

parties. It is stated that in the sixth and all succeeding years the Treasurer shall pay £4,500. The present production at Collie is 600,000 tons. The company is entitled to make an extra charge of 2d. in partial recompense of its contribution towards this pension fund. That amounts to £5,000, so the community would have to pay not £4,500 a year, but £9,500, the amount being made up of £4,500 in a direct grant, and £5,000 in the increased price of coal. There is another curious provision on page 26, to the effect that—

If a mine worker has made regular contributions to the fund for a period of five years and such mine worker resigns or is dismissed from the coalmining industry in circumstances which do not entitle him to a pension under any of the provisions of this Act, the tribunal shall pay to him the amount of the actual contributions paid by him under this Act, irrespective of the cause of his resignation or dismissal.

I would like to see some sort of provision of that kind put into our insurance companies Acts, to the effect that anybody unable to continue his payments should get the lot back, but I am afraid we would be told that that would upset the actuarial basis on which insurance is founded. I would like to emphasise the great importance of the Collie coalfields to all the industries of Western Australia in the post-war period. Whatever expansion is made in social services the well-being of the community will still depend upon its industries, upon the wealth we produce, and if anyone thinks that, instead of depending upon the wealth directly produced, all these concessions can be made out of what is called Commonwealth Bank credit, it will not be very long before the receivers of these benefits will realise the extent to which they have been defrauded.

It is essential to the success of our industries that power should be provided as cheaply as is possible consistent with the adequate remuneration of those who supply it. It is essential to our primary industries that our railways should be run economically. In all these things Collie coal is bound to play a major part. The outstanding fact today, which is clearly disclosed from this report of the Royal Commission—and very few of the recommendations of that commission have been carried out, and the wages paid now at Collie are higher than when the Royal Commission made its report—is that Collie is not making the contribution it

should towards the prosperity of the State. I think I am right in saying that that is admitted by those engaged in the industry. The management blames the men: the men blame the management. It is not for me to say which is right and which is wrong, but I do say, however, that this House would be unmindful of its duty to the public of this State if it passed a Bill of this kind in such circumstances.

The bounden duty of the Government, whether by implementing the report of this Royal Commission or by appointing a further commission, is to take every step possible to ensure that neither the management nor the men should unduly burden the State, and that everything possible in the way of the introduction of labour-saving machinery to reduce costs, should be done. When all that is done and the industry has been put in order so that it is making the contribution toward the prosperity of the State that it should make, no one will be more ready than I to support a Bill to give pensions to those engaged in it.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [3.2]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 23rd February, at 2.15 p.m.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 3.3 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 23rd February, 1943.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Motor Spirit and Substitute Liquid Fuels Bill.

QUESTION.**NATIONAL SECURITY ACT.***Lighting of Motor Vehicles.*

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the statement by the Minister for Home Security (Mr. Lazzarini), made in Canberra on the 12th February, and published in "The West Australian" of the 13th February, will the Minister for Civil Defence (Hon. A. Panton) immediately cancel the regulations which compel the continued use of headlight masks on motor vehicles in Western Australia?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The Lighting Restriction Order is one made under National Security Regulations by the Premier acting under delegated authority. Official advice has been received from the Commonwealth regarding removal of masks, but further information is being sought concerning the interpretation of the condition insisted upon by the Commonwealth that no car lights be shown to seaward.

BILL—PUBLIC AUTHORITIES (RETIREMENT OF MEMBERS).

Introduced by the Honorary Minister and read a first time.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS).*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 16th February.

HON. L. B. BOLTON (Metropolitan) [2.23]: I regret that I was not present when the Chief Secretary moved the second reading of the Bill, but had I been here, I believe his remarks would have had little effect upon the opinion I formed on reading the measure. This is one of the most unnecessary Bills, in view of existing conditions, that has been brought before the House for a considerable time. No matter what views we may hold regarding the justice or necessity for such legislation, if the Government desires to introduce a system of pensions, why should only one section of the community be considered when there are many other workers in the State who are equally, or possibly more, entitled to benefit along similar lines? Why, I ask, in the face of what is taking place in industry generally through the continued interference of the Federal authorities, should our own Government outbid, or

attempt to outbid, the Commonwealth Government on the right to pay more favourable pensions to coalminers? Why this mad rush to give unto him that already hath? In his very able address on this measure, Sir Hal Colebatch pointed out to the House how many other industries—particularly goldmining—were treated less favourably than was this industry.

Under the new social conditions which we are promised I am quite certain that the coalminers will receive every consideration; but it is most unfair, in my opinion, that any body of workers should be selected for special treatment such as is proposed in this measure. We have been told from time to time—in fact, it has been definitely proved on more than one occasion—that this State has for many years paid more than a just and fair price for its coal. So, too, has it been established that the coalminers have received a greater reward for their labour than have workers in many other industries in the State. I am convinced, and I think almost every member of this Chamber will agree, that the time is not far distant when the Collie coal mines will be taken over either by the State Government or by the Commonwealth Government and nationalised. There is not the slightest doubt about that. Not only does that apply, in my opinion, to coalmining; today everything points to its happening in most of our industries.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: That will be nice.

