The Attorney General: I will accept that.

Mr. MUNSIE: The clause provided that a copy of every resolution appointing or removing a treasurer or trustee signed in the case of a resolution appointing a treasurer or trustee by the treasurer or trustee so appointed, and by the secretary of the union, shall, within 14 days be sent by the secretary to the registrar. Did that apply in cases of an association of unions?

The Attorney General: Yes.

Mr. MUNSIE: In that case it was his intention to support the amendment and as a matter of fact he thought that the proposal to extend the period to 30 days was not enough. If it were applied to trades unions where members would be electing their members or trustees from among the members of that trades union, 30 days would be sufficient, but in the case of an industrial association he had known where that association had been particularly anxious to get the signatures of the three trustees appointed under the present Miners' Federation, and it took seven weeks to do so.

Mr. GEORGE: The Attorney General had informed the Committee that where a bona fide excuse could be put forward the penalty would not be inflicted.

Mr. MUNSIE: It would be an injustice to inflict any penalty under the conditions which he had explained.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MUNSIE moved a further amendment—

That the word "sixty" be inserted.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 24 to 29—agreed to.

Clause 30—Saving of right to transfer shares in company:

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was his intention in the clause to move an amendment to strike out the words, "but no such transfer shall relieve the transferror from any liability incurred by him under this Act up to the date of such transfer."

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10·49 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 20th August, 1912.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Plans showing land resumed at West Perth for proposed public markets, cold storage, and refrigerating works (asked for by Hon. Frank Wilson). 2, Papers *re* claim of W. J. Pascoe for deferred rent during service as warder (ordered on motion by Mr. Carpenter).

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Messages received notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1, Excess (1910-11).

2, Nedlands Park Tramways Amendment.

3, North Fremantle Municipal Tramways Amendment.

QUESTION—STATE HOTELS FOR MERREDIN AND KELLERBERRIN.

Mr. GREEN asked the Premier: 1, Are the Government aware of the monopoly that exists in the liquor trade at the towns of Merredin and Kellerberrin, as there is only one hotel at each of these towns, and the present Licensing Act does not permit of further publicans'

licenses being granted there to private persons? 2, Are the Government also aware that two town lots were reserved by the late Minister for Lands (Mr. Mitchell) for the purpose of a State hotel at Merredin, where large sums of public money are now being spent on the construction of railways? 3, In these circumstances, is it the intention of the Government to erect State hotels at Kellerberrin and Merredin? 4, If so, when?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. Lots 117 and 118, Merredin, are reserved for State hotel purposes. 3, The Manager and Inspector of State Hotels is leaving for Kellerberrin and Merredin to report thereon. 4, Answered by No. 3.

QUESTION—LAND DEALER'S ADVERTISEMENTS IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. GREEN asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that one Charles Sommers, land dealer and money lender, has a quantity of his advertising literature placed for distribution at the office of the Government Immigration Department? 2, How much money (if any) is received for the distribution of such advertising literature? 3, If none, why not?

The PREMIER replied: From time to time residents abroad inquire in general terms regarding the price of farms for sale owned privately. In order to supply this information a few catalogues are obtained, as required, from those land agents in Perth issuing them. These catalogues, however, are not for public distribution, and are not placed upon the trays with other literature for public use but are kept in the inside office. As a matter of fact there are only five copies of the catalogue referred to in the office.

QUESTION—CONDEMNED SLEEPERS IN SAWMILL RAILROAD.

Mr. LAYMAN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it a fact that some sixteen hundred condemned sleepers are being used in the construction of the railway to the State mill at Manjimup? 2, If so, who purchased the sleepers in question? 3, What was the price arranged to be paid for said sleepers? 4, To whom, if anyone, has the purchase money been paid? 5, Will he insist upon the hewers concerned being paid the full union rates for the said sleepers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The mill erector. 3, The price at which they were offered, namely, 6d. each. 4, Messrs. Turner Bros. Payment has not yet been made, but the sleepers have been delivered. 5, We have no knowledge of or control over the price paid to the hewers.

QUESTION—EDUCATION CLASSIFICATION REGULATIONS.

Mr. HEITMANN asked the Minister for Education: 1, Has his attention been drawn to an article appearing in the August number of the *W.A. Teachers' Journal*, which deals with regulations in reference to classification? 2, Will he take action to remove the anomalies referred to in the article mentioned?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes. 2, The regulations generally are being revised and the points raised have been and are being specially considered. Wherever justified, alterations will be made.

QUESTION—FRUIT TRANSPORT RESTRICTIONS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that an embargo exists against fruit going into the Greenbushes district from Perth and Harvey? 2, Seeing the difficulty of the residents there in getting an adequate supply, will he take steps to make an alteration?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is not intended to relax the regulations. Should this be done, orchards in the Blackwood district would incur a grave risk of being infested with fruit fly. At the present time

fruit fly does not exist in any of the orchards in that district, while plenty of fruit is available in the quarantined area, not only for local consumption, but for marketing elsewhere.

QUESTION — KARRI SLEEPERS AND BAND SAWS.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has any proposal been made by either the Federal or State Governments to put down unpowellised karri sleepers in the Commonwealth line? 2, In view of the erection of State mills, does he propose to erect band saws in those mills? 3, Has he heard of the failure of those saws in other mills? 4, If not, will he have inquiries made?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No such proposal has been made. 2, An agreement has been made with a manufacturing firm whereby it has agreed to supply and erect at its own cost a large band saw under guarantee to deal with a specified quantity of timber daily. If the guaranteed quantity is not reached, the Government are under no obligation to purchase, and the vendors must remove the plant at their own cost. 3, Yes. 4, Answered by No. 3.

RAILWAY DEVIATIONS SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) moved—

That the time for bringing up the report of the select committee be extended for one month.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): The committee should try to expedite the consideration of the matter of submitting their report. Surely it was not necessary to have an extension of a month? Would not a fortnight do, in order that the report might be brought down in time to be useful, if it was to be of any use at all?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (in reply): The matter of the two select committees conferring hampered the Assembly committee. It was not thought desirable to go on while the motion for the two committees conferring was in abeyance, but as soon as it was decided that the two committees should confer they had met in conference. They did not desire to commit the same fault as was committed by the Legislative Council select committee dealing with the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway deviation, namely, going into the country without giving the settlers sufficient time to make arrangements to give evidence. Therefore it was decided that the earliest possible moment at which they could go into the country would be the 29th August, when the two committees would leave Perth. The fact would be well advertised in the papers circulating in the district concerned, so that anyone who desired to give evidence could do so. This, however, would not leave very much time to the committees to complete their labours in Perth, and it would be impossible to report in anything less than a month, though it was understood there was nothing to prevent the committees reporting before a month expired. They would use every expedition in getting their report ready, but in the circumstances could not ask for an extension for anything less than a month.

The PREMIER: One did not know whether Parliament had any control or desire to take control of select committees, but he objected to select committees taking on the powers of a Royal Commission.

Mr. SPEAKER: The mover has replied.

The Premier: There was no explanation of why this extension was asked for.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The Premier: It is very unsatisfactory.

Question put and declared passed.

The Premier: No "ayes" voted.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will put the question again.

Question put and passed.

BILL — FREMANTLE-KALGOORLIE (MERREDIN-COOLGARDIE SECTION) RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in moving the second

reading said: The object of this Bill is to get the authority of Parliament to construct the first section of what will eventually be the Transcontinental railway. It is a Bill of some importance, although, after I have explained the reasons actuating the Government in presenting it, members will recognise that it is not a matter requiring any great explanation. It may be urged that Parliament should be asked to authorise the construction of the whole line rather than this one section, and this course would have been adopted by the Government if we had received sufficient data to enable us to decide as to the exact route of the line between Fremantle and Merredin. That data is being obtained to-day. We have a survey of the route known as the Armadale route, and have sufficient data to enable the engineers to arrive at an estimate of the cost of that route; but the Government, being desirous of getting the fullest information on this important question, on a matter that is going to cost a considerable amount of money to the State, gave the engineers instructions also to investigate a route known as the Swan Valley route. That is being investigated to-day, but we have not yet received any official notification, and the Engineer-in-Chief is not yet in the position to supply sufficient data to enable us to arrive at a conclusion as to which route will be in the best interests of the State. Therefore, we have been obliged to introduce this measure without being able to supply that information.

Mr. George: Have you finished the survey of the Armadale route?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not in the position to say that it is actually finished because the line, as surveyed, is represented to be very expensive, and an effort is being made now to see whether a less expensive proposition can be carried out by going through the Swan Valley. If, however, we find that the Swan Valley route is not a great deal superior to that which is known as the Armadale route, it has been represented to me, as Minister, that a still better route can be got across the Swan Valley at a point runnig out from Beenup. I submitted that to the Engineer-in-Chief, with instructions to have it investigated, so that we might be in the position to give Parliament the fullest information.

Mr. George: You can make no mistake there; you can get through it cheaply and well.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will be investigated. Hon. members will be interested to know why the Government are presenting this measure seeing that we are not in the position to give full information in regard to the whole matter. The Government have been influenced by a desire to conserve the funds of the State. It has been found that to carry out our obligations to the Federal Government in connection with the carriage of material to enable them to get on with their portion of the line, it will be necessary for us to carry over the State lines about 250,000 tons of material. To carry that quantity over the lines as they exist to-day would seriously interfere with the State traffic. As a matter of fact, to endeavour to do it, as we are situated at the present time, would almost mean the suspension of the conveyance of State traffic at certain times of the year. To make it possible to cope with the increased tonnage I have referred to over the existing lines, it would be necessary to put in a considerable number of sidings. These would be purely temporary and their removal would be necessary after we had carried the material and started to construct the Transcontinental railway. Realising this, the Government requested the Engineer-in-Chief and the Engineer for Existing Lines to go into the question and submit a report conveying expert advice as to the best means that should be adopted for handling that traffic. These gentlemen advised the construction of a line running alongside the existing line. The proposal briefly is that we should set to work on that portion of the line that we know will be a permanent part of the Transcontinental railway, to get a one in eighty grade and that we should carry out our earthworks on that grade. Then, the advice was that we should lay sleepers to carry the 4ft. 8½in. gauge, long enough

and in size up to the standard required for the Transcontinental railway, and lay on those sleepers the 80lb. rails which will be required in connection with the permanent line, but that we should lay those 80lb. rails to a gauge of 3ft. 6in. I hope hon. members follow me. These 80lb. rails, which are ultimately to be used for the Transcontinental railway, will be laid on the permanent sleepers, only, however, on a 3ft. 6in. gauge, and afterwards one rail will be moved out the required distance to make the line 4ft. 8½in. This will obviate a good deal of expenditure on the construction of temporary sidings.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You will, of course, use the new line to carry the traffic.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the object, to carry the 250,000 tons of material for the construction of the Federal portion of the Transcontinental railway. The earthworks for this particular portion can be put in hand at once. Sleepers can be cut at the State sawmill or hewn by hewers in the employ of the Government. The rails of 80lbs. have practically been ordered at the present time. I might point out that the Government had on order with a firm in the old country 250 miles of 60lb. rails. These rails were intended for use in connection with relaying purposes, but representations were made and we found that by altering that order from 60lb. to 80lb. rails we could get them run immediately, at an increased price of 12s. 6d. per ton. The Government decided to change the order, and the 80lb. rails can be supplied almost immediately. We are thus placed in the happy position of being able to get the 80lb. rails in the State and practically laid before the Transcontinental railway material starts to land. The result of course will be that we will have the line ready to convey that material when it arrives.

Mr. George: The increased amount is a very good premium?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member may not be aware that there has been a big increase in the price of rails, and he must know also that there is a big difference between running the 60lb. and the 80lb. rails. The advisers of the Government consider the price a fair one. It will be seen that by immediately constructing this part of the line we will also save the cost of temporary crossings. It is estimated that we would have required 10 or 12 crossings between Merredin and Coolgardie to cope with the increased traffic. Then we save the delay on those crossings. Hon. members will know that it is not possible to run all trains to time, and while the trains are regulated to be at certain crossings at a particular time, it is not always possible to do that. Then, in addition, where it is necessary to have crossings, we are compelled to have attendants; in that way also another saving will be effected. Another big question is that the return of the rolling stock that will be used for the carriage of this material, will be expedited, with the result that we shall not require quite such a quantity as otherwise would be the case were we compelled to trust to the crossings I have referred to. I am prepared to admit that there is a little cost that has to be set against the savings I have mentioned, and that will be the connecting-up cost by the duplication of the line. Then, of course, there will be the cost of removing one rail when we are widening the gauge from 3ft. 6in. to 4ft. 8½in., but that cost will be small compared to the huge saving that will be effected by not being compelled to construct the sidings. The Bill only provides for the construction of the line from Merredin to Coolgardie. Members may ask why not Kalgoorlie. The explanation is that already we have a double line between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie and that, of course, will carry the traffic, and it is anticipated that ultimately, when we want to connect up the Transcontinental railway, one of those lines can be utilised. If it is found that we can get a suitable grade, and that it is in the best interests of the State to adopt what is known as the Swan Valley route, one of the first things the Government will have to do will be to ask authority to construct a portion of the line

from East Northam to Merredin, because there will be a great difficulty in carrying the traffic over that portion; but as a set-off against that, there is a possibility of the Government being able to utilise the line from Collie to Merredin—or it will be better known to members as the Wickepin-Merredin line—for the carriage of sleepers. That will relieve our traffic somewhat between East Northam and Merredin. Our advisers inform us that if it is ultimately decided to adopt the Swan Valley route they would prefer to go on with that section so as to relieve the traffic on that portion of the line. The estimated cost of this section is £434,941 for construction, and £241,140 for rails and fastenings, a total of £676,081. The Bill provides for a 10-mile deviation, but when it was first presented to the Government the point was raised as to whether it was necessary to provide for such a deviation. Of course the engineers are always anxious to be on the right side.

