one of the members of the association rode to his house on a bicycle to inform him of the accident. The man found him at about five o'clock in the evening, after he had returned from the function. He (Mr. Holman) went to Day Dawn and got there about two hours after the accident. In the meantime a lawyer had gone to the widow and obtained a written authority from her to act as her representative. It was said at the time that this lawyer was in the pay of the company. The manager of the mine also sent to the widow, saying that he was prepared to pay the expenses of burial. As soon as he (Mr. Holman) got notification of this accident he went to the mine (the man was a member of their organisation) and inquired about it; he also asked the widow to allow the association to take charge of her affairs, and she did so by word of mouth. He went to the mine manager, and told him they were going to take charge of her affairs. They buried the body, and took the widow's case to the court. He attended the inquest as a representative of the workers' association, but found that the lawyer referred to had seated himself in the coroner's court, and desired to act on behalf of the widow and children. He (Mr. Holman) objected to the lawyer acting on behalf of the widow, and he sent someone on a bicycle to the widow, who then gave authority for him (Mr. Holman) to act as her representative. He conducted the case in the coroner's court, and afterwards the whole of the negotiations on the Murchison. A well-known solicitor in Perth took the case in hand on behalf of the association. The case was brought into court, but was settled without being heard, the widow receiving £1,300 from the company, and the only expenses she had to pay amounted

to £20 for sending witnesses to Perth. He could quote several other cases in which he took similar action. There was an absolute necessity to protect the interests of the widow and orphans in the case of a fatal injury. He was sorry that the remarks thrown across at members on the Opposition side led him to lose his temper as he did just now

MR. EWING: When the event referred to took place he was absent, but it was gratifying that the member for Murchison had expressed regret for the expressions uttered. On a previous occasion he (Mr. Ewing) introduced a Bill for the protection of coal miners, and he regretted that a similar provision to that now proposed was not contained in that measure, As far as his knowledge went, the inspector in the coal district had on all occasions notified the secretary of the union, and there had never been any friction or trouble in the Collie district; but it did not follow that all inspectors were the same, or that all districts were so easily get-at-able. It was difficult to say what was a serious accident and what was not. If we were going to do anything, notice should be given in the case of any accident. No one going down a coal mine or gold mine immediately an accident had occurred could decide whether it was a a serious one or not. A man might appear at the moment as happy as possible, and yet might be maimed for life. This matter might be overcome by farther consideration, and doubtless the Minister would see if some amendment could be framed which would attain the object the member for Murchison had in view. Every protection should be given to the workmen, and there should be an opportunity, seeing that litigation might take place, of knowing at once the circumstances under which the accident occurred.

MR. HOLMAN: The amendment was not framed by him. He knew it was a serious question, and he went to the Parliamentary Draftsman and got him to frame the amendment.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No good case had been made out apparently why such a drastic provision as that proposed should be made in the case of a miner, whereas it did not exist in regard to other hazardous occupations, nor, so far as he was aware, had there been any strong request for such legislation.

MR. SCADDAN: Miners did not make the request to the hon. gentleman.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the Government side of the House equally with others were men who desired to do all they could. The occupation of a lumper was almost, if not quite, as dangerous as that of a miner. A considerable number of accidents occurred in the course of the year at the port of Fremantle alone. If we could possibly avoid them by legislation of this description, everybody would, he was sure, support it. There was another phase of the question which he desired to bring under the notice of members, and in no party spirit. In some cases the friends of injured persons were induced by union officials to bring actions under the Employers' Liability Act rather than under the Workers' Compensation Act; and the plaintiffs, losing the case, lost the compensation they might have obtained under the latter Act. It would be better, if possible, to provide that the representative of the Government should be the person to inspect the scene of an accident.

MR. JOHNSON: When the inspector visited the spot, the representative of the employer was there, and the representative of the worker was absent.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Daglish): The hon. member must not make a speech.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The representative of the employer might be on the spot; but there were the fellow-workers of the injured man. The employer's representative had no legal status. The employer would have a tendency to minimise the gravity of the accident, which would on the other hand be magnified by the workers. That was the difficulty. The inspector should be the controlling factor. Why give either the employer's or the worker's representative a legal status?

MR. WALKER: The employer had all the legal status.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: None was given him by the Bill. That this was not a party question was proved by the fact that some Government supporters had spoken in favour of the amendment. Let members opposite say why miners should in this matter be treated differently from workers in other occupations almost equally hazardous.

MR. WALKER: The preceding speaker did not understand the purpose of the amendment. That we had not adequate laws to protect lumpers was no reason for not protecting miners.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Was there any general demand for the amendment?

MR. WALKER: Every gold-miners' union in the State had urged its representative to have the Bill amended as now proposed. If the Minister would bring in a Bill to protect wharf lumpers, the Opposition would help him to pass it.

MR. TROY: The Minister for Mines had said that when an accident happened the inspector stood neutral between the employer and employee. On the Murchison, in the absence of the inspector, a mine manager frequently acted as his deputy.

MR. BARNETT supported the amendment. In respect of such accidents we could hardly give the workers too much protection. Better err on the side of caution. He would support the amendment if the suggestion of the Attorney General were not agreed to.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES still considered the amendment objectionable, but was prepared to accept an amendment to the effect that the union must be notified when a serious accident occurred. Respecting the amendment, he had received the following minute from the State Mining Engineer:—

> This seems to be very unnecessary. By departmental inspections, inspectors have for a long time past been advising representatives of the miners' association of any accident, so far as they can do so without hampering themselves in their principal duty of getting to the spot as soon as possible. I have heard no complaint for some considerable time past that the associations have not been notified, and believe that the arrangements on that head are working satisfactorily. The amendment will involve a lot of clerical work in registering and keeping records of the representatives of the miners' association in the different districts, and regulations will probably be required to ensure satisfactory registration, without which notice under a statutory provision such as the amendment proposes would be very unsatisfactory. A definition of "Miners' Associations" will also be required in the Act if the amendment is passed. It seems to me that a better provision would be to require the manager, when notifying the inspector of an accident, also to notify the local representative of the association, which would give the latter much more time to make inquiries in most cases.

The member for Guildford had made out a strong case for acceding to the request of the member for Murchison, but it was rather far-fetched. We knew that if a serious accident occurred in the Kalgoorlie district, it was notified through the district, perhaps sometimes before the inspector had knowledge of it. We had to consider not only Kalgoorlie, but the whole of the goldfields, and with such a clause on the statute-book it would be an absolute impossibility, on many occasions, to give the notification rendered necessary. The Government, through their inspectors, should see that there were equity and fair play between employer and employee; but this was throwing a red-herring across the track. It would probably mean a considerable amount of unfair interference. The amendment could be amended to provide that in the case of fatal accidents notice must be given, and that the practice carried out by the department of notifying other accidents wherever possible should be continued. If accidents had to be notified in every case, it would lead to a lot of unnecessary work being placed on inspectors. If his (the Minister's) suggestion would be accepted, progress could be reported, and the necessary amendment brought forward at the next sitting.

MR. ILLINGWORTH resumed the Chair.

MR. HOLMAN: The amendment suggested by the Minister could not be accepted by Labour representatives. It will be almost useless. There were scores of accidents even worse then fatal. There were 300 accidents last year, and the work divided among eight inspectors would not be very much; so the argument of extra work would not hold water. Members should accept the amendment that the Opposition considered sufficient, and if, on recommital, the Government would bring down a feasible amendment, the Opposition would give consideration to it.

Amendment (Mr. Holman's) put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at sixteen minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.