HON. L. B. BOLTON: My friend interjects that that will be nice, but to my mind that is what present-day legislation is leading up to. I warn the people of this State, and particularly the members of this Chamber, that if we give the Commonwealth Government the additional powers which it is seeking in another measure, then it will only be a question of time—in my opinion, a short time at that—when private enterprise, development and initiative will entirely disappear from industry in this State. I could give the House some startling information, figures and results obtained by private enterprise as compared with industries continually hampered by Government interference, industries working under cumbersome red-tape methods. Coal, as we all know, is a basic war material and we are continually being reminded how necessary it is to our industries and the disadvantages already being

suffered by our manufacturers owing to the high price of power consequent upon the high price of coal. This measure will only mean added costs and still less chance of favourable competition with the Eastern States. If it is necessary to have for one set of workers legislation of this kind, it is just as fair that all workers should come under it and that the scheme should be a national one. It stands to reason and is but natural that if the coalminers receive what they are seeking, other workers in the State will demand, and justly so, similar treatment. Sir Hal Colebatch went fully into the financial position and the high price being paid for the recovery of coal and, as I said, the high cost to industry.

But I am as much concerned from another angle, one which also affects our industries, and that is the shortage of supplies. I was somewhat staggered when I read in a week-end paper the coal position as it stands today. It was pointed out in the article that coal from Collie is being delivered at approximately 10,000 tons per month less than the State's requirements. The article also tells of drastic cuts being made to consumers; but more serious still was the statement made that one large manufacturing firm, trying to direct its entire capacity to fulfil war contracts, is working only 50 per cent. of its full capacity owing to the shortage of coal and its inability to secure sufficient quantities. To my mind that is a shocking state of affairs. Yet we have the Government asking this House to support a measure for the compulsory retirement of coalminers at the age of 60 years, many of whom are better at that age than are other men still in their forties.

Hon. C. B. Williams: In mining? Who told you that?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Yes. I venture to say that there are many men in industry today who, at 60 years of age, are better than others in the same industry at 40 years of age. I go so far as to say that that applies to the coalmining industry.

Hon. C. B. Williams: At 65 years of age they are a dead loss. You should talk on topics you know something about.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: They may be a dead loss.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Of course, they are.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Various reasons are given for the restricted output, most of

which have come under the notice of members. Our policy should be to use every endeavour to get the Government to increase the output not only to satisfy the requirements of industry generally and also of the railways, but to assist in the terrible shortage of fuel with which we will be faced in the metropolitan area during the coming winter.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do you know that last year was a record year so far as coal hewn in Western Australia is concerned? It was better than any other year of the existence of the field.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Probably the hon. member who represents the district may be correct.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That was published in "The West Australian."

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I have figures quoted by the Minister which show that the highest output was 604,000 tons in 1938. But what I am complaining of is that the output is gradually becoming less per man, according to statistics. If it is the fault of the men, then something should be done in order to make the output higher again.

Hon. T. Moore: Can you substantiate your assertion that the men are hewing less today?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I believe they are.

Hon. T. Moore: You believe! Tell us where you get your information.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I believe figures will prove that.

Hon. T. Moore: Tell us where you get them.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: The output is less.

Hon. T. Moore: Quote your figures.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am suggesting to the Government that the cause should be overcome. If the reduced output is owing to the machinery, then the mine owners should be brought to book and more up-to-date methods should be adopted. I propose later to quote briefly a statement made by the chairman of the Commonwealth Coal Commission, which will bear out my statement. The Government would be doing much better for the community generally if it did something on those lines instead of wasting the time of Parliament on a measure which surely can wait until the war is over. The Minister in charge of the Bill in another place is reported to have said this—

It can fairly be claimed, I think, that on the basis of service given to the industry the

coalminers of Western Australia are deserving of treatment at least equal to that received by the coalminers in any other State. I put that forward because I feel that any body of workers that continues to operate an industry, thus assisting production, is a body entitled to some credit and praise.

I entirely agree with that statement and so, I think, does every member of this House. But I agree with it for all sections of the community and not for coalminers only. Let every individual be included—coalminers, goldminers, timber workers, farmers, and the city workers. I am not opposed to superannuation or pension schemes; I am a believer in them, but I believe in equality and that every worker, under these conditions, should be treated equally. We will have to pay our share of the cost.

It is not only the Government or the worker who will meet this additional burden on the country; the whole community will have to bear a part. In my opinion any such scheme as this should be brought forward on a national basis. This should be held over and brought forward at a later date when it can be made a national scheme. It is not my intention to go into the details of the Bill. They will probably be handled by members who are more au fait with the coalmining position, namely, the representatives of that district. I do feel, however, that under present conditions I could not support the measure. I was pleased indeed to see my remarks supported by a statement in the paper this morning made by the chairman of the Commonwealth Coal Commission, Mr. N. R. Mighell. He has made a week's investigation into the coal position in this State.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He has not instructed you much with his remarks.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I am going to draw the hon. member's attention to his remarks. I hope he has read them. I feel sure that every member here has read this article, so I do not propose to quote the whole of it. "The West Australian" summed up Mr. Mighell's views regarding the industry in the following words—

The Collie coalfield can produce all the coal that is required during the war; the coal can be more rapidly produced there than elsewhere; a new mine is being opened up by the Griffin Coal Mining Co., Ltd.; an open cut is to be developed by Amalgamated Collieries of W.A., Ltd.; an appeal for increased production has been made to the coalminers; action against absenteeism is threatened and better transport for the miners is promised.

As I said, these are the main features contained in the statement made by the chairman of the Commonwealth Coal Commission. To my mind that sums up the whole position is, too. Mr. Mighell in his published statement said—

The Collie coalmine produced a record output of 604,792 tons in 1938.

I quote that in support of what I said previously both to Mr. Williams and Mr. Moore.