Mr. Monger: Have they ever exceeded the deviation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On one occasion I think they got outside the deviation. I may explain that in going into the matter in detail with the Engineer-in-Chief to-day, I was informed by that officer that he is almost sure that the 10-mile deviation will not be necessary and that he is confident that no deviation will go beyond five miles. In any case it is contemplated that the principal portion of the deviation will be made on the goldfields section of this particular line. I explain this because hon. members may wonder why a deviation is necessary, when we are asking for authority to run parallel and close to the existing line. The explanation of the engineers is that to get a one in eighty grade it will be cheaper to go round rather than to get through on the existing line. There is also the usual provision in the Bill for the resumption of land, and again it is not anticipated that this will be put into operation to any great extent, because the deviations will take place mainly where Crown lands are. Therefore, while the provisions are contained in the Bill, I do not anticipate that the deviations will be anything like 10 miles, and I question whether they will even be 5 miles, while, with regard to the land resumption, I doubt whether there will be any for the reason I have stated. It is intended that this portion of the line shall be placed in the hands of the Working Railways Department to construct, the reason being that the Working Railways can operate this portion more conveniently than could the Public Works Department. In other words, it would be somewhat difficult to construct a line close to and parallel with an existing line, and have two departments interfering with one another in an attempt to work the two lines. Therefore it is proposed to place the work in the hands of the Working Railways Department with a view to getting better results than could be hoped for if the work were given to another department.

Mr. Monger: I am glad you admit for once that your department is not able to cope with it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not said that. I think it should appeal to any intelligent member that the Public Works Department would have great difficulty in constructing a line so close to another line operated by the Working Railways, without in some ways interfering with the latter department. On the other hand the Working Railways Department can do this construction work without in any way interfering with the operation of the existing lines.

Mr. George: Are they going to make it from Merredin to Coolgardie?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Of course it is not intended to place the deviation in the hands of the Working Railways Department. That will be constructed by the Public Works Department. As I have said, it is anticipated that the greater portion of this line will be constructed in time to carry the material for the Trans-Australian railway. Even if the line be not actually completed, we will be able to carry that material over the first section completed and make connection with the existing line; then, when we get another section

completed, we will be able to couple up; and so on, until we shall be running the full length on the line. But if Parliament expedites the passage of the Bill, we will be able to have the line ready for the carriage of the material throughout. Hon. members may ask why we are called upon to construct this line, why we should not leave its construction to the Federal Government. Without wishing to go deeply into that question, I would point out that Sir Walter James, when Premier of the State, in 1903 passed a Bill through Parliament guaranteeing to construct a line from Kanowna, or some other point on the existing line, to Fremantle. It is true that Bill specified that in the event of the Transcontinental Railway Bill *not* being passed by the Federal Government within a period of five years the State Bill would lapse. Eventually the Bill did lapse, but succeeding Governments gave definite assurances that immediately the Federal Government should demonstrate their willingness to start the construction of the line from the Western Australian border to some point on the existing line the Bill would be re-introduced. Time and time again assurances have been given that the people of Western Australia would honour the promise given by Sir Walter James when he introduced the Bill in 1903. I do not think it is necessary that I should give any further information; in fact I doubt whether I could do so. The Bill is introduced for the purpose of trying to do something permanent instead of going into a huge expenditure on purely temporary works. We want to utilise this line for the carriage of material, which we have guaranteed to carry, for the construction of the Federal Government's portion of the Trans-Australian railway. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I beg to move—

That the debate be adjourned.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In explanation let me say I pointed out that we desire to get the Bill through at the earliest possible moment. While the Government will not object to an adjournment, I may say we would like hon. members to be ready to go on to-morrow.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We have no desire to delay the measure, but it is of considerable importance, and we would like an adjournment till to-morrow.

Motion put and passed.

BILL—ACCOUNTANCY.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) in moving the second reading said: The Bill which I propose to submit to hon. members is the result of a deputation introduced by the member for Perth, and consisting of gentlemen carrying on the work of public accountants in Perth. I informed that deputation that I was in sympathy with their desire to regulate the practice of accountancy in the State with certain restrictions, and, in keeping with that promise, the Bill is now presented for the consideration of hon. members. At the present time there are no means of assuring to any person who desires his books to be audited, or the assistance of an accountant on any occasion, that he will get a duly qualified person to undertake the work. I hold that if duly qualified accountants were procurable by business men quite a number of these business men would be saved from the bankruptcy court. For that reason I hope the House will agree to pass the measure.

Mr. Heitmann: There is an examination in accountancy at the present time.

The PREMIER: But it is not compulsory for any person who practises accountancy to pass that examination.

Mr. Underwood: What are they examined in, anyhow; French and German, and the classics?

The PREMIER: The examination is to be prepared by the council, or by the society, and the hon. member will discover that the regulations which are to be made under the Act by the society must be submitted for the approval of the Governor-in-Council. Thus we are protected against regulations which may prove to be harsh, or which may be in-

troduced for the purpose of making the society a restricted body. The Bill is somewhat modified as compared with the suggestions of the deputation who, as a matter of fact, submitted a draft measure for our consideration. I am afraid the accountants whose ideas were expressed in that draft will not be satisfied with the Bill, which considerably modifies certain proposed provisions which would have made of the society a closely restricted corporation. Indeed, they desired to surround accountancy with the restrictions applying to those gentlemen who appear in the courts of the land. They wanted to make the accountants' society just as restricted as is the legal profession. Whether or not it is desirable that the legal profession should be as closely restricted as it is I am not just now prepared to debate; but I hold the opinion that there is no comparison between the accountant and the legal practitioner. While it is necessary that we should have qualified accountants in order that business men might have their accounts kept in proper order, the services of the accountant are not of the same degree of importance as they would be if he had to appear in the Supreme Court and defend a person from a charge which might cost that person his life. It is essential that a legal practitioner should be duly qualified, and that we should have sufficient statutory powers to prohibit any but duly qualified persons from so appearing.

Mr. George: You are going to make this society a close corporation under the Bill.

The PREMIER: The Bill will be placed in the hands of members to deal with as they think fit. It is not to be regarded as a party measure in any sense of the term. Hon. members on both sides will have free scope to deal with the Bill as seems to them best. I have kept faith with the accountants by introducing the measure. The only promise I gave was that a Bill should be submitted protecting tradesmen and others against persons who pretended to be accountants and who eventually landed their clients in the insolvency court. It will be noticed that the Bill is made retrospective to the 23rd November last, the date on which the deputation waited upon me, and on which the matter became public. This has been done to provide against the possibility of unqualified persons having, since that date, joined one or other of the three societies operating in the State, with a view to being registered under the Act. I promised the deputation that we would make the Bill retrospective. It is intended to regulate the practice of accountancy in Western Australia and, with certain exceptions, to restrict it to persons who shall obtain registration under the Act. The Bill provides for the formation of a society of registered accountants. The society will be incorporated, and will have power to acquire property. But it is provided that such property shall not be divisible among the individual members, but shall be used solely for promoting the objects of the measure. The members of the society will not be under personal liabilities except so far as they have property of the society in their hands. The society will be governed by a council. The first council will be appointed under the provisions of this measure, the names of the council being shown in the first schedule. They are those of accountants in the public service, and public accountants practising in the State at the present time. This council is not constituted just as desired by the society which waited on me as a deputation. They submitted certain names, some of which we have agreed to, while others we have rejected. The council will be made up of properly qualified accountants and persons prepared to do justice in accordance with the provisions of the measure. The council are required to meet regularly. The first council will retain office for only six months after the commencement of the Act. Subsequent councils will be elected annually by members of the society in general meeting. In the council will be vested the general powers of the society, except such as are expressly required by the Bill to be given to the general meeting. The council have power

to appoint a secretary and other officers, but it should be noted that the appointment of a registrar will lie with the Governor-in-Council. In their draft measure the deputation provided that the registrar should be the secretary of their society. In fact, no mention whatever was made of a secretary; that officer was called the registrar, and was empowered to keep the register and to charge a fee for registration. It was removing the control from the Government and placing it in the hands of the society, who was to appoint the registrar and collect all the fees. We have not agreed to that. We contend that the register should be kept by a registrar who should be a Government officer appointed by the Governor-in-Council, and that the registration fee should be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. This is, of course, a departure from the suggestion of the deputation, but, as I have already explained, it was thought desirable that the official should be appointed by the Governor. The council will have the power of deciding whether a person has made out his claim to be registered in accordance with the provisions of the Act, or when an offending registered accountant should be struck off the register for misconduct or incompetency, but their decision will be subject to review by a judge of the Supreme Court. A copy of the register will be published annually in the *Government Gazette* for the information of the general public, and no person will be entitled to be registered unless he satisfies the council that he has attained the age of 18 years and is of good fame and character. The proposal of the society was that the age should be 21 years. but I hold that if a person shows that he has the qualifications when he reaches the age of 18 years, the fact of his youth should not debar him from practising his profession. Therefore, we thought it advisable to substitute 18 years for 21 years as proposed by the deputation. For six months after the commencement of the Act any person who was on the 23rd November last—that was the date of the deputation—a member of one of the societies mentioned in the Second Schedule, or who had at the commencement of the Act, been practising for five years as a public accountant, or is the chief accountant attached to any department in the service of the State, will be entitled to be registered under this Act.

Mr. Dwyer: Why not an accountant of a bank?

The PREMIER: The hon. member will have an opportunity later on of giving reasons why bank accountants should be included. The societies did not recommend that the chief accountants attached to public departments should be registered, but I am of opinion that a person who is qualified to fill the position of chief accountant in one of the departments of the State should be qualified for registration under this measure. It must be remembered that many of the members of the societies mentioned in the Schedule have not passed any examination whatever, but have been admitted as members, and as such, will be registered accountants and entitled to a certificate that they are duly qualified to carry on operations as public accountants.

Mr. McDowall: You will have no objection to altering the date?

The PREMIER: If a majority of the House decide that the date should be altered and made earlier or later, I will have no objection.

Mr. McDowall: You will have a great deal of difficulty if you adhere to the date in the Bill.

The PREMIER: It is very difficult to fix any date that will give satisfaction to everybody.

Mr. McDowall: Why not the date of the introduction of this Bill?

The PREMIER: Publicity having been given to the fact that the Government intended to introduce this Bill, that would induce a number of persons to become members of these societies in order to secure registration without examination.

Mr. Thomas: They could only become members on the same conditions as the others.

Mr. McDowall: Yes, they have to be accepted by the societies.

The PREMIER: I am not going to say that the fate of the Bill will hang on the

question as to the date of admission without examination, but I would respectfully point out that one society did not cause any of its members to pass any examination, and it would be possible for that society to admit any person who applied since the 23rd November without inquiring as to his qualifications at all. I do not say that that is so, but it is possible.

Mr. McDowall: That is true of the initiation of all societies.

The PREMIER: I am not so much concerned about what will happen at the commencement of this Act, but I am satisfied that the unsatisfactory state of affairs which exists at the present time should come to an end as early as possible, and that a person who is practising as a public accountant should have some certificate of competency.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Have you many instances to the contrary?

The PREMIER: I may inform the hon. member that I have not made too many inquiries lest I should receive a shock.

Mr. Gill: Who made the request for the Bill, the business people or the accountants?

The PREMIER: The request came from both parties. Amongst the societies mentioned in the Second Schedule will be found the Society of Public Accountants and Auditors of Western Australia, Incorporated. The name of that society was not originally submitted by the deputation, but as it was incorporated before the date of the deputation I hold that it is entitled to inclusion with the other societies. I also desire it to be clearly understood that a person need not necessarily be a member of one of those societies. If he has been practising as a public accountant for five years before the passing of this Bill, he will obtain registration just in the same way, as, when we first introduced a Bill for the certification of engine drivers, we provided that members must get a certificate of service. If a man had been carrying on operations in his particular trade or calling for a number of years we gave him a certificate of service which was of the same value as a certificate of competency. The same principle will apply in regard to the accountant, and any man who has been practising accountancy for five years prior to the passing of this measure will be entitled to registration without being a member of any one of these societies. I wish to draw particular attention to the definition of "public accountant" for the purposes of Clause 27, which provides for registration within a period of six months after this measure is passed. If members will turn to Subclause 2 of Clause 27 they will find that it reads—

> "Public accountant" means a person who habitually performs accountancy work for reward as his sole or main means of livelihood, and for the purpose of such work keeps as principal (either solely or in partnership with any other person) an office or place of business; but no person shall be deemed to have been practising as a public accountant who has been practising merely or mainly as a servant or clerk of another person.