Hon. T. Moore: You did not quote the number of men.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That figure is given here, too. Mr. Mighell continues—

Since that year annual production and number of men employed has varied as follows:—

1939	557,535 tons	725 men
1940	539,427 "	713 "
1941	556,579 "	778 "
1942	581,176 "	825 "

Hon. C. B. Williams: How far did they have to walk to the coal seam in 1938?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: That is a question I am not in a position to answer. Perhaps Mr. Mann will be able to give that information.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Read what he said further.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Very well. He said—

It will thus be seen that production for 1942 was some 25,000 tons greater than in the preceding year. It is true also that the number of employees has increased but this increase was mainly engaged in non-productive work in carrying out essential and urgently required development and maintenance, as a result of which increased production during this year should result.

I am not only trying to put one side of the question forward, but the case as I see it. If proper co-operation can be brought about between the mineowners and the workers, I am of opinion that the whole of the coal requirements for this State can and should be produced at Collie. The Government is, perhaps, ill-advised to bring this measure forward just at this particular time. I have got nothing against the coalminer; I have nothing against the system, but I want it to apply to everyone—to my workmen if members like, but not to one selected body. As I view the measure at present, I cannot support the second reading.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban): I wish to make it quite clear that I am in full accord with the present political trend towards social security. I believe that retirement from labour, whether

that labour be manual or clerical, should beminers' pensions. So far as shareholders in the coalmining companies of Western Australia are concerned, this would have two effects. The first would be to reduce the preference dividend from eight per cent. to six per cent. on the par value of the shares. This may not be a serious matter in the minds of some members, because six per cent. is a handsome return on any investment. It must not be overlooked, however, that a large number of the preference shareholders paid 26s. a share.

Hon. L. Craig: Many paid 35s.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I think that 26s. would represent the purchase price paid by a large number of shareholders.

Hon. L. Craig: Many shares were sold at over 30s.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Today's price is 26s.

Hon. L. Craig: People are frightened today.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: At 26s. per share, which is the market price today, the return on the capital invested is actually six per cent. If the reduction which would be brought about by this legislation came into force, it would mean that every 26s. that had been invested in the shares would return to the shareholders something like 3¾ per cent. This looks like a piece of legislation that represents a new method of reducing dividends to below four per cent. Members will no doubt recollect that several months ago the Commonwealth Government decided to limit all returns from investments to a profit of four per cent. but, after mature consideration, that scheme was abandoned. Here in this Bill we have a clause which would have an even worse effect than the Commonwealth proposals.

The second effect would be to over-ride the articles of association of the coalmining companies, and take from the preference shareholders the right to vote. I am informed that there is a clause in the articles of association of one of the coalmining companies in Western Australia which provides that preference shareholders shall have the right to vote. They would then virtually have a voice in the management of the company if the dividend on the preference shares falls below eight per cent. The effect of this Bill, if passed, would be to wipe out the provision laid down in the articles of association of the company concerned.

Then we could easily reach the position where the ex-workers of one industry would be obtaining a pension of £2 a week, and the ex-workers of another industry obtaining 41s. or 42s. a week, and we would then have a varied group of hotch-potch sums of money by way of pensions which would create dissatisfaction particularly on the part of those of the lower-paid pension groups. The result would be that we might have in Parliament a series of amending Bills in an endeavour to level the pension rates. Even if the Bill be passed, it is probable that it will never be proclaimed because it is more than likely that a separate Federal measure will be enacted to embrace all such pension schemes. Should, however, the Bill pass the second reading in this House I shall certainly seek to amend it so that clerical workers engaged in the coalmining industry are included in the pensions scheme.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Did you say "excluded"?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I said, "included." If a pensions scheme is available to other workers in the industry it should embrace all the workers, including those engaged in clerical occupations.

Hon. L. Craig: The clerical workers can be included afterwards by the Minister.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I now refer particularly to Subclause (6) of Clause 19. On the face of it, this appears to be innocent enough. Actually that portion of the Bill carries the measure beyond the provision of

Surely that is a dangerous precedent, one which may lead eventually to complete insecurity in regard to the articles of association or the memorandums of companies in Western Australia. The clause to which I have referred would mean an interference with and confiscation of rights as between the shareholders and the company. It may not be the intention of the Government that this should be the effect of the subclause in question, but I contend that that would be its effect. If the Bill reaches the Committee stage I shall certainly move either for the deletion of that subclause, or an amendment which would protect the preference shareholders of the company to which I have referred.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): I do not like the Bill. It is a rotten measure, and both ill-conceived and ill-considered. If it has any merit, if there is anything in it, and if we agree to the principle of coalminers receiving pensions, we ought to pass the second reading, and then deal with the Bill in Committee as it deserves to be dealt with, namely, chop it about quite a lot. The House may agree that there is only one principle to take into consideration, namely, the principle as to whether coalminers as opposed to other workers are entitled to pensions. That, after all, is the main thing. It is claimed that coalminers owing to the kind of work they do, the arduous nature of it, the discomforts of working underground, etc., are entitled above other people to pensions from the State. Whether or not they are entitled to such pensions, I am not in a position to say. I personally do not think they are harder worked than are lots of other people.

The coalminer doubtless sticks to coalmining because he likes it. These people by the very nature of their occupation may be doing work that is more difficult than that which is undertaken by other people, but surely that is made up to them by the extra pay they receive. The average earnings of the coalminer are considerably in advance of the average earnings of many other workers. The coalminers are being paid extra for the discomforts they have to put up with. I claim that the extra money that is provided should enable them to look after themselves in their old age. When dealing with the Bill speakers have claimed that New South Wales passed a similar provision, as did Victoria and Queensland.

That, however, is no valid reason why Western Australia should pass this Bill.

Hon. T. Moore: It is a decent reason.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If that were so, the basic wage in Western Australia would come down because it is lower in Victoria and in New South Wales. That, however, is never mentioned. It is only when we want things and have not got them that we quote what is given in other States. As for Victoria, the fact that such legislation was passed by that State as a result of an agreement between the Country Party and the Labour Party, does not mean a thing. A man like the Premier of Victoria would do anything.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Quite right.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is claimed for this Bill that, owing to the arduous nature of their work, coalminers are specifically entitled to a pension and to retirement at the age of 60. The measure goes on to include, with the exception of the clerical workers, everyone connected with the coalmining industry. The union representative will be included as a miner, and everyone else, whether he works underground or above ground. The nature of the work, therefore, does not enter into the matter. Everyone employed in the industry will be entitled to retire at 60 and draw a pension. For the time being people who work in coalmining offices are excluded, but the Minister with a stroke of the pen can bring them within the provisions of the legislation. That is one of the most wicked provisions in the Bill, and one to which I would not agree.

Another provision is that the extra cost of these pensions shall be borne by the shareholders of the company. The company has ordinary shareholders who have received no dividends for the last two or three years. The controllers of the company are the ordinary shareholders, so that they are not actually affected by this Bill. I have been wondering why there has been no protest from the company concerning this measure, but not a word has been said. There is something sinister about this Bill: there seems to be a little collaboration. The people who are going to pay the extra money are the poor old preference shareholders, many of whom have paid 35s. a share for their holdings. I myself paid 35s., but I do not hold any shares now and can therefore speak quite openly.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Did you get 40s. a share for them?

Hon. L. CRAIG: They were purchased at 35s.

Hon. H. Seddon: As a preference shareholder, did you ever see a balance sheet?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No.

Hon. H. Seddon: Did you ever go to a meeting?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I had no vote. Preference shareholders had no say in the running of the company. There was a contract between the preference shareholders and the company, but that is being repudiated by the Bill. In New South Wales a similar Bill has been passed, but the shareholders are not asked to contribute towards the pensions scheme. Many of the companies in that State have paid 10 per cent. to the preference shareholders. Why quote New South Wales? It is not the only State where there are preference shareholders. This Bill is practically a repudiation of the contract entered into between the public who put up the cash, and the company. The ordinary shareholders put up little or no preference shareholders. I know that the cash; 80 per cent. of it was put up by the Minister in charge of this Bill is opposed to anyone getting as much as five per cent. on his capital. Evidently there is something wrong with anyone who can earn more than five per cent. on an investment.

I would like to know how many years the company was in operation before the 8 per cent. preference shareholders got their dividends. Some New South Wales coal mines, which are much bigger than the mines here, have not paid dividends for many years. Thus there is a reason attached to coalmining why 8 per cent. should not be regarded as a high rate, not as high as that obtained in farming. Yet if one receives 8 per cent. from a coal mine, one is almost regarded as a rogue. I hope that in conformity with action taken by the Parliaments of other States this Chamber will pass the second reading of the Bill, so that we may see if the measure has any merit at all. I would go so far as to grant pensions to the real miners in our coal industry. I hold that their calling entitles them to some special privilege in that respect. Notwithstanding all the unjust and inequitable principles contained in the Bill, the second reading should be passed, subject, however, to our determination to secure later the

elimination of all persons except those actually engaged in mining coal; eliminating, that is to say, union officials and clerks and superintendents and all those who do not mine coal. If the surface men on mines are to be included, the men who clean our streets and drains might be included as well. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan): In view of the fact that I have here spoken previously on the future security of man, I feel that I should express my reasons for either voting against the second reading of the Bill or for materially modifying it after the second reading has been passed. I believe that security is something which will in future be demanded, but I doubt whether there is any wisdom in attempting to form local security or attempting to give security for old age purely to one section of the community unless that section of the community so suffers by its work that some special security is demanded by it from the general public. I have heard mentioned more than once during the debate on the Bill the fact that New South Wales and Victoria have Acts of the type of this measure, but I would make it clear to the House that those Acts are on the respective statute-books of those States for the reason that the coal workers in those States suffer from a disability which justifies the public in giving them some further measure of support when their years of work are done.

I have repeatedly spent most interesting days in Sydney investigating the effects of coalmining upon New South Wales coalminers, because they suffer, from their coalmining, in exactly the same way as our goldminers suffer. Coalminers in this State, however, do not suffer from silicosis. We have a different type of coal from that found in Eastern Australia, and in all the years I have been here, although I have seen cases in which coal has been present in the lungs of miners and has been detected by x-ray, I have never seen here a coalminer suffering from the effects of coal dust or the effects of silica. Our coalminers do not suffer from silicosis.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You would not say you were an absolute authority on that subject, would you?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I can assure the House that I have probably interested myself more in the cause of pulmonary disorders in this State than has any other mem-

ber of my profession. Therefore although it is possible that coalminers do go to other practitioners, it is equally possible that no other member of my profession has made it his business to inquire as to whether there is silicosis present to any degree in Collie. From my knowledge of coalmining the workers there do not suffer from silicosis. If I thought for a moment that the disease was present in Collie, or that the Collie coalminer suffered from anything of the same nature of disease as do Eastern States coalminers, I would favour a pensions Bill for them, or any compensation being granted to them similar to that which is granted to Western Australian goldminers, who do suffer extensively from silicosis. Therefore my support of the Bill could never be given on grounds of health, because I do not believe that the coalminer of Western Australia suffers from the same type of disease as do coalminers in the other States.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Would not you say that there were other disabilities?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am not sufficiently aware of the other disabilities. However, I have made my own inquiries, and have learnt from those of my profession who have practised in the past in Collie that they are not aware of any disabilities suffered there which are particularly related to coal. The result is that my support must be withdrawn from the Bill if this is to be a pensions measure on grounds of health. The other reason why I would not support this particular Bill is that I regard the loose character of its clauses as something that would lay the measure open to very serious malpractices.