I want to admit at once that that subclause as at present worded will exclude a number of persons who are carrying on accountancy business, but have no office or place of business. They carry on their work by moving from place to place or firm to firm and have no necessity for maintaining an office. When we reach the Committee stage members can decide whether we should modify that provision somewhat, and permit the registration of any person who can produce evidence that he has been carrying on accountancy work for five years, thus placing him on the same footing as those who were members of these societies before the 23rd November. Personally I hold that there is a possibility of abuse arising from any modification of that subclause, but I will leave the final decision of the point entirely in the hands of the Committee. It will be observed that it is left to the society in general meeting to prescribe the societies or institutes, membership in which shall qualify for registration. That means that we will not compel a person who is a member of an institute in some other

part of the Commonwealth or the British dominions to undergo an examination here if the society of which he is a member is one prescribed under this measure. We desire to reciprocate in this matter as we do in a number of others. Therefore, it is left with the society to prescribe the societies, membership of which is a qualification for registration, and it also rests with the society to fix the qualifying examination, but a restriction not suggested by the deputation has been placed upon the powers of the society under this clause, for they are to be prohibited from prescribing that any local society may qualify a person for registration by simply admitting him to their ranks. In other words, they cannot permit a member to join the society after this Bill is passed and by virtue of that become registered. In addition to the above qualifications, it must be noted that under Clause 25 the members of the first council become what may be called the foundation members of the society. The names of the members of the first council are not precisely those suggested by the deputation; they have been altered considerably, but it will be admitted, I think, that the gentlemen selected are fully qualified for the position. A registered accountant is empowered to sue for fees, provided he has first taken out a certificate, for which one guinea will be charged. That fee will be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and will be in addition to the fee for registration which will be fixed by proclamation. I have left this point open so as to get an expression in Committee as to what should be a fair fee for the registration of an accountant. An unregistered accountant will not be entitled to sue for any fee. That is a restriction that will assist materially the qualified accountant to carry on his work successfully in competition with the unregistered accountant, because the latter cannot sue for his fees, and, therefore, a dissatisfied person can refuse to pay them. General meetings of the society will be held at regular intervals, and special meetings may be called by the council or on a requisition of one-fifth of the members of the society, as occasion demands. The council are called upon to submit accounts regularly to the society, but the most important function of the society in general meeting is the making of regulations with the consent of the Governor-in-Council. I want it to be clearly understood that the regulations can have no force until they are approved by the Governor-in-Council, and thus we have some check on what may be prescribed by the society. By this power they will be enabled to prescribe rules of far-reaching effect, for they can order that candidates for registration must produce evidence of having had practical experience in accountancy. They may also provide for the classification of registered accountants, and give a definite name to each class. They may further prescribe the scale of fees to be paid to the society by members.

Mr. Underwood: Are these not limited?

The PREMIER: Yes, by regulation which the Governor-in-Council must approve. They may also suspend from the privilege of registration any person who makes default in payment of such fees. Further, they have, as already indicated, the power of prescribing and regulating examinations in accountancy and auditing, and in other branches of knowledge which may be declared by regulation to be incidental or helpful to a competent knowledge of accountancy and auditing. It is further provided that they may by regulation prescribe the manner of making and dealing with complaints against registered accountants alleged to have been convicted of crime or misdemeanour since the registration, or to be incompetent, or to be guilty of misconduct as accountants. Until the first general meeting the power of the society with reference to making regulations is vested in the council with the consent of the Governor. After the first general meeting no regulations can be passed unless two-thirds of the members present concur, but to this I have added an important proviso which was not suggested by the society and that is that one-fifth of the members of the society—that is in all parts of the State—may within 14 days after the passing or rejection of

any proposed regulation require such regulation to be submitted to a poll of all members of the society, and, if on such submission it is approved by a majority of the registered accountants voting on the question, it is taken to be passed, otherwise it is deemed to be rejected. This proviso was not suggested by the deputation. The reason for it is, if the society were able to agree to or reject any proposed regulation, we would be handing over the control to the accountants of Perth, because other accountants could not attend the meetings to vote upon such questions. So the Bill now provides that one-fifth of the members may ask for a poll and the whole of the members of the society throughout the State must then be consulted before finally adopting or rejecting any proposed regulation. The provisions of the Bill with regard to offences are very important. No person who is not a registered accountant will be allowed to perform accountancy work for reward with certain exceptions. I want members to note particularly the exceptions which are somewhat different from those suggested by the society. They are provided in Clause 44 and comprise any public officer or paid clerk or servant of a local authority acting in the discharge of his official duty, or any auditor elected under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, or the Roads Act, 1911, in the exercise of his office, or any paid clerk or servant continuously employed in keeping or auditing the books of his employer. The deputation did not suggest in their draft Bill that we should exempt the paid clerk of a society or association, but the Government are of opinion that it is not desirable to compel societies or small associations to have a public accountant to audit their books. The whole of the revenue of such a society or association may not be more than a few pounds a year, and it would be a hardship if they had to pay one-half of their revenue for auditing. They are exempted from the operations of this measure. Another exception is any banker or trader keeping his customers' accounts in the books of such banker or trader. As the member for Perth will see, we do not call upon the banker to first of all see that his account has passed an examination. The other exception is any paid or apprenticed clerk or servant of a registered accountant acting on behalf of his employer. The word "master" was included, but we do not like that, so we omitted it and put "employer." A further exemption not suggested by the society has been made, and that is, that any part of the State may by proclamation be exempted from the operation of the measure. I think there are only one or two centres to which it should be applied at once. such as Perth and the metropolitan area, and perhaps the Kalgoorlie and Boulder districts. In other small places it is not desirable or necessary that this Bill should operate. The definition of accountancy work is somewhat wide, and therefore this prohibition will be somewhat far-reaching. Clause 45 provides stringent regulations applicable to registered accountants. These may appear somewhat strict, but they are really not so strict as those proposed by the deputation. They have been considerably modified. Provision is made in Clauses 46 and 47 to prevent unqualified persons from holding themselves out or advertising themselves as registered accountants, but Clause 47 contains an equitable proviso which exempts from penalty any newspaper which innocently publishes any advertisement contrary to the Bill. It is not intended that the Bill shall come into effect at once, but on a date to be fixed by proclamation, and, unless the Bill is passed early, it will be necessary to alter the date provided in Clauses 44 and 46, which stipulate the end of 1912. That, however, is not a very vital point. The Governor is empowered by proclamation to exempt any portion of the State from the operation of the measure for such time as he thinks fit. This would not mean that a certain portion of the State thus exempted would be excluded for all time, as, by future proclamation, it can be brought under the operations of the measure. It is only in very far-distant places that it is desirable the measure should not apply.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Would other professions have the same right to claim a Bill?

The PREMIER: They would, and as a matter of fact, architects have asked.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Would the so-called labourer have a chance?

Mr. Gill: What about loco. drivers?

The PREMIER: That suggestion is not one from the hon. member's point of view, because loco. drivers are perhaps subject to more restriction than any other employee in the State. A man cannot become a loco. driver unless he joins the service as a cleaner and works his way up and passes an examination to show his qualifications. We are not handing over to this society any powers which are not subject to control by the Governor-in-Council.

Mr. George: I cannot understand it at all.

The PREMIER: I stated at the outset that the reason the Bill is being introduced is because it was requested by persons carrying on the business of public accountancy, principally in Perth.

Mr. George: If any other body asked you would you introduce a similar Bill?

The PREMIER: Personally, I hold the view that any person who claims to audit a business man's books and show him the state of his business, which is one of the essentials to carrying on successfully, should be able to produce qualifications, and it is not asking too much to require that such a man should pass a proper examination. I hope the House will see the wisdom of allowing this Bill to reach the Committee stage and then these points raised by members can be thrashed out, and the Committee can consider whether these questions will be in the best interests of the State as a whole. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—PEARLING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed fro mthe 8th August.

Mr. McDONALD (Gascoyne): I welcome this Bill, seeing it aims at putting the great pearling industry on a proper footing by consolidating nine previous Acts, and also aims at bringing to the coffers of the State an increased revenue. The Bill for general purposes may be divided into two parts—one part dealing with that area known as the Shark Bay area, and the other dealing with that portion which lies between the entrance to Shark Bay and the northern boundary of this State. At one time the district of Gascoyne had the honour of claiming in its boundary some portion of the area which may be known as the north-western pearl shell area, in so far that its northern boundary extended to Onslow. Owing, however, to some manœuvres which occurred in the last Parliament, known sometimes as gerrymandering, the northern boundary of that constituency was brought in a southerly direction towards the tropic of Capricorn. While I welcome this Bill, and while I want to see the great pearling industry of Western Australia increase, still, parochial as it may seem, it is only that portion of the measure dealing with the issue of permits and licenses to the Shark Bay fishers with which I wish to deal. The member for Roebourne was guilty of a slight error when he stated that the value of the pearl shell raised at Shark Bay sometimes went as low as £40 per ton. The real fact of the matter is, the average for the Shark Bay shell has been considerably under £14 per ton. This industry was established as early as 1873, but at that time Europeans and Asiatics without restriction worked the banks in Shark Bay. That was deemed unsatisfactory by the Europeans working there, and legislation was introduced in 1886 to make an alteration in that direction. I will quote from a report which was made by Mr. Foss, the resident magistrate at Carnarvon in 1890, dealing with the need for improved legislation. He said—

> It will be within the knowledge of His Excellency the Administrator that prior to 1886 these banks were worked without restriction by Asiatics as well as Europeans. Seeing that for many reasons the unrestricted working of the

banks by the Asiatics was injurious to the interests of the Europeans engaged in the fishery, steps were taken to represent to the Colonial Government the injury that was being done.

The whole area, comprising Shark Bay fishing area, was leased to an association of which three men were the representatives—Messrs. Butcher, Graham, and Higham. The revenue derived from them in the first year amounted to £1,000. Owing, however, to representations made to the Government, the sum was reduced to £800. I want to draw attention to the fact that in the early eighties, although the whole of the pearl shell industry of Western Australia was practically confined to this small area, the revenue amounted to £800. Last year, although the value of pearls and pearl shell sold amounted to over £300,000, the revenue derived amounted to only £840. Apart from that, I would draw attention to the fact that the value obtained in 1890 included 1,000 ounces of pearls valued at £12 per ounce and 1,000 tons of pearl shell valued at £15 per ton on the average, showing therefore that I am in accord with the member for Roebourne in his proposal that a royalty should be charged on all pearl shell gained from the territorial waters of Western Australia, north of the tropic of Capricorn, the latter on account of the enormous difference in the value of pearl shell obtained from the two areas. The Bill is welcome on account of the good work it promises to do for the pearl fishing industry of Western Australia, but there are certain amendments which must be made before it becomes suitable for those engaged in the industry in that portion of Western Australia that I represent. Exclusive and general licenses were granted when the Government, on the report of Mr. Foss, took over the control of the Shark Bay portion of the industry in 1890. They granted exclusive licenses whereby a man could obtain a certain quantity of the foreshore and banks, so that he might cultivate and be, on that account, entirely free from, I may say, the depredations of the ordinary man who might go in there. Having that license, one had an exclusive right to all the pearls and pearl shell obtained within his area, with a view to cultivation. In 1891 the then Attorney General, Mr. Burt, in his speech dealing with a Bill on the pearling question, asked that the Government should take a hand in the cultivation of pearls, and Mr. Saville Kent was loaned by the Queensland Government to the Government of this State so that he might report on the proper methods to be followed. Unfortunately, on looking through the records of the House, I can find no copy of this report, still I can say from my own experience that, no matter what the report may have been, nothing has been done, except by private enterprise, in the matter of cultivating pearl shell in Western Australia with the single and honourable exception of the efforts of Mr. Haynes at Montebello. I suggest that the Government, not only in the area known to contain pearl shell now, but in other areas where the bottoms may be considered suitable, should at once take in hand the proper cultivation of shells. We have at present exclusive licenses, according to the speech of the Minister for Works, covering an area of 16,000 acres. Dividing this area by the number who hold exclusive licenses, we find that the average is something under 240 acres. Notwithstanding that, we find that this Bill follows in the footsteps of the measures that precede it, and allows the holder of an exclusive license to take not more than six square miles, which means an area of 3,840 acres. In other words, one man can have the exclusive right to 3,840 acres, which I maintain is too large an acreage to be held under one license in such a valuable area as a pearl fishing area. Furthermore, this Bill suggests that, although the period of an exclusive license is fourteen years, for the payment of a slight fee the license may be renewed twice or even three times, the Government having the right of assessment. This, however, under slight conditions gives one man, or one firm, the opportunity to hold these valuable bank, for something like 56 years. I maintain that the area that

one man may hold under an exclusive license should be considerably reduced below six square miles. Again, a general license is issued which allows a man at the picking-up or dredging season to work on banks thrown open to the public by the Government, but he has no exclusive right to those banks. I have asked on two or three occasions in the House that the license fee of £4 a year charged for a general license should be reduced. If a man may have for £1 an exclusive license to 100 acres, to ask him to pay £4 for a general license is asking him to pay more than he should in ordinary circumstances. Although the Bill proposes to remedy the anomaly, in wealthy Broome the license fee paid was £1 per annum, and I ask the Minister in charge of the Bill to consider in his wisdom the possibility, nay, the advisability, of reducing the fee for a general license at Shark Bay from £4 to a—the lowest reduction that I think would be fair should be at least 50 per cent.

The Minister for Works: I thought you were going to say "a shilling."

Mr. McDONALD: That would be as fair as £4. Notwithstanding the advantages given to exclusive license holders under the old Act, this Bill, unfortunately, while leaving the license fee of the general worker remain at £4, reduced the license fee for the exclusive man to 10s. It reduces the license fee of the exclusive holder by 50 per cent., while that of the ordinary general worker is allowed to remain at £4. Another matter I draw attention to is a question that was brought under the notice of the Minister for Works during his recent visit to the North-West, that is, as to the number of boats which may pearl on the general banks to the detriment of those holding general licenses. He promised to bring before the responsible Minister a suggestion that would lead to the reduction of the number of boats. Although a man may have 13 or 14, or three or four boats working on his own banks held under exclusive license, of his own free will, without any detriment and with no obstacles being placed in his way by the Government officer, he may remove the boats from his own banks and place them on the public banks. Therefore, I would ask, in considering this Bill, that the House should decree that not more than at least one boat should be taken from an exclusive licence bank to compete with the general workers on the public banks. I compliment the Minister on the clause in the Bill which provides that no Asiatic shall hold or have any shares in a boat. Another clause which deserves notice is that which restricts or regulates at least the carrying of firearms by Asiatics. We remember only a few weeks ago, as is quite common among Malays, one man ran amok in Shark Bay and two white men were shot dead and two others seriously wounded before he was in turn shot by the police. That may happen at any time; and though restriction is placed on Asiatics carrying firearms in boats, I would like to see the clause altered so that they should be restricted from carrying firearms in any pearling district. I want to ask how Clause 44 is to be interpreted. This clause reads—

> It shall be lawful for the Governor by an Order-in-Council published in the *Gazette* to close (except as against the holder of a previously existing general license) any portion of a pearl shell area.