Looking at the various clauses under which pensions are to be granted, one finds that from the coalminer who has worked all his life in Collie the tribunal shall bend downwards to the "hard luck" cases and give some form of compensation to them. I am with Mr. Craig when he says that he would withdraw from the Bill all those who do not actually produce coal underground. I would direct the attention of the House to an interesting clause. I do not know that it was ever meant to read as it does: this may be due perhaps to the elimination of certain words. Paragraph (g) of Subclause (1) of Clause 2 reads—

(g) An elected official of an industrial or trade union of employees, or of an association of employees registered as an organisation

under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1904-1934, or under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-1941, of which union or organisation the membership is principally confined to persons falling within any one or more of the classes referred to in paragraphs (a) to (f) of this definition.

I think that words are missing which should have been there to cover that class when the definition of "mine worker" was inserted. Certainly the Bill does not define which elected official it shall be.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is no reason for voting against the Bill.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I am merely drawing attention to the loose character of the wording of the measure.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Read the definition!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: There is no definition applying to the elected official. The only definition comes under "mine worker." The Bill fails to define either an "elected official" or a "union official."

Hon. C. B. Williams: Surely we can alter that.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The Bill defines a "worker" and says that a worker may come from a particular union associated with coal mining; but when it comes to defining an "elected official" the word "any" appears, and means "any." I shall not say much more about the measure. I do feel that there is a great deal to be hammered out of it before a reasonable Bill will be before the House. I am still at a loss to know quite what my attitude should be. I shall be perfectly fair in saying that at the moment I feel inclined to vote against the second reading purely on the ground that I do not believe I can support this as a health measure and cannot support a local attempt at security.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West): I have listened with a good deal of interest to the four speeches delivered this afternoon on the Bill, but on one or two occasions I have not been able to understand fully some of the statements made. Mr. Craig referred to the measure as a "rotten" Bill with nothing good in it whatever. Yet he said he would support the Bill in order to help the real miners, the men working underground. I am not going to say that the Bill is a perfect one, but I indicate at the outset that I shall support the second reading, and for much the same reason as my colleague has stated. In my opinion

the measure seems to put into effect for one section of the community a principle that for a very long time has operated in this State for other sections. My research into pensions in Western Australia goes back to the Superannuation Act of 1871. Right down the intervening 70-odd years, this State and this House have put their seals on pensions of varying kinds. My great regret as regards the present Bill is that the question is not tackled nationally.

I think that Labour men in Australia did their own cause the greatest disservice when they opposed the National Insurance Bill in the Federal Parliament and made it practically impossible for that measure to be proceeded with. Had they not done so a Bill of this nature would have been unnecessary. Why there should be any objection to coalminers receiving pensions in their declining years while other much better favoured persons in the State receive them, I am at a loss to understand. We have had pensions, not on a small scale such as is provided in this Bill, but on a lavish scale. Pensions have been awarded to the Judiciary, to higher officers of the Education Department, to railway employees and to higher officers in the Civil Service.

Hon. L. Craig: All Government employees!

Hon. W. J. MANN: I will come to private employees later on. These pensions have cost the State a tremendous sum. Through the good offices of the Chief Secretary I have had a return prepared showing—not fully because it is too far back to follow up—what pensions for the favoured few in this State have cost the taxpayers. I have gone back only 20 years. While these pensions benefits have been in operation, people on the lower rungs of the ladder in all walks of life have had to make the best provision they could for themselves. In that regard I would point to a most glaring anomaly in the railway service. It will be remembered that certain officers who were in that service prior to 1904 became entitled to pensions. Some of them got in by just a few weeks or a month. But engine-drivers, firemen and cleaners who had been in the service long years before and had worked their life span out, were retired at 65 years of age without even a “thank you.” There was something worse. I recollect the case of a man who had been given a watch in

order that, as an engine-driver, he would have the correct time. The old watch became part of himself. He placed a high sentimental value on it but when he retired at 65 years of age he received a demand that the watch be handed in at once or the consequences would be severe.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: He had the option of buying it, you know.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Later on; not at that particular time. The Engine-drivers' and Firemen's Union took the matter up and as a result of their negotiations I understand that the position since has been that a man who has cared for this small piece of property for all those years may purchase it at the rate of 25s. That is more paltry than asking for it back. The very least the department could do would be to say, “That is yours as a small memento of your service in the department.” This question of recognising pension rights is not peculiar to Australia or Western Australia. I am not going to weary the House with some figures I saw in an English publication the other day showing the colossal amount that it costs the British Government for pensions. It was an enormous figure with very wide ramifications. In those cases provision is made in many instances for the man on the lower grade. Mr. Craig interjected just now that all the employees I quoted were from the Civil Service.

But is it not a fact that in this country all banks, most insurance companies, big manufacturing concerns and industrial establishments have their own superannuation schemes supported by employers? Is it not also a fact that the men who are enjoying these superannuation benefits are working in air-conditioned palatial buildings with most modern fittings and every possible convenience, while men in the Colliery mines sometimes faint at the coal face by reason of the humidity or foul air? I am not putting that up as sob stuff; it is gospel truth. While I have every respect for Dr. Hislop and his medical knowledge I propose to quote some comments from the doctor at Colliery who has been there for some years and has kindly provided me with his views on the health problem. Before I go any further I think I had better quote the figures to which I have referred, for their inclusion in “Hansard” will provide a valuable record. I will give first a statement showing the cost to the

State of pensions under the Superannuation Act of 1871. The figures for the past 20 years—there are 51 other years not included—are as follows—

Year.	Amount. £	Year.	Amount. £
1922-23	36,428	1932-33	81,550
1923-24	40,861	1933-34	87,875
1924-25	44,216	1934-35	100,474
1925-26	47,707	1935-36	114,515
1926-27	53,227	1936-37	120,809
1927-28	59,118	1937-38	128,388
1928-29	63,258	1938-39	133,303
1929-30	68,251	1939-40	141,081
1930-31	77,243	1940-41	145,881
1931-32	67,096	1941-42	152,660

Commencing with £36,428 for 1922-23 and concluding with £152,660, for 1941-42—a 400 per cent. increase—the total for the 20 years is £1,763,941. Can we afford to quibble over a few pounds for Collie coal-miners when in 20 years the élite of our Civil Service have taken over £1,750,000 out of the public funds?

Hon. V. Hamersley: Those people were on very small salaries.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Some of them have retired on pensions amounting to £1,000 a year! I am afraid the hon. member is mixing up the position. I have a return showing the number of ex-civil servants drawing pensions under the Superannuation Act of 1871 on the 30th June last, amounting to £152,600. I want members to appreciate that figure. Those pensions were awarded to ex-officers in the following sections of the Public Service:—

Civil Service	..	..	..	219
Railways	..	..	..	174
Police	..	..	..	10
Education	..	..	..	127
Other	..	..	..	35

Those figures are very illuminating. They show that 565 persons drew £152,660. Let me go a bit further. The estimated cost to the State of long service leave is interesting. There is no long service leave for the coal-miner. Not on your life! He is supposed to work about 250 days in a year.

Hon. L. Craig: Under the Bill, only 60.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I will come to the Bill later on. There are lots of things in the Bill I do not agree with but I want members to get a proper angle on this pensions question. It is estimated that the annual cost to the State in this respect for 1938-39—and I am using that period be-

cause it represents the last normal year prior to the wartime restriction—was—

	£
Civil Service	.. .. . 18,000
Police	.. .. . 5,000
Education (teaching staff)	.. .. . 16,000
Wages staff (including Railways)	73,594
Total	.. .. . £112,594

Yet some people quibble about the coal-miners wanting a maximum of £4,500 a year after commencing at £2,000 for the first year and rising £500 for each of the following five years.

Hon. L. Craig: That is the Government's contribution.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes; they want that amount from the public purse.

Hon. L. Craig: From the Government.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I know what the hon. member has at the back of his mind, and perhaps I am a bit in agreement with him! The next figures I have are also worth hearing. They deal with the Government's contribution to superannuation and pensions other than those provided under the 1871 Act. For the year ended the 30th June, 1942, these were as follows:—

Judges' pensions	.. .. . 1,000
Police Benefit Fund	.. .. . 5,600
Superannuation and Family Benefits Act of 1939	.. .. . 77,480
Mine Workers' Relief Fund	.. .. . 15,895
Miner's Phthisis Compensation	.. .. . 41,126
Total	.. .. . £141,101

I do not want members to think I am complaining about those figures, particularly those relating to miner's phthisis and mine workers' relief, but if they take the £112,000 I quoted a minute ago with regard to long-service leave and add it to this additional figure, they will get a total of £253,652. Add to that the £152,660, to which I previously referred, and we have an amount of over £400,000. Members will thus get some idea of what pensions are costing this State annually. If anyone can get up then and complain at the amount of money it is proposed to expend on coal-miners' pensions, I cannot understand his reasoning. I said just now that I would have a word or two to say with regard to the health of miners. I know the Collie miners pretty well and they know me pretty well. I have nothing to thank them for. They gave me the biggest hiding I ever had in my life, and I told them so. When I first stood

for Parliament I fought the president of the Miners' Union and was beaten two to one. After I had given them 12 years of good service—

Hon. V. Hamersley: You are turning the other cheek.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Collie miners have always invited me to their various functions but at the end of 12 years when I had again to face the electors and was opposed by a man who was not a miner, they beat me again by over six to one, the voting being something like 610 to 98. I want the House to understand that so far as any suggestion of my playing-up to the Collie miners is concerned, there can be nothing to it. I have nothing to thank them for. I have always found them jolly good fellows and have always got on well with them, but in the past there has been no question about where I stood politically with them.

However, I wish to refer to some comments I received from Dr. Copping last Friday. I have his permission to use his name. In the course of the doctor's statement he said—

You ask for my opinion in general of the health of the Collie miners and of the effect of the working conditions upon their health. For the past three years 95 per cent. of my male patients have been Collie coalminers and the following observations are based on that experience. They refer to underground men only.

Hon. L. Craig: Is he the panel doctor there?

Hon. W. J. MANN: He is a doctor practising at Collie.

Hon. L. Craig: Is he paid by the union? Is he the panel doctor?

Hon. W. J. MANN: He is a medical man who is perfectly justified in making this statement. If Mr. Craig wishes to infer that the doctor's statement may be biased because of his position, I think such a suggestion is most unworthy. I am indeed sorry to hear such a suggestion.