The schedule of the Bill points out that these licenses shall run until the end of the year. If this clause is to be interpreted as it reads, it will be impossible to close any of the public banks until the end of the year. They are supposed to have a thoroughly competent inspector in Shark Bay, and it should be lawful for him or for the Governor-in-Council, on report from him, to at any time close any one of these banks when he deems they are denuded of shell. Now, coming back to the request of the member for Roebourne for a royalty, at a very low estimate the hon. member asks that £10 a ton should be charged on all pearl shell brought up out of the waters of Western Australia. When we were at Broome we heard that the average for each boat amounts to three and a-half tons. That would give an average of £35 for each

boat, and as there are 400 boats or thereabouts between Onslow and Wyndham that would give us something like £14,000. Compare that with the request of the member for Kimberley when speaking on the Address-in-reply last session, when he asked that a bonus of £25 should be granted to the pearlers of the North-West.

Mr. Male: For a certain purpose.

Mr. McDONALD: I quite understand the purpose. The Minister for Works, in the course of his speech, said that no boat could be used in pearling unless it held a license. That made me rather anxious, seeing that by the Act of 1886 boats in Shark Bay and those places were exempt from licenses; but on inquiry from the Inspector of Fisheries, I find that Clause 46 deals with it. It says that the holder of a general or exclusive license may employ ships; it only asks that these ships may be registered. I merely mention this to remove any misapprehension, because this clause may be misinterpreted.

The Minister for Works: Nevertheless, they must have a license—a general license, an exclusive license, or a ship's license.

Mr. McDONALD: The expression used by the Minister was "pearling license." There are two classes of pearling in Shark Bay, picking-up and dredging. They have different seasons. Dredging may occur at some fathoms, but picking-up takes place on the banks at very low tide. It has been asked that the inspector be notified that at certain times while the dredging season is on, the picking-up banks should be closed, and the dredging banks closed while the picking-up season is on. Most of these remarks will undoubtedly form the nucleus of amendments to the Bill when we meet it in Committee, and I suppose at that time we will have liberty and more time than we have at present to deal with them. However, as I said in the beginning, I welcome the Bill for the amount of good it is likely to do to the pearling industry, and I gladly support the second reading.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): In the first place I would like to thank the Minister who introduced this Bill for holding back the second reading until my return from England, so that I might have the opportunity of speaking on the second reading, more especially as I find it was impossible for the Bill to reach the pearlers of Broome so that they could have an opportunity of perusing it and wiring down or sending down their expressions of opinion thereon. I would also like to take this opportunity, as it is the first opportunity I have had, of thanking the Minister for Works and those members of Parliament who accompanied him on his recent visit to Broome. I greatly regret I was not there.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You were not invited.

Mr. MALE: Yes, I was invited. I regret I was not there to welcome the hon. members; but, knowing Broome and the North as I do, I feel quite sure the Minister and the members with him received a good reception, were shown all that could be seen, and were given every information it was possible to give them. We appreciate a visit of that kind, whether it be from members on the Ministerial side of the House, or on this side of the House, and we feel certain that if you can see for yourselves and see first hand what exists there, and gather information as far as possible first hand, the people of the North will derive some benefit, and I might say that we are looking forward to receiving benefits from the visit which the Minister for Works recently made. Respecting the Bill before us, I wish to congratulate the Minister on bringing in this consolidating measure. It wipes out a number of existing Acts under which we have worked in the past, and will bring the work of pearling under one Act. In looking through the measure it appears to me that there were two features which prompted the Minister to introduce it. The first was to consolidate the existing legislation and the second, to obtain a little more direct revenue from the industry. The first is a matter of utility, to which I think no one, and no pearler, will have the slightest objection. The second should be a matter of equity, or fair play, as

well as the ability on the part of the pearlers to pay. Naturally the pearlers, like the rest of the community, will object to any increased taxation, unless they at the same time can see that they are going to derive some benefit from it, or that the money will be spent in such a way that it will be for the benefit of the industry. Under those conditions I do not think they will object to a fair increase in revenue being obtained by the State. With regard to the drafting of the Bill, I find that one very serious change has been made, and that is in the matter of the engagement of crews. This I think, is almost, if not quite, the only important change which occurs in the Bill, as compared with existing legislation. Judging from the Minister's own words when introducing the Bill, I believe he has been actuated with every good intention in the matter, but he failed to realise, in including Part 3 in the Bill, that he has introduced something quite new to us. In his remarks, the Minister said somewhat as follows, that inconvenience had been experienced through there being no provision similar to that relating to discipline under the Merchant and Shipping Act for the government and control of the men on the luggers. This, as he pointed out, was now going to be rectified under the present Bill, and certain provisions in the Merchant and Shipping Act would be made to apply to luggers in the pearling industry, and the masters of the vessels would be given sole control over the crew, similar to the control exercised over a crew on a British ship. I would like to point out that the Minister was not quite correct in his remarks here, for under the Merchant and Shipping Application Act 1903, Part 2 of the Act of 1894, which is an Imperial Act was made to apply, and Part 2 of that Act deals very fully with the question of discipline and control of men, and the pearlers in the North have been working under that Act for many years without suffering any inconvenience whatever. On the contrary, they have found it a most satisfactory measure and have worked under it quite well. But now, by Clause 90 of the present Bill, the Minister deprives the pearlers of the privileges which they enjoy under the Merchant and Shipping Act, and substitutes Part 3 as we have it in the Bill, which is only the application of a portion of that which we at the present time enjoy. I would here like to make the remark that I intend to be as entirely parochial as the member for Gascoyne. He has directed his remarks solely to the position as it exists at Shark Bay, and I am going to direct my remarks entirely to the position as we find it in the North. I would like to point out that the two industries, in my opinion, are as distinct as we might say are wheat growing at Kellerberrin and sheep squatting in the North. There is very little in common between the two. At the present time the men employed in our industry are imported from Singapore, Koepang, or some other place outside the Commonwealth. Before leaving Singapore, or such other place, they have to sign an agreement which is almost similar to the agreement stipulated in Part 3 of the Bill, wherein the term of the agreement is set out, the capacity in which the man is engaged, the rate of pay to be received, how and when payable, and a clause is also inserted providing the minimum scale of rations which shall be given, and, I believe, that was inserted at the request of the authorities in Singapore, who wished to know before the men were leaving that when they were taken away they would be properly looked after. It is also stipulated in the agreement that on arrival at Broome or the port of destination, wherever it may be, the men as soon as they arrive will sign on the ship's articles as British seamen, according to the Merchant and Shipping Act, and that was inserted in the Singapore agreement, so that we might bring ourselves into line and in conformity with the Federal regulations. In this latter matter the shipping master, to a very great extent, works in conjunction with the Federal Immigration Officer, and in passing I would like to point out that the question of white or coloured labour does not in any way come within the scope of this Bill. The whole question of imported labour is entirely a

Federal matter, and, therefore, I shall not touch upon that aspect of it, but simply confine myself to the Bill before the House. I was pointing out that the shipping master works to a great extent in conjunction with the Federal authorities. Before a pearler is able to import a man from outside the Commonwealth it is necessary for him to obtain a permit to import, and this he has to do through the Federal authorities. A telegram is sent to Melbourne and on receipt of a reply to the effect that he is allowed to import, the importation proceeds. This permit to obtain men is only given to replace a crew whose time is expiring, or men who may have died. When the men arrive, unless you have this permit to engage, the shipping master will not sign the man on the ship's articles, and, further, at the expiration of the man's engagement, after he has been paid off at the shipping office, notification of this has to be given to the Federal immigration officer, so that he may see that the man is sent away from the country at the first possible opportunity. In Part 3 of the Bill I find there are clauses which set out the nature of an agreement which must be made, and the manner in which it shall be made. Cluase 77, Subclause 4 of the Bill reads "Every such agreement shall be deemed a contract of service within the meaning of the Masters and Servants' Act, 1892, and shall be enforceable accordingly." This clause was necessary because in Clause 90 a portion of the Merchant and Shipping Act 1894, which had been made to apply by our Application Act, has been cancelled in so far as such provisions, or any other provisions, of this Act apply, and the provisions so cancelled are those dealing with the forms and conditions of the agreement with the crew, and also with control and discipline of the crew. On looking further into this matter—and I might point out that I think the Minister mentioned in the course of his remarks that this part of the Bill was drafted in the time of the James Government—I find it is not entirely a new thing. I think what has apparently happened is that the department, not realising we were working under Part 2 of the Merchant and Shipping Act, have classed pearling boats as fishing boats, and Part 4 of the Merchant and Shipping Act applies only to those particular boats, but does not apply to the colonies or places abroad. In drafting Part 3 they have taken the form of agreement from Part 4 and then for the provisions respecting the payment of wages and discipline, resource has been had to Part 2 of the Act, and sections have been taken from it, as we find from the marginal notes in the Bill. If Part 3 be left as it is in the Bill, and I trust I shall be able to convince the Minister that it would be advisable for it not to be left in, it will then be necessary for me to compare the present Bill with the Merchant and Shipping Act to see if all the necessary clauses have been inserted. I would further point out to the Minister that if it is his intention to instruct magistrates at Broome and at other ports to carry out Part 3 of the measure, as provided for in Clause 77, Subclause 2, which reads, "The agreement shall be read over and explained to each pearl fisher in the presence of a magistrate or inspector"—I say if it is his intention to instruct the magistrates to carry out that portion of the Act, he will then have to provide the magistrate with an additional staff during what we call the lay up season, when the boats come in to lay up during the period of the willy willies. The magistrates' work during that portion of the year is exceedingly heavy, and I think I am correct in saying that Broome ranks second in the Commonwealth in shipping office work, that is in signing off and signing on of men. I believe Broome comes next to Sydney. I do not know whether that is actually the case now, but it was so not long ago. I should say that probably some 1,500 men sign on and off articles during the lay up season, and when it is remembered that the terms of their agreements, when signing on, have to be fully explained to the men, and in a majority of cases have to be interpreted to them, inasmuch as they have not a sufficient knowledge of English to understand, and also at the

paying off, accounts have to be examined by the shipping master and they have to be certified as it were by the men being paid off as being correct—when we consider what work has to be done, and the nature of the work I am sure the Minister will realise that it cannot be rushed or pushed through in a hurry; it has to be done carefully and properly.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MALE: Before tea I was explaining the nature of the work which was being done at the shipping office, and which would fall on the magistrate if those duties were placed upon him. At the present time the shipping office is provided with men accustomed to the work, and has a staff prepared to cope with it. I think it would be unwise on the part of the Minister, and very expensive, to make any change in this direction. Under the present conditions, any young men—I refer to white men—who are on ships' articles as mates, and who are desirous of obtaining their mate's certificates, can use the official discharge which is issued at the shipping office as evidence of service at sea. When they are applying to and going before the board to get their certificates, they have to produce evidence of certain services at sea as one of their qualifications. Under the Bill it would not be possible for the magistrate or the inspector to issue those official discharges, such as provided for by the Board of Trade. In view of the fact that the old arrangement has worked satisfactorily for many years, and that no time has been allowed for those interested to peruse the Bill; moreover, as in my opinion all parties are best controlled and protected under the Merchants' Shipping Act, it is my intention to ask the Minister to eliminate Part 3 of the Bill and allow the present conditions in respect to agreements to remain. I trust the Minister will agree with me in this matter, for I urge it in a desire to assist him to make this as good and workable a measure as possible. I notice the number of licenses has been increased by a general license and a divers' license. These licenses, it will be noticed, with the exception of the divers' licenses, can only be granted to natural-born or naturalised British subjects. No Asiatic, or naturalised Asiatic can hold a license under the Bill. Those are exactly the same conditions as exist at present. There is nothing new in them. There is a clause in the Bill providing that no Asiatic shall share in the profits of pearling or pearl dealing carried on under a license. That is not new. It was introduced at the request of the pearlers themselves in the form of a regulation issued on the 10th June, 1910, under which every pearler applying for a licence has to make a declaration to the effect that no Asiatic has any share or interest in the pearls or the shell obtained by the boat, nor is to be charged with any part of the working expenses of the boat, nor holds any interest directly or indirectly in the enterprise. Clause 3 of that regulation reads as follows:—

> These directions shall not prevent the renewal of any licence heretofore held by any Asiatic or African licensee so long as the licensing officer is satisfied that no person of Asiatic or African race other than the licensee has any share or interest aforesaid.

It would be absolutely unfair to deprive the few Asiatics who still hold licenses and have their capital invested in the industry of the right of getting their renewals. I do not think it is the intention of the Bill that any person shall be deprived of rights which he already holds. These people cannot increase the number of licences they hold, neither can they transfer to another Asiatic, and it is only a matter of time before they either go away or pass out. There are only a few of them left, and it would be unfair to deprive them of the right of renewal.

Mr. Underwood: Only a few Asiatics left?

Mr. MALE: Only a few who hold licenses. There are only two or three who have the right of renewal. They cannot increase in number nor can they transfer, and it would be obviously unfair to take away their right of renewal, a right which they have hitherto enjoyed.

It would be against all ideas of British justice.

Mr. Heitmann: It is said that hundreds of white men are dummying for Asiatics.

Mr. MALE: Under the Bill you can pounce on them.

Mr. Heitmann: I would like to hear your opinion on the practice of dummying.

Mr. MALE: I believe that years ago such a thing did exist. It is possible that a little of it still exists, but, I think, not much of it. It was for the purpose of putting down dummying that the pearlers themselves got this regulation gazetted on the 10th June, 1910.

Mr. Heitmann: Dummying is absolutely disallowed by the association?