Hon. L. Craig: I am not suggesting anything at all.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am glad to hear that, for some people might take it that way.

Hon. L. Craig: I do not care how people may take it; I merely asked the question for information.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The doctor went on to say—

In the mass the miners are not a healthy looking lot, and appearance goes a long way in the assessment of an individual's general health. The miners have not that healthy colour of skin which is to be regarded as normal in this country. The complexion is sallow and subject to pimples, pustules, boils, and other disturbances which are mostly attributable to excessive sweating. We see a remarkable change in the appearance of a man who has been working underground for years after he has been on the surface for a few weeks. This change is especially marked in the young miners who have been in the Army.

Then the doctor goes on to say that even in the very best possible circumstances a coal mine can never approximate ordinary conditions under which men labour elsewhere, and he is quite right in that contention. Then his statement proceeds—

A coalmine obviously can never be a health resort. The lack of light, the dust, the increased humidity and the fumes and smoke from explosives do not constitute environment for which the human machine was designed. Even when the working conditions are the best possible, underground work must be the least salubrious of occupations. . . . A sense of fatigue and a demand for a "tonic" is one of the commonest things to bring a miner to see his doctor.

Very frequently when miners emerge from the mine they can be seen, to use a colloquialism, to be "all out." Most of the men are engaged on piecework. Certainly they have a seven-hour bank to bank day, but I have been down the mines and I have seen men working the machines and on the face. I have not been able to stop down very long because of the perspiration and humidity. The men were bathed in perspiration and looked as if buckets of water had been thrown over them from time to time. There can be no disguising the conditions under which they work, and those conditions are such as must inevitably soon wear men and machinery out. The doctor went on to say in his report—

The most unsatisfactory problem I have to deal with in my practice is the miner from 55 to 70 years of age who comes complaining of a multitude of minor ailments which together simply mean that, as a machine, he is wearing out, or has worn out.

That refers to men of from 55 to 70 years of age.

Hon. T. Moore: And that is no city doctor's opinion.

Hon. W. J. MANN: As is well known, there are men in the Collie mines who are

70 years of age, and I think references were made to them during the course of the debate in another place.

The Chief Secretary: Those men returned to the mine during the war period.

Hon. W. J. MANN: We all know there are a few cricketers who have made quite good scores even after Father Time has placed a heavy score against their years. So it is with some of these elderly miners at Collie. Some of them can register first-class tallies, and there may be a dozen or more of such men in the mines today. We must appreciate the conditions under which these miners work. If it were possible to parade 1,000 miners at Collie and a stranger were asked as the men went by if the men worked in God's sunlight under average conditions, I would bet every shilling I have that the answer would be, "No; you cannot tell me that they are working under those conditions. They must be working under conditions that are wearing down their health." Dr. Copping further said—

In my opinion, which is solely medical, no man should be allowed underground under 18 years of age and should not remain underground longer than 20 years. I have attended five or six cases of men who had collapsed at the coal face. They have been well on entering the mine and 24 hours after the collapse they were fully recovered. Their complaint is "bad air." I believe the cause to have been heavy exertion coupled with increased humidity and defective ventilation. These few cases probably represent the most susceptible individuals.

The retiring age should be fixed compulsorily at 60, if not at 55 years. The fact that there are exceptional individuals who remain wiry and tough at 70 does not make any less necessary the above reforms for the majority. Logically the greater the number of machines and the fewer the men working underground, the better.

That is the gist of the statement made for me by Dr. Copping, without his possessing any information in the first instance as to what use I was likely to put it. Whatever the defects of the Bill may be, I shall support the second reading. There are defects in it and after the Bill passes the second reading stage, as I feel sure it will, I propose to take a hand in an endeavour to straighten some of them out. We have been given some details regarding the work of coalminers. If there is any one section of industry throughout Australia that deserves the very best that can be extended, it is that represented by the men

working in the coalmines at Collie. We have had a wonderful run from them; of that there can be no doubt whatever. They have had their quarrels, but with only one or perhaps two exceptions—I have some particulars regarding one and I believe there was another brief stoppage of a few hours—I can recollect no appreciable hold-up of operations.

Hon. T. Moore: They are good men and true.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The Chief Secretary quoted some figures and Mr. Bolton quoted others. During the course of the debate I remarked, by way of interjection, that more coal had been hewn last year than ever before in the history of the fields. I have some figures to quote, but I am afraid they are slightly under those mentioned by Mr. Bolton. The figures that I have embody the claim that the output constituted a record. In dealing with this matter I feel somewhat like Mark Twain who said that there were "liars, god damn liars and statisticians." I may inform the House straightaway that a statistician provided me with these figures: but nevertheless I shall place them before the House. The particulars I shall quote appeared in "The West Australian" of the 18th February of this year under the heading of "Collie Coal Production." The paragraph read—

The Collie coalfield produced 581,175 tons of coal last year, the highest output on record.

That total is slightly less than the one quoted by Mr. Bolton.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Yes, I quoted 604,000 tons.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The report proceeded—

The value of production was £461,494. Scarcely one day was lost during the year, the mines generally working 12 shifts a fortnight. Only one instance of industrial trouble occurred, two days' work being lost at the Cardiff mine because of a dispute between the miners and the management.

In 1941 the mines produced 556,577 tons of coal valued at £389,278, so that an increase of 24,598 tons was shown last year. The increased value of the output was £72,216. The average number of men employed in the industry for the year was 823—a record figure for the field. In 1941 the average number of workers was 778.