Mr. MALE: Most certainly, and under the Act there is a penalty of £100 against any person caught dummying. Moreover, if the regulation continues in force, there will also be the penalty provided against the making of a false declaration. The man who signs that declaration does so with his eyes open, and if it be false he will be mulcted in a penalty of £100, which I do not think is a bit too much. Under the Bill ships' licenses are practically the same as those in existence at the present time, the principal difference being in the fee charged, which I find, according to the schedule, will be £5 as against the £1 charged to-day. In connection with this it will be noticed that all licenses granted under the Bill will start from the 1st January next, and that all licenses in existence will be rendered void as at the end of December. The licenses for the current year were, I believe, taken out on the 1st July. Therefore on the 31st December they will only have run for half a year. I think it will be a fair thing if the unused half be credited to the new licenses which will be issued for the next succeeding 12 months. Provided the Minister in his reply assures me that such is the intention, there will be no occasion to move an amendment in that regard. It is provided that the licenses of the boats shall be kept on board. In many cases this would be very inconvenient, while it could serve no useful purpose. The fact that a license is not on board the boat would occasion no inconvenience to the inspector, because he can always supply himself from the magistrate's book with a list of the licenses issued, or he can obtain the list from the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, who is supplied in Perth with duplicate copies. In Committee I shall move that this particular clause be struck out. I congratulate the Minister on the retention of provisions for the issue of licenses for exclusive areas throughout the pearling grounds. In respect to Shark Bay it is obviously necessary that this provision should be in the Bill. The industry at Shark Bay is quite distinct from that in the North, the fishing is quite different, the shell itself is of an entirely different class. It is obtained by dredging in shallow water, or by "picking up" as one hon. member described it, whereas in the North the shell can only be obtained by deep water diving with expensive apparatus. Although up to the present no success has been achieved, either on our coast or elsewhere, in respect to the cultivation of mother-of-pearl, still I believe that provision should be made in the Bill for the granting of exclusive areas, and the Government should give every assistance to any person or company willing to embark time, money and energy in an attempt to cultivate pearl shell. I would strongly advise the Government not to make any attempt whatever as regards our portion of the coast in the cultivation of shell, but to render every assistance to others who are willing to make the attempt. Even though it may be necessary in some measure to render financial assistance, I think it would be better than the Government attempting to do it themselves. Reference has been made by various member to the experiments that have been carried out at Montebello. Experiments have been conducted for very many years past and much money and labour have been spent, but I have yet to learn that any marketable shell has ever been raised or that any success has ever attended the venture. It is within my recollection that

many years ago a company took an exclusive lease of Beagle Bay for the same purpose. They imported a large quantity of red tiles from France, and had them placed in the shallow waters of the bay. They kept a vessel continually engaged, for a couple of years, I think, in getting the big mother-of-pearl shell outside and planting it in the bay, with the idea that the spat given out from the big shell would attach itself to the tiles, and that they would gradually work up a nice little plot of shell for themselves. But after the expenditure of a lot of money and time the venture had to be given up without any success attending it. Reference was made by the last speaker to Mr. Saville-Kent. This gentleman was engaged by a former Government to report on our fisheries, including the pearl shell fisheries, and amongst other work undertaken by him was the transplanting of big mother-of-pearl shell from the waters at Broome to Shark Bay. At the first attempt the shell was placed in a large tub on a steamer and Mr. Kent started with them for Shark Bay. The water in the tub was changed two or three times a day, but in spite of that the shell died long before they reached Shark Bay. Mr. Saville-Kent came back, and we obtained for him another lot of shell, and before taking that away he had a hose fixed on the steamer so that a continuous stream of water was running through the tub. The shell arrived at Shark Bay successfully, and were planted in the shell beds. Some of them lived for a considerable time, and there may be some living there yet. They did produce young shell, but strangely enough the young shell very quickly acquired the characteristics of the Shark Bay shell, and I think the longer they were left there the more they would acquire those characteristics. Still, either because the experiment was not sufficiently looked after, or for some other reason, I think I can safely say that that attempt has not produced any actual results. Also in connection with this matter, I may mention that in conjunction with Mr. Saville-Kent we did endeavour in a small way to see if it was possible to breed shell at Broome, not anticipating at all that we could do it from a commercial point of view. We found a suitable spot in the mangroves where a little water was left when the tide was out, and we had some jarrah cages made and covered them with wire netting. The big shell were placed inside and the cages were dropped into these pools. After being there for perhaps six months, I cannot say accurately, I noticed that a few young shell were starting to grow. The spat had attached itself to the rough jarrah frames, and perhaps some half-dozen were growing in that way. They were there for some time, but finally in the lay-up season were destroyed by the natives. To a certain extent that experiment did prove that it might be possible to cultivate pearl shell, but the fact stares us in the face that our northern coast line is entirely unsuited for this purpose. It is too open and too exposed, and in my opinion it is impossible to confine the spat. The coast-line is liable to heavy storms and willy-willies, and the rise and fall of tide are very excessive; and although I know the coast fairly well I cannot think of one place which is sufficiently protected so that we could safely plant shell there, and say that the spat would be confined, and that the young shell would not be washed back into the ocean.

Mr. Underwood: What about the Port Hedland creek?

Mr. MALE: It might be possible to do it there, but there is shell in that creek without cultivating it. Still, I would remind the hon. member that there is a tremendous tide there, and that the spot is also exposed to the storms that occur on the coast, and I fail to see how it would be possible to confine the spat within that area. Again, Mr. Clarke, whom I might class as the pearling king of Australia, has made an attempt at Thursday Island. Now it cannot be said that Mr. Clarke would start with ignorance or want of knowledge. He is one of the biggest, if not the biggest, growers of edible oysters in Australia. Therefore, in starting to try to cultivate the mother-of-pearl shell, he started with

some knowledge of the game. But after continuing the experiments for some time, he had to give up the venture without having achieved any success. Further, I would like to point out that the Sunlight Soap Company (Messrs. Lever Bros.) engaged the services of Mr. Saville-Kent with the idea that he might transplant shell from Thursday Island to an island or islands they were occupying in the South Seas. He did start operations, but as with his previous operations, he had to give them up as unsuccessful. Therefore, with all these results before us, and with the knowledge that the northern portion of the coast is too exposed for these experiments, I would warn the Government not to start experiments themselves, but to render every assistance to any individuals or company who should come along and express their readiness to undertake the work. The fact of the Government having power to grant these exclusive areas —I am not referring to Shark Bay, but the other portion of the coast—as I read it does not imply that they shall give sole rights of good shelling ground to one individual, and I think there might be some little opposition on the part of members in regard to exclusive areas for that reason. They have the idea in their heads that the Government might have the power of granting exclusive rights to good shell-bearing portions of the sea to one individual, but if not actually expressed in the Bill, I certainly think it is implied that that is not the intention. The Bill only intends that these powers shall be given for the purpose of granting an exclusive area should any man be desirous of trying cultivation. The diver's licence is one which I have always advocated, for the reason that in my opinion it will give the pearlers better control over the divers; and, although the license as specified in the Bill carries with it no qualification as to the diver's ability at diving, yet, at the same time, I think that a clean license will be of material assistance to the diver when looking for another job. The clause referring to this license stipulates that no person shall dive for pearl or pearl shell without being the holder of a license, but I would suggest to the Minister that it is advisable that provision should be made for what we call "try" divers, probationers who are learning the occupation of diving. On a Saturday afternoon, or in other spare time, the diver assists them to go down so that they may gradually learn the work of diving, but under the Bill these men could not go down even to learn, without a license, and in that respect I think it would be wrong and misleading to issue licenses to men who were not divers. It would be quite easy for provision to be inserted, allowing the inspector or magistrate, as the case might be, to issue to these men permits, and as soon as they were efficient, or were given charge of a boat, and sent out as divers, they should be compelled to take out a proper diver's license. In regard to pearl dealer's licenses, the Pearl Dealers Licensing Act of 1899, which is embodied in this Bill, was a measure which tried in some small degree to control the buying and selling of pearls. We all realise that it is almost impossible to pass measures which will put down or stop what we call "snide" buying and selling of pearls. When we consider that a boat is sent out on the high seas for weeks and even months at a time, members will realise that the opportunities which men have for taking and concealing pearls are immense. The conditions are quite different from what they are in connection with gold stealing, because in mining the mine is confined within a limited area on shore, and it is possible to have only one approach to the mine, to search the men, and to make all sorts of protective restrictions, but with pearling the case is quite different, and we can only do the best we can.

Mr. Underwood: What about the pearl-buyers' league?

Mr. MALE: There is not one to my knowledge. This portion of the Bill only applies to that part of the State north of the 27th parallel, and prohibits the sale of pearls unless either the buyer or seller holds a license, and the transaction must take place at the registered place of business of the holder of the license.

Mr. Heitmann: That will not trouble them much.

Mr. MALE: Maybe not, but every little helps. I think the clause prohibiting certain persons from selling pearls is an excellent one. As the hon. member says, it may not do much good, but it will not do any harm, and it may do a little good. I think in connection with this matter another clause that might be useful would be the limiting of the hours of business to daylight. The work of snide buying of its nature is confined as much as possible to the dark, and I see no objection to a clause in the Bill that not only should business be done at the registered office of the company, but between the hours of 8 o'clock in the morning and say 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening. In connection with pearl selling, the member for Roebourne, in reply to a question, said he would advocate a most stringent regulation to prevent illicit dealing in pearls. He thought that the onus should be placed on the person in whose possession they were found to prove where he got them. For the information of that member, and for others interested in the pearling industry, I would like to point out that I introduced in 1907 a Bill for an Act to amend the Police Act Amendment Act of 1902. That was passed, and at the present time this very important provision suggested by the hon. member is law, and the onus of proof of the bona-fide ownership of a pearl lies with the man in possession of it. In putting this Bill through the House, all I did was to add after the word "gold" in the original measure, the words "or pearl." Therefore, at the present time, the law dealing with pearl stealing is identical with that dealing with gold stealing, and if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person has in his possession pearls which were stolen, he may be arrested, and the pearls may be taken, and it is for him to prove the bona-fide ownership of them and not for the person who has laid the information. I might mention that use has been made of this provision on several occasions. To give it more prominence, I would like to see this clause incorporated in the Bill, but I am given to understand that it would be somewhat cumbersome and difficult to do so, and as I am perfectly satisfied with the clause in the Police Act and know it is just as effective there, it is not a point I shall press. I have drawn attention to it so that members might know that that power exists, and that a little more prominence may be given to it. Part 4 of the Bill deals with the regulation of pearling operations, and on looking through it I find that it contains some new but very useful provisions. To carry out these regulations effectively, it will be necessary for the Minister to appoint inspectors. At present we have no inspectors in our northern fisheries. Amongst other things, the inspector will have power to examine the sails, boats, anchors, and other gear of the ship, and also to examine the diving gear, that is the dress, pump, and air-pipe and other gear which is used. As far as the majority of the pearlers are concerned, I do not know that this power is necessary, but I do believe that it is a power the Government should have. It will be a guarantee that all gear in use is of an approved quality, and has been properly tested and looked at before being put into use. Further, it will also give the divers an opportunity of having any doubtful gear examined by an inspector if they so wish. In connection with this matter I find there is a clause which makes it imperative on the pearler having the gear examined every six months. This will, in itself, necessitate the appointment of inspectors to carry out that portion of the measure. There is also a clause which allows an appeal; that is to say, if an inspector has inspected gear and said it is not fit to be used, the master, if he thinks is is fit to be used, can appeal against the decision of the inspector. But a slip—I think I might call it a slip—has been made in the provision inasmuch as it stipulates that the gear, tackle, or other article, shall be taken before the magistrate. The member for Roebourne will realise that it would be difficult, I might say almost impossible, to take the gear say from Cossack Creek to Roebourne or from Ash-

burton Roads to Onslow, and to make the provision effective it should be amended so that the magistrate might appoint a competent person to examine the gear if he is not prepared to do it himself. I am very pleased to find that a clause has been inserted for regulating the quantity of liquor which may be carried on the boats. Most of the pearlers have themselves learned the wisdom of regulating the quantity of liquor which shall be taken on board. Still, they have no power to regulate the quantity of liquor which may be taken on board someone else's boat, and for that purpose it is certainly advisable that the power should lie with the Government, as they can make it apply all round. There is also a provision under which the Government may prescribe the sizes of the pearl shell which may be raised. This again is a useful power for the Government to have, but at the present time it is not one that in my opinion requires to be put into force, and when put into force, the power must be exercised with a certain amount of knowledge and discretion. Knowing as we do that we have some 1,500 miles of shell-bearing coast and only about 300 boats working it, I do not think it is possible for those boats to deplete the beds to any great extent. We are shipping from Western Australia as much, and in fact more shell per year than was shipped a few years back, and to me it does not appear as if the beds were becoming exhausted. True, I will admit there are more boats fishing for shell, and I also admit that the average take per boat is less than it was a few years ago. But it must be remembered tht diving on our coast is limited to 20 fathoms of water. That is not the actual limit to which diving can be carried out, because at the present time, and for the last two years, diving has been carried out at Darnley Island, near Thursday Island, at a depth of 40 fathoms. But we have never on our coast fished for shell at a greater depth than 20 fathoms, or at the outside, 22 fathoms of water. Outside of that depth the shells are thriving and breeding, and the spat and the young shells are continually being brought into the shallower water and thus replenish it. The industry is a recuperative one, and, not like mining, one that is gradually exhausting its wealth.

Mr. Heitmann: It is supplying a commodity which can be done without.

Mr. MALE: That is so. In connection with the prescribing of a size for shell, I would like to point out that the shell is different on various parts of the coast. The shell which is procured on what we know as the Ninety-Mile Beach, is of a much smaller character than shell found on other portions of the coast. What would be a full-sized matured shell there might be a young shell in another part comparing size for size. Further, the pearlers themselves to a great extent assist in making it impossible for the young shell to be taken inasmuch as they do not pay the divers for the very immature shell. I am also pleased to find a clause in reference to the life-saving apparatus. This, I would point out, is already in existence as a regulation only, and I welcome its insertion in this Bill. The tale of the last few years is a sad one respecting the loss of life on our coast, and it is our duty to see that every precaution and safeguard are taken for the saving of life. There is another clause which I am pleased to see in the Bill, which I have advocated and to which attention was drawn by the member for Gascoyne, and that is the one which allows for regulations to prohibit the carrying of firearms by Asiatic pearl fishers. It is most desirable that the Government should have this power, and I fail to see any necessity or reason why Asiatics should be allowed to carry firearms on the ground.

Mr. Heitmann: That would come under the Police Act, would it not?

Mr. MALE: I do not think so, because I fancy it would have been put into force before, as I have previously called attention to it.

Mr. Heitmann: It should be.

Mr. MALE: Yes. Now, let me say a few words respecting the profits of pearling and the ability of pearlers to be further taxed. I find that a great deal of misconception exists as to the profits

which are made at pearling. It seems to me to be regarded as a kind of el dorado from which great fortunes are to be extracted with very little effort. I will try to set members right in the matter. Let it be borne in mind that at Broome the shelling is the industry, and not pearling. That shell is the true mother-of-pearl shell, from which buttons, knife-handles and many other articles of great beauty are manufactured. It is in no sense an article of necessity, but is absolutely one of luxury and fashion, and the price fluctuates accordingly.

Mr. Heitmann: According to the vanity of mankind.

Mr. MALE: At present, the price of shell is abnormally high. It is at what I call a fictitious value and to-day shell is fetching a higher price in Broome than I can ever remember it having brought before.

Mr. Heitmann: That is supply and demand.

Mr. MALE: It is more a question of fashion, though it is partly a question of supply and demand. In a wire received from Broome a few days ago I was advised that the buying price for shell packed is £292 a ton. That is equal to £285 a ton to the owner of the boat, but that is a price at which it cannot possibly stay for any length of time. It must be remembered that the price in July, only a few weeks ago, was £243 in Broome, and in April last it was only £222 per ton, therefore the price to-day of £285 per ton is by no means the average price per ton for the current year. The member for Roebourne quoted prices. He said that shell had realised as high as £375 a ton, but such figures are misleading, though it is true a little has been sold at that rate. On arrival in London all the shell is unpacked and sorted into many grades, some fetching as much as the hon. member mentioned; in fact I do not think it would be impossible for me to find that often it tops a higher price than that for a small quantity, but the greater quantity of the shell fetches considerably less, and a considerable quantity fetches very little over £100 a ton. But it would be obviously as unfair for me to make use of the lowest price as it is for the member for Roebourne to make use of the highest price. What we have to consider is the average price, and it is on that basis that the pearlers sell to the buyers. Again I would like to point out that even at the present Broome prices the buyer has to take the risk of the market, and it is often the case that he loses, though at the same time, I admit, sometimes he does not lose. To try to convince hon. members of the fallacy of the high price the member for Roebourne referred to, I have looked up my papers, and I have succeeded in finding a few useful figures. The average net price realised in London from 1891 to 1907, a matter of 17 years——

The Minister for Works: Net prices do not convey much.

Mr. MALE: They convey the price the pearlers receive.

The Minister for Works: You do not know what costs they are putting into them.

Mr. MALE: Yes, I do. This is our own shell. We know exactly. It is the price the shell was sold for in London, less the freight and selling charges at that end.

The Minister for Works: As soon as you start that, you never get reliable figures.

Mr. Gardiner: As a rule they are supplied for income tax purposes.

Mr. MALE: These are our own figures, my figures. I know them. I have got them from no one. They are the proceeds of our own shell sold in the open market in London.

Mr. Green: The open market does not show what the charges are.

Mr. MALE: The accounts show what the charges are. We know exactly what is paid to the broker, and the auctioneer, and to the steamship company for freight.

Mr. Green: But the public have no means of checking that.

Mr. MALE: If they doubt my word they are at liberty to do so. They are my own figures. I have not the actual net average price for the last four years,

though I can obtain the figures if necessary, but for the 17 years ending 1907 our average net price obtained in London per ton was £122 and seven-seventeenths, or, say, £122 10s. During the last four years I can safely say from memory that the average price is well under £200. Putting it down at £180, which is, I believe, a fair average, that gives the average net price for shell in London for the past 21 years as £133 10s. Can any sane man lead me to believe that the present price of shell is normal, or one that is likely to last, or even that the price mentioned by the member for Roebourne, £250 per ton, is a fair selling price, or a normal selling price? The hon. member has told us that the cost of running a boat is £500. He is not quite accurate there.

Mr. Gardiner: Those figures were taken from a small pearler's books, and include everything, insurance and all those things.

Mr. MALE: A man may be working a boat on an overdraft. Many men are working on overdrafts. The policy has been of late years to create as many small pearlers as possible. A man has been judged in most instances on his merits as far as possible, rather than on his pocket. A man there is every reason to believe is going to give a fair and square deal comes along with perhaps £200 in his pocket, and he purchases a boat for £500 or £600 as the case may be according to its value, and, over and above that, he has to be provided with money to procure his diver, his tender and his crew, and he has to be tuckered and licensed. He therefore starts with the handicap of a big overdraft on which he has to pay interest, and he has to keep his boat insured. He can only get insurance at 8 per cent. I have not the absolute figures to vouch for it—I am perfectly honest with hon. members—but in my opinion a man under these conditions cannot, with a 3½ tons per boat per annum output, fish shell successfully at £150 to £160 per ton.

Mr. Gardiner: Is it the interest on his loan that prevents it? It is not the working cost of the boat.

Mr. MALE: I am adding the interest to the working of the boat.

Mr. Gardiner: It is the usurer that gets it.

Mr. MALE: The man who will allow another with £200 to buy a boat and start in the industry canot be called a usurer. However, if we exclude loans, the figures of the hon. member are not so far out, but I wish to place the position plainly before hon. members. During the past few years, it has been the policy to assist in building up as many small pearlers as is possible, because it has been found that big fleets will not pay nearly as much in proportion as small fleets. A man with one or two boats gets a better return from his boats than it is possible to get from eight boats or over. I would point out that the cost of crew, taking the return passage into consideration, would work out at £2 10s. per month. We have to pay their return passage.

Mr. Gardiner: Most of that would come back through the agency of the slop chest.

Mr. MALE: Dealing with the slop chest, I would refer the hon. member to the Federal regulation.

Mr. Gardiner: It is most ineffective.

Mr. MALE: The Federal regulation in connection with the import of labour from outside the Commonwealth says that before forwarding any application from a person owning a schooner on which there is a slop chest, the officer has to make inquiry as to the prices charged for goods from such chest, and to state whether such charges exceed the prices charged at local stores for similar articles plus ten per cent., similar inquiries to be made periodically, and the result reported to the department so that the Minister may have an opportunity of considering whether he will decline to issue further permits or revoke those already granted. If the Federal immigration officer, on making inquiries, finds out that a man is charging his crew over ten per cent. above the shore prices, the Federal authorities have the power to refuse further permits, and to revoke those already issued. I do not think it is likely that many pearlers will run the risk of losing

their permits and losing the chances of livelihood. The Federal Government have taken this matter up, and that regulation has been in existence for some considerable time. Again, in regard to the slop chest, it did exist, as the hon. member points out, some years ago, but then all the boats were worked from schooners. To-day nearly all the boats are worked from shore stations, and they go out without slop chests. Slop-chest purchases are made on the shore, not on the high seas. There are few schooners left to-day that are trading at all. To continue my previous remarks, tenders are paid £5, and the wages for divers range from £2 to £5 a month with an allowance of from £25 to £35 per ton on pearl shell. I do not think the member for Roebourne can find a single case, at any rate it would be a very rare case in which he would find the wages paid to a diver as low as £2 and £20 on shell. The sale price of shell which the hon. member puts at £250 as a fair price, and which he considers low, has never existed until within the last few weeks, that is after the results of the last July sale in London. In all my twenty years' experience of pearling this is the first time in which I have heard of an average price as high as £250 being paid, yet the hon. member will ask the House to accept that figure as a fair selling price for shell. On the figures I have produced I maintain it is quite impossible for the industry to be saddled with a royalty.

Mr. Gardiner: What about pearls?

Mr. MALE: Pearls are such an unknown item and in most instances are of such small account that it is difficult to take them into consideration as an item of profit. In supporting a pearling venture I would be very sorry to estimate my take of pearls.

Mr. Gardiner: The official return last year was £50,000.

Mr. MALE: There is no doubt that pearls are found and some of them are of very great value, but there are many pearlers who have failed to find £50 worth of pearls in a year.

Mr. Underwood: Many gold mines have also failed for a year.

Mr. MALE: Are we to put a royalty on gold because some of the mines have yielded a big profit, or to put a royalty on tin because it is worth over £200 a ton to-day. At the present time, I admit, there is a margin of profit, but at normal time, as I have shown by my figures, the average price realised for 21 years has been £133 10s., and as in my opinion the cost of raising shell is £150 a ton, I say there is absolutely no justice in trying to obtain a royalty from the industry. With a drop in price to normal conditions, and unless a pearler is lucky enough to find a few pearls, I say that he has not a living in his boat. Again, even if we did try to impose a royalty, how will we do it equitably. Are we to assume that every man is going to obtain an average take of shell? Many men only get three tons, because they have only inferior divers, and they are not able to employ others because they cannot pay the big advance necessary to secure the services of crack divers. We are assuming that every man is going to get the average of 3½ tons. Many men will get three tons and others will get four tons; if we admit that the 4-ton man has the ability to pay a royalty, can we admit that the 3-ton man can do likewise? I say that the latter is not in a position to pay it. Further, the value of the shell differs in different parts of the coast. The shell fished at Onslow is not of the same value as the shell fished around Broome, and there is a margin of difference of at least £20 per ton in the value. If the member for Roebourne knew anything about shell he would know that last year buyers stood off Port Hedland shell and would rather not buy at all, and if they did they purchased at a margin of at least £10 per ton less than the Broome shell. If the shell varies at Onslow to the extent of £20 and at Port Hedland £10, how will it be possible to get an equitable royalty which will deal fairly with all parties?

The Minister for Works: We can put it on the price instead of the tonnage.

Mr. MALE: We might do that. When calculating the revenue derived from Broome, and I use the word Broome as

applied to pearlers, we should bear in mind that something like £20,000 a year is paid in hard cash to the customs, and that has been done for many years past. I say £20,000 a year in round numbers. In addition, a similar amount should be credited to Broome for duty paid on goods received from Fremantle and the Eastern States. These figures must not be forgotten. Then again, we must not forget that pearlers pay income tax and dividend duty and when, as at the present time, shell is bringing a high price, the Government are participating in the profits inasmuch as they get paid a bigger income tax, or a dividend duty as the case may be; and I would like to point out that, unlike the mining industry, the pearling industry is in the hands of Australians.

Mr. Gardiner: Asiatics.

Mr. MALE: Oh, dear no. The Asiatics get a very small sum out of it, and if we follow up the slop chest argument of the hon. member as being correct, they do not get any of it. I repeat that the industry is in the hands of Australians who re-invest the profits made from pearling.

Mr. Underwood: What is the name of the two "Australians" who own the two pubs at Cossack?

Mr. MALE: We can find one or two such cases, but taking it as a whole the industry is owned by Australians, and what is more they do not send their money away in dividends to the old country and other places, as is the case with so many mining companies. Can the member for Roebourne, or any other hon. member, point to wealthy pearlers who have retired from this lucrative business? I know perhaps of ten only who in the last 20 years, the period that I have been connected with the industry, have retired. and all almost without exception of that number have only made an ordinary competency. What have they done? They have started with what they have made in more congenial work and in a more congenial climate. As soon as they have made sufficient to get away they have been glad enough to do so, and reinvest their money in a business which is more secure and less hazardous. Believing as I do, that it is unjust and unfair, I shall oppose the imposition of a royalty all I know. We do not object to a license or anything that may be reasonable. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill and I can assure the Minister for Works that I shall do all I can to assist him in making the measure one which will meet with the approval of the pearlers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): As I understand there are no other members who desire to speak on the second reading I wish to offer a few comments on the criticism, if it can be called such, of the Bill. I want to say that I am extremely pleased with the way the Bill has been received, and although the hon. member who has just sat down warmed up to the subject towards the conclusion of his remarks, it must be borne in mind that he was dealing with amendments proposed and remarks made by the member for Roebourne, and not with any of the provisions of the Bill. Of course the Government will have a few remarks to offer in connection with the suggested amendments, and I find it is always safe to take a fence when we reach it, and I shall do that when we arrive at the Committee stage. The one point, and I think it is the only big matter dealt with by the hon. member, is in connection with the provision contained in Part 3 of the Bill, where we propose to make certain portions of the Merchant and Shipping Act apply to the pearling industry. I must admit there is a lot of soundness in the argument the hon. member used inasmuch as he pointed out that the whole of the Merchant and Shipping Act applies to the pearling industry today, and seeing that that is the case why limit a portion of it in the Bill? In reply, I would point out that the provisions contained in the Bill before the House were copied from the Bill which was prepared by the James Government in 1903, and at the time the Bill was drafted it was represented as being necessary to put those provisions there because of some difficulty that had been experienced in connection with the discipline on some

of the luggers. I am not prepared to-night to say that the representations made by the hon. member will be adopted by the Government, but if the Government are convinced that the provisions of the Merchant and Shipping Act do apply and can be applied to the pearling industry, we shall be prepared to let matters stand as they are rather than limit any portion of the Merchant and Shipping Act to the industry. When we reach that portion of the Bill in Committee I will be in a position to state definitely the views of the Government. The other matter refers to the cultivation of pearl shell, and I was extremely pleased to hear the remarks of the hon. member in regard to it. Such remarks must appeal to anyone taking an interest in any industry. If we want to preserve an industry we must do our best to cultivate that industry, and while it is true as the hon. member has represented that the amount of shell won to-day is equal to, if not more than it was some years ago, and he uses that argument justly as evidence that the production of shell is increasing rather than decreasing, the fact remains that we must endeavour to do something to assist others (if we do not engage in the work ourselves) who are endeavouring to overcome the difficulty in regard to the expermients made up to date for the cultivation of shell. An enormous amount of money has been expended in this direction in various parts of the world, and in parts of Western Australia the hon. member admits the experiments have met with some little success, and if we achieve that success at the cost of comparatively little capital, it goes to show that we will be justified in giving more encouragement than has been done in the past to those who will engage in the cultivation of the shell. After my return from the North I was very strongly of the opinion that we were not doing enough in that direction. One gets that evidence at Shark Bay where there are exclusive licenses in force. I am of opinion that we are not getting the best possible results at Shark Bay. There is no doubt that with the appointment of the Inspector of Fisheries, an enthusiastic man highly qualified, we will now get better results in this direction than we have achieved in the past, and, as far as the Government are concerned, he will get all possible encouragement. The next point raised was in connection with probationary divers. I cannot see that any objection could be offered to issuing permits to probationary divers, because, after all, in every calling an apprenticeship must be served. If you do not try, you will never succeed, and we cannot say a man is a diver until he has had experience in that direction. While I would not be prepared to grant a permit for an unlimited period, I think a permit might be granted for a specific time, long enough for a man to prove that he was capable of becoming a diver. Once he had a little experience he could take out a diver's license. I had proposed to make a few remarks in conenction with the figures quoted by the hon. gentlemen, but, after all, those figures were not quoted with a view to combating others which I produced. As a matter of fact the figures used by me were merely the official figures, if they could be called official, published by those who deal extensively in the pearl shell sales in the old country. From those figures one can gather exactly what the pearl shell brings. But when we come to the figures quoted by the member for Roebourne, it is not, I think, within my province to enter into the difference of opinion apparent between the two hon. members. In fairness to the member for Roebourne, it should be pointed out that he was dealing with the question from a viewpoint a little different from that taken by the member for Kimberley. It seems to me that the figures of both hon. members were correct, the apparent discrepancy being due to the fact that one was adding interest to the capital invested in the concerns. And, whether it is the owner's own capital or borrowed capital, interest should be provided on it. The member for Kimberley was allowing for this whereas evidently the member for Roebourne was not. Whether those figures justify the imposing of a royalty on the shell won

is a matter which might fittingly be debated in Committee. I am more than pleased that the Government were able to postpone the second reading until the member for Kimberley arrived, because undoubtedly he has given us an interesting speech on the pearling industry embracing a lot of information that we would not otherwise have secured. I am particularly interested in the Bill because it deals with one of our industries, and therefore must appeal to all hon. members as one worthy of consideration. It is gratifying when we get experienced men, such as the member for Kimberley, dealing with these measures, and more particularly was it gratifying that he should have approached the Bill in the spirit he did. Certainly it tends to secure the best possible result.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Interpretation:

Mr. GARDINER moved an amendment—

That in line 4 of the definition of "Asiatic," after the word "Archipelago," the words "but does not include persons of the Jewish race" be inserted.

Authorities had assured him that if the definition of Asiatic were permitted to stand in its present form, it would debar members of the Jewish race.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—No licenses but diver's to be granted to an alien or Asiatic:

Mr. GREEN moved an amendment—

That in line 1 the words "other than a diver's license" be struck out.

The amendment meant that Asiatic divers would be prevented from continuing in the industry. The objection urged by the member for Kimberley that the white man was not able to do a particular work which could be done by an Asiatic was urged, not because it was the real reason, but because the black man was cheaper than the white man. By its employment of negroes or Malays, this particular industry was the one black spot on the fair fame of the policy of a White Australia. It was time that we rendered something more than lip service to the ideal of a White Australia, so far as the North-West was concerned. It had been said that it was impossible to have white divers in the pearling industry, but experience showed that the three best divers in Broome had been white men. It was true that divers who had been engaged in other classes of diving work took time to learn the strange conditions of pearl diving. But it was also true that the young men who desired to take up diving in the North-West were strongly discouraged. The people in Broome were the most disloyal in Australia towards the White Australia doctrine, and it was for this Parliament to say that the White Australia ideal should be given a fair trial in the pearling industry. It had been predicted at one time that white men could not work in the cane fields of Queensland, but the fact remained that they had succeeded, and what were formerly plague spots under the black labour conditions were now healthy and law-abiding districts, and the value of property had gone up considerably. In Panama, right under the equator, the shrewd American Government had proved that even ordinary navvy work was better done by white men than by negro labour. If Parliament made it plain to the people in the North-West that the White Australia ideals were to be put into actual practice the pearling industry would not die out, and white men would soon fill the vacant places just as they had done in other directions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The object of the hon. member in endeavouring to prevent Asiatics being employed was understandable, but the amendment would not have that effect. All it would do would be to prevent the State collecting a little bit of revenue from the Asiatics, because the amendment would prevent the collecting of a fee for a coloured diver's license. He agreed to

a large extent with the remarks of the hon. member, but it was not within the province of the State Parliament to deal with this matter at all. At the present time the Commonwealth authorities were inquiring as to the wisdom of further continuing what they had allowed to continue to date, the use of imported coloured labour, and until the Federal authorities had shaped their policy in that regard it was not within the province of this House to prevent the employment of coloured labour. The Government were strongly of opinion that the industry should be operated by white men only, but all the hon. member's amendment would do would be to cheat the State of a little revenue and make the Asiatic diver happier than if the clause were allowed to remain in its present form. In the circumstances he hoped the hon. member would withdraw the amendment.

Mr. GREEN: Clause 55 provided that no person was to act as a diver unless he was licensed. If the Asiatic were prevented from holding a license white men would then be the only ones who would be able to dive for shell.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The State Parliament in this matter was in the hands of the Federal authorities, and no matter what provisions were made in the Bill members could not prevent the employment of Asiatics. If there was any provision in the measure preventing the use of a diving apparatus by Asiatics, then, of course, the Bill would not stand against the Federal measure which permitted of Asiatics being employed as divers.

Mr. McDONALD: Had Clause 54, which provided that none but licensed divers should be employed, any bearing on the subject?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The State Parliament had absolute power over the industry. We undoubtedly had the right to issue licenses to divers, and to say whether they should be Asiatics or others. At the same time, it would not be advisable at the present juncture for this Parliament to pass any measure prohibiting the use of Asiatics as divers, for the reason that the whole question was before the Federal Parliament. If the Federal legislature failed to look after the industry, and to endeavour to make it white, it would be the duty of the State Parliament to do so. Many people in the pearling industry seemed to be of opinion that everything was controlled by the Federal Parliament, but the State Parliament had entire control over every subject connected with the industry except the importation of labour. Most emphatically the State Parliament had the power of granting or refusing licenses. Still, for the time being he was in favour of allowing the matter to rest until the Federal Parliament had dealt with it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: As the member for Pilbara had said, this was purely a State matter. Clause 10 set out that certain licences might be granted under the Bill, and Clause 11 said that none of those licenses, except the diver's license should be granted to Asiatics. If the State Parliament had power to prevent an Asiatic from getting the other licenses, it had power to stop them from getting a diver's license. We had stopped them from getting miners' rights on the goldfields with the object of discouraging the presence and employment of Asiatics, and if members were of opinion that we should attempt to put the white Australia policy into operation in the pearling industry the proposal before the Committee was the only way it could be done. On a recent trip to the north he had met with a number of people who stated that in years gone by white men did most of the diving, and he had met others who had said that they had not been allowed opportunities to learn diving under the existing circumstances.

Mr. MALE: The effect of carrying the amendment, if it were effective—the Minister for Works said it would not be—would be to absolutely knock pearling on the head.

Mr. Green: You say that of every industry that a black man engages in.

Mr. MALE: At the end of the year it would be absolutely fatal to the pearling industry, and it was not to be believed

that the Government would allow such a serious thing to occur. The Federal Parliament had appointed a Royal Commission who were taking evidence at the present time and thoroughly threshing out the whole matter. They had also issued a regulation prohibiting the importation of Asiatic divers after a certain period, and that period was only sufficient to enable the Royal Commission to complete their inquiries. It would be wrong and unwise for the State Parliament to interfere with the work being carried on by the State Government at the present time. If the Commonwealth legislators failed in their duty, it would be time enough for the State Parliament to thresh out the whole question on its merits. If they decided upon alterations we would make them. He could not believe that anyone would seriously attempt to carry such an amendment at present.

Mr. GARDINER: If the mover was sure of his ground he would support the amendment, though he had been assured it was beyond the province of the State Parliament. An industry which would not support white labour was of very little value to anyone. If the industry were knocked out for twelve months it could be resuscitated and developed by young Australians.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The provision under discussion was to license divers, and by those means to raise revenue. He would not combat the argument that the industry should be conducted by white labour, but he would be placed in a false position. He refused to be placed in the position of advocating the employment of Asiatics while supporters of the amendment were opposed to it. He was a strong advocate of white labour, but this was a Federal question, over which the State had no control at present. The Federal authorities had appointed a Royal Commission which was making inquiries to ascertain if their policy was the correct one. If they failed in their duty, it would be time for the State to see if it had power to enforce the opinion of the Government that this should be a white man's industry. He would not fight the question, and if the mover insisted on his amendment, he would report progress and refuse to go on with the Bill.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: This Bill was outside party politics, and was not one in connection with which they should debate the white labour question. He did not care if he were branded as a supporter of the employment of Asiatics in this connection. The industry had been established, and made valuable to Western Australia since its inception by the employment of Asiatics. True, white men had in the early days dived for shell, but in shallow water where they could almost stoop down and pick it up. To-day it was a different question. The problem was being tackled by the Federal Government, and they were not satisfied that the industry could be safely left altogether in the hands of white divers. We had had experience lately of half a dozen white divers. Unfortunately one had lost his life through being too hazardous, and the others did not appear to be doing as well as they expected. Two intended to return to the old country and the others had not been so successful as Asiatics in locating the shell. This showed that we would be acting foolishly if we prohibited the issuing of licenses to Asiatics. Anyone who had money invested in the industry, if forced to discontinue operations owing to a lack of divers, would not wait until young men were trained, but would get out of the business as soon as they could, and the industry would terminate and never be revived. It was very well for the mover and supporters of the amendment to show they would stand by their platform, but they should not force the Minister to take up the other side of the question, or put their leaders in a false position. He was an advocate of a white Australia, but he would not go to the extreme of closing down this industry, which had done so much for Western Australia, and the trade of which amounted to £300,000 a year. About eighteen months ago he had made representations to the Federal authorities to extend the time in order that the Government might not make a

false step by prohibiting licenses to Asiatics.

The Premier: Did you not go further?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, by suggesting a bonus of £25 per ton on shell recovered by white divers.

The Premier: Did not you move that black labour should be employed in the pearling industry?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of that he had no recollection. This was not a matter of a White Australia policy, but of employing Asiatics on the high seas as 90 per cent. of them were beyond territorial waters. It was preposterous to say they should not be employed. They entered port only once in a while to re-fit and re-provision their schooners, and only took shelter in the off season. We would be doing a serious injury if we agreed to the amendment, and he was glad the Minister had taken such a firm stand and had refused to be overridden or bullied by his caucus friends on this occasion.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition appeared to have misunderstood the attitude of the Minister for Works. Every member of the Government believed thoroughly that the industry should be carried on by white divers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Belief is not sufficient.

The PREMIER: The member for Kimberley could probably give the leader of the Opposition information regarding the attitude adopted by the Government to assist the Federal Government in connection with the introduction of white divers. He was not satisfied that white divers had been given a fair deal by the pearlers. From information he had received, it appeared that the white divers had not been placed on the same basis as the Asiatic divers, who had been trained for the work. No assistance had been given to the white divers who had been compelled to find out the ropes for themselves. Where a white man could live he could do what a black man could do and do it a little better. But the question was whether it was the class of occupation a white man should be asked to undertake. This was the point the Federal authorities were now considering by means of a Royal Commisssion, therefore the member for Kalgoorlie could accept the assurance from Ministers that they were just as thoroughly convinced that the white divers could operate in the North-West as the hon. member was, and we were only continuing the present position until the Federal authorities could consider whether it was desirable to stop black divers altogether. There was no wisdom in pressing the amendment, and it was not fair to the Government to compel them to do something which was not in accordance with their belief. The hon. member could have as much patience, surely, as Ministers and as members for the North-West who believed that white men could operate there, but that in the course of time provision would be made in the direction the hon. member desired.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: What about a time limit?

The PREMIER: If the Federal Royal Commisssion came to the decision that pearling could be carried on with white divers the Federal authorities would not permit the bringing in of black divers, and if they required assistance from the State Government in the direction of refusing licenses a Bill would be introduced as early as possible.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will you not wait until you can get the white divers?

The PREMIER: The white divers would be found as they had already been found. The Government went so far as to bring out the white divers who had already arrived at immigrant rates and rendered every possible assistance to the pearlers in the North-West to get them on the spot as early as possible in order that the question might be thoroughly tested. The Government thoroughly believed that white men could do what coloured men could do, and when the time was ripe they would take steps to prevent licenses being issued to other than white men in the pearling industry.

Mr. GREEN: It was regrettable the Minister for Works had shown heat in the matter. It was not intended to put the Minister in a position of being in favour of black labour in the North-

West when the Minister was a strongly in favour of the White Australia policy as anyone. The idea of the amendment, however, was that, as one believed in a white Australia, it was an opportune time to put the principle into operation, and if the Minister for Works would fix a time limit, even as far ahead as two years, one could accept it, and the amendment might be withdrawn.

Mr. McDONALD: All members on the Government side of the House, and possibly on the Opposition side, were White Australians. As there were 2,268 Asiatics employed in the pearling industry and the number of divers' licenses issued was 317, the amendment would allow unmolested 1,951 Asiatics to be still employed in the industry. He would welcome the withdrawal of the amendment.

Mr. HEITMANN: While believing in the White Australia policy, at the same time it must be recognised it was impossible to bring in a set of conditions in the pearling industry doing away at once with the Asiatic labour with which the industry had been carried on. The Federal Commission were inquiring whether the industry was such that white men should be employed in it. Men who would advocate the employment of black labour in an industry because the industry was too dangerous for white labour were brutes, as were men who advocated the destruction of life whether it be white or black.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No one advocates that.

Mr. HEITMANN: The advocates of black labour sometimes said that white men should not be employed in this industry because of its dangerous character. What other argument was there? If it was not good enough for the white man there must be some reason for it; if it was not fair to employ white men in it it was not fair to employ black labour.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You must let them choose for themselves.

Mr. HEITMANN: In many cases white men were prevented from following certain occupations because they were injurious to health, and we should have the same power over black men. One was not satisfied from inquiries made at Broome among the pearlers that white labour could carry out this industry immediately. The best method of giving effect to the White Australian policy in regard to the pearling industry would be a gradual movement giving assistance to those employers who would be training white divers. Mr. Pigott, an ex-member of Parliament and a resident of Broome, and a fair-minded man, was doing everything to give the white divers a chance. Though the Premier had said the white men did not get a chance, Mr. Pigott was sending out black divers with white divers. It was not so much the inability of white men to get to a depth, it was that they were unaccustomed to the indications of where the shell lay. Men were sacrificing £200 or £300 a year in endeavouring to train white divers, and the probability was that the investigation of the Federal authorities would show there was some method of getting over the labour question. Until that time one could not accept an amendment which would mean stopping the black labour in the industry. We could not fix any date ahead until we had the result of the investigations now being carried out by the Federal Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The carrying of the amendment would not stop the employment or Asiatic labour. It would merely stop the licensing of divers, and the collecting of £1 a year from each diver. Divers were imported under Federal legislation and it was questionable whether the State could prevent these divers being employed, as the Federal legislation would supersede the State legislation. Placing a time limit in the Bill might have some influence on the Federal Parliament, but it would not govern them; if they still permitted indentures their provisions would override ours and the pearlers would ignore our measure by the authority they got from the Federal Parliament. If the amendment were persisted in, holding the same views as the mover of the amendment he would be placed in a very unfair position in voting against the amendment, and in order to prevent his being placed

in a false position progress would have to be reported and the whole matter would have to be left to the Federal authorities to decide whether Asiatics should be continued or not. Then if it was found that they failed in their responsibility to Australia, we could see whether we had the power to enforce that which we thought would be in the best interests of the State. We should wait to see what the Federal Parliament intended to do with regard to the Asiatic question. The amendment of the hon. member would have the effect of robbing the State of revenue and also placing those who agreed with the White Australia policy in a false position.

Mr. GREEN: In view of the explanation made by the Minister for Works and the assurance given by the Premier, he would be willing, with the permission of the Committee, to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. MALE moved a further amendment—

That the following proviso be added: "Nothing herein contained shall prevent the renewal of any license heretofore held by any Asiatic licensee as long as the licensing officer is satisfied that no person of Asiatic race other than the licensee has any share or interest aforesaid."

The object of the amendment was to provide for the renewal of licenses which were still in existence. He did not think it was the intention of the Minister to deprive people of rights they now held. There were still three or four Asiatics who in all probability were naturalised, and it would be unfair to deprive them of the rights they possessed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Without getting further information on the question, he preferred not to agree to the amendment, but he had no hesitation in saying that if there was the power to prevent the issue of licenses or the renewal of licenses to Asiatics, he would enforce that provision. Seeing, however, that these people were licensed to-day, he questioned very much whether we could take the licenses away from them. There was another point about which he was not sure and that was the number who held these licenses. The hon. member said there were three or four.

Mr. Male: I am not absolutely certain.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So far as his own opinion was concerned there were only a few, but he was not in possession of the actual facts. If the hon. member would agree to the clause being passed, the Bill could be recommitted and in the meantime inquiries would be made in regard to the power to refuse the renewal of these licences and if they had to be renewed, how many renewals would have to be granted.

Mr. MALE: There was no desire to interfere with the progress of the measure, and he would be quite willing to agree to the Minister's suggestion. The Minister's attention, however, might be drawn to a proclamation which was published in the *Government Gazette* on the 10th June, 1910, under which pearlers had to make a declaration that no Asiatic had any interest in the profits or the working of the boat, and it was with the object of keeping the Act and the conditions as they still existed that he had brought the amendment forward. By permission of the House, he would withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 12 to 22—agreed to.

Clause 23—Duration of existing licences:

Mr. MALE: The Minister for Works, in replying to the second reading debate, made no reference to the remarks about the unexpired portions of the licences already in existence.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government would either have to give credit for the money paid or refund it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 24 to 26—agreed to.

Clause 27—Licences to be kept on board ship:

Mr. MALE: The clause should be struck out because it was not necessary to keep the license on board the ship when the ship was being employed in pearling. It would be inconvenient for

that to be done and would serve no useful purpose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The only feature of the clause was to make it easy for the inspector to know exactly where the license was to be found. He agreed, however, that it would be unwise in some cases to compel the license to be kept on board the ship; it would be preferable for the owner to hold the license in many cases, but to make it apply generally would inflict a hardship.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 28 to 33—agreed to.

Clause 34—Authority to grant exclusive licences:

Mr. McDONALD: Reference had been made during the second reading speeches to the cultivation of pearls and pearl shell. He did not know whether the matter could be attended to by regulation or whether it should be included in the Bill, but there was a regulation which provided that all pearl shell in Shark Bay had to be opened on the main land and that meant that the spawn and the immature shell was dead before it was taken ashore. Some means should be adopted whereby the shell could be cleaned as soon as it was removed from the water and all the young stuff thrown back so that it might have a chance to grow again. Would the Minister explain whether the matter could be overcome by regulation or by an amendment to the clause.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member turned to Clause 105 he would see that there was provision for the making of regulations, and it was intended that the question raised by the hon. member would be subject to regulation. It was true that there were cases where it was in the interests of shell cultivation that the shell should be opened on the area, but the Inspector of Fisheries pointed out that in other cases it would be dangerous to do so, and he preferred to make it subject to regulation so that he could control it.

Mr. McDONALD: The remarks of the Minister might lead to a misconception; they would seem to indicate that it was only the holders of exclusive areas who were at all anxious to cultivate shell. It was as much to the benefit of the holders of a general license to see that the public banks were not denuded of shell and to make any distinction between those holding exclusive licenses and general licenses was altogether wrong. He would ask that those working on the public banks should also have the right to open their shell on board. A more rigid inspection than existed would be necessary to prevent those dredging from taking immature shell, but the benefit to the industry would more than compensate for the increased cost of this inspection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member would find that Clause 105 specifically met the difficulty referred to.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 35—Form, contents and conditions of exclusive licenses:

Mr. McDONALD: Was there any necessity for the provision for two or more successive renewals? It might mean that a man would have the right to one exclusive license for a period of 56 years. He moved an amendment—

That paragraph (v.) be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The paragraph was merely permissive. The object of the clause was that the Government might give the utmost consideration to the owner of an exclusive license, provided he was deserving of it. There was no reason why such a man should not have a license for 56 years if he were successfully solving a world-wide problem. The power would only be exercised in deserving cases.

Mr. McDONALD: Having received this assurance from the Minister he would withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 36 to 38—agreed to.

Clause 39—Area to be covered by licence:

Mr. McDONALD: This allowed the holder of one licence to occupy six square miles of shell-bearing area. It was too much. He moved an amendment—

That in line 2 the word "six" be struck out.

If the amendment were carried he would then move that the area be one square mile. The average size of exclusive holdings in Shark Bay was 234 acres.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause meant that six square miles should be the maximum. It might seem large, but it was generally recognised to be the proper limit of an exclusive area for shell cultivation. The hon. member had said that the size of the average holding in Shark Bay was 240 acres; but that hon. member must know that some of the licensees in Shark Bay held areas considerably greater than that, inasmuch as some of them had each several holdings. He (the Minister) would agree to a reduction in the area, but not to so drastic a one as that proposed in the amendment. It would be quite safe to allow the clause to stand. The Chief Inspector of Fisheries had reported that while it was not anticipated that so large an area as six square miles would be granted, at the same time special circumstances might call for the granting of such an area.

Mr. MALE: Whilst the hon. member was, perhaps, right in asking that, so far as Shark Bay was concerned, the area should be reduced, at the same time it was necessary that power should be taken to grant an area of six square miles for shell cultivation on the north coast. In many places in the north it would be impossible to provide a suitable area of less than six square miles. If it was necessary that a smaller area should be the maximum for Shark Bay, an amendment could be drafted restricting the smaller area to Shark Bay, and leaving it optional for the Minister to grant areas of six square miles further up the coast.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would be better to leave the clause as it stood, because it was quite possible that in the north an area might be applied for which was bounded by or interspersed with islands, and, perhaps, was not very rich in shell. After all, the six square miles represented the maximum. It was for the Government to decide whether such an area should be granted, and the hon. member might well believe that so large an area would not be granted if it were not necessary. He trusted the hon. member would not press the amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: Would the Minister be prepared to accept an amendment for three square miles?

The Minister for Works: No, not so small as that.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD moved a further amendment—

That the word "four" be inserted in lieu of "six" struck out.

Amendment passed.

Mr. GARDINER: So far as the North-West was concerned, it would be unwise to grant any exclusive licences at all to any individual or company. He would like to move an amendment that after the word "Act" in line 1 the words "north of the Tropic of Capricorn" be inserted.

The CHAIRMAN: An amendment had already been made in line 2 of the clause and the hon. member could not now go back and move an amendment in line 1. The only course open to the hon. member was to move to add a proviso.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The amendment should have been made in Clause 34, which provides for the granting of exclusive licenses.

Mr. GARDINER moved an amendment—

That the following be added:—"Provided that no exclusive licenses shall be granted north of the Tropic of Capricorn."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the amendment were carried it would prevent the cultivation of shell north of the Tropic of Capricorn. On the second reading he had pointed out that Mr. Haynes had expended a lot of capital in cultivation experiments at Montebello, and that he claimed to have obtained results second to none in the world. If the amendment were carried it would prevent that gentleman continuing his work, because he must work under an exclusive license, without which the fruits of his labour would be lost, and others could enter upon his area and remove the shell he had cultivated. As one anxious to encourage pearl shell cultivation, he was

strongly in favour of granting exclusive licenses for that purpose. Outside of Shark Bay exclusive licenses would not be granted for other than cultivation purposes. The hon. member for Roebourne would agree that Mr. Haynes had done good work and he would see the unfairness of this amendment, especially when he had an assurance that the idea of providing exclusive licenses north of Shark Bay was solely for the encouragement of pearl shell cultivation.

Mr. MALE: The power to grant exclusive licenses had existed for many years, and there had never been an attempt on the part of any Government to abuse that power. The sole purpose of the provision was that exclusive areas might be granted on that portion of the coast for the cultivation of shell, and it was not intended that the clause should be used for the purpose of granting an exclusive license to work a good shell-bearing area.

Mr. GARDINER: Whilst agreeing that it was desirable to encourage the cultivation of pearl shell, the clause as drafted left room for exclusive licenses to be granted to individuals over the pick of the shelling grounds. If there was any desire to experiment in the cultivation of shell the State should undertake such experiments. The present Government might not be always in power, and it would be competent for other Ministers to grant exclusive rights to work certain shelling grounds to the detriment of the industry.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause as previously amended agreed to.

Clauses 40 to 43—agreed to.

Clause 44—Portions of pearl shell areas may be closed:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved an amendment—

That in line 2 the words "except as against the holder of a previously existing general license" be struck out.

The clause gave the Governor-in-Council power to close any portion of a pearl shell area, but limited the power of the Governor inasmuch as an area could not be closed against the holder of a previously existing general license. That would defeat the object of the clause, for if it were desirable to close certain waters they must be closed absolutely.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved a further amendment—

That in line 4 the words "not being subject to an exclusive license" be struck out.

Mr. McDONALD: The Minister had power in other portions of the Bill to remove exclusive licenses from any holder thereof if there was any need to do so, but it would be most unusual in Shark Bay for an area held under exclusive license to be declared closed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This was applying to a pearl shell area in a general sense. An exclusive license was a contract over a given area, and the Government could not close that.

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

Clauses 45 to 53—agreed to.

Progress reported.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT — SLEEPERS FOR TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): In accordance with a promise made on Thursday last, I telegraphed to the Federal Prime Minister asking if he had any objection to my announcing the prices to be paid for the supply of sleepers for the Trans-Australian railway under the contract between the Commonwealth and the Government of Western Australia. Having received the Prime Minister's consent, with your permission I propose to make the figures known. The contract provides for the supply at the outset of 100,000 jarrah sleepers at a price of 4s. 6d. on trucks at Hollyoake or Manjimup; 680,000 karri powellised sleepers at 4s. 11d. on trucks at Manjimup or Nannup, and 720,000 karri sleepers at 7s. 8d. at Port Augusta.

Mr. Wisdom: Powellised?

The PREMIER: That has yet to be settled.

House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.