I think those are astonishing figures. By way of comparison I shall quote a report appearing in "The Daily News" of the 20th February last under the heading of "Seventy Stoppages in Seven Weeks." In

that report the following statement was made—

To date this year since the miners resumed after the holidays seven weeks ago—

This refers, of course, to New South Wales.

—more than 124,000 tons of coal have been lost by strikes. The majority of stoppages were due to disputes directly affecting miners.

I need not read the whole of the report, but will mention the last portion which embodies a statement made by Mr. Lowden, who is what is known as the southern president of the coalminers' organisation in New South Wales, which appeared in the miners' official organ "Common Cause," as follows:—

The whole position savours of anarchy because of failure to act as part of the union, lack of appreciation of the federation policy and an attitude towards the war effort that cannot be tolerated.

There we have 70 stoppages in seven weeks, and the Collie mines have been going for over 50 years and by the greatest stretch of imagination one cannot for a moment suggest that there have been anything like seven stoppages there in that period. As against that we have the position in New South Wales.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And that is where the coalminers were given pensions.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I have been told that pensions were offered to the miners in New South Wales in the hope that the practice would be conducive to the workers giving better service. My impression of the New South Wales coalminer is that if we gave him the earth he would not be satisfied. If we were able to give him the Kingdom of Heaven he would want the other place as well. There is one other matter I shall mention regarding coalminers and the justice of their claims, and that is regarding accidents. It is a fact that the number of accidents is growing at an alarming rate, and this is a matter that concerns both men and management. A newspaper paragraph states—

Accidents in the industry increased alarmingly during the year, 731 being reported. This is the highest accident figure in the history of the field. Two fatal accidents occurred, 251 serious accidents and 478 of a minor nature. In 1941 accidents totalled 564 and in 1940, 495.

So much in justification of the miners. While I agree with the object of the Bill, there are several features to which I have

objection and which, in my judgment, are inequitable and unnecessary. Were we living under normal conditions, I would say that 60 years or less would be a reasonable age for the men in the industry to retire. For many years I have contended from my place in this House that one of the ways to bring about stability in industry in Australia, because of the mechanisation of industry, would be by withdrawing men from industry at a given age, say 55 or 60 years, to make room for the rising generation. I have been told that there is a provision in the Bill—I have not yet found it—or that it is understood that the compulsory retirement of men from the coal-mining industry at the age of 60 is to be suspended during the war. I shall look through the Bill once more in search of that provision. If it is included it will cover one of my objections. We should stipulate that this provision may be suspended during the war.

I do not wish to appear pessimistic, but I think we are about half-way through the war, perhaps not even that, but we cannot tell what is before us. We in Australia are living altogether too easily and comfortably and have not settled down to the really hard conditions of war. While I agree that 60 years is none too early for a coalminer to retire, I believe it will be definitely wrong in war-time to make it mandatory for men on reaching that age to leave the industry and remain out of it. There are men of 60 years who may be physically able to carry on a little longer, even if they could not work full time, but who would, in a national crisis, be glad to help.

Reference has been made to the definition of "mineworker." I made it clear at the outset of my remarks that my main consideration is for the older men of Collie who have given wonderful service, and have kept the younger element in check and have played the game by the people and the State. In my estimation they are deserving of all possible consideration. But there are others who seem to have got into the category of "mineworkers" and apparently the old men will have to carry them on their backs under this scheme. The Bill provides that a workmen's inspector, a check weigher or miners' check inspector shall be included. A check weigher is more or less a clerk. The definition, however, does not include an underground manager. A work-

men's inspector has to go below and so does the underground manager.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There is quite a difference between them and the miners.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I agree, and if we are not careful we shall be perpetuating the old system of providing a pension for one man while a man who works alongside him is not eligible for one. I should like the Minister to clear up that point. Then there is the question of including union officials. I am sure Mr. Williams will support me when I say that it would not be fair to overload the scheme by including too many union officials. I think there is a catch in the union-officials proposal.

A man came to me recently without any instruction from any union and urged me to do certain things. I asked him what he worked at. He was employed on the outskirts of the mine—on the boundaries—and he thought he should be roped in. He was talking about the unions and I thought I detected some flaw in his argument. I asked him which union he was referring to and he said that four unions were concerned—the Collie miners, amalgamated engine drivers, another section of engine drivers and the clerical staff. He said, "They will all be in it." If we are going to include two or three dead-heads out of each union, we shall be going outside the scheme.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The engine drivers' union would not have a permanent official there.

Hon. W. J. MANN: It has some sort of official at Collie. The provisions of the Bill might be stretched to bring in representatives of other sections. If the intention is that one member of the miners' union only is to be included, that might be tolerated, but I do not think that any number of men of that description should be brought under the scheme. The secretary of the union might be an ex-miner who could well be included. Clause 6 defines among other things the periods which a man shall have worked in or about a mine in order to qualify for a pension. One is that he must have worked as a mineworker for not less than 60 days for the year immediately preceding his sixtieth year. That provision of sixty days seems to be bordering on the absurd. I should like the Minister to explain why that period is mentioned.

There are other provisions—a man must have continuously resided in the State for five years immediately preceding his attainment of 60 years and must have worked in or about a coalmine in this State for not less than 300 days during that period of five years. That would mean an average of 60 days or 12 weeks per year, which seems illogical to me. I should like some information on that point. There is another provision, namely, that the miner shall have been engaged in the industry in the State for a period of not less than 20 years in all. That appears to be satisfactory. Another provision is that he has been resident in the State for not less than five years out of the seven years immediately preceding the date of his retirement, or that he has actually worked in or about a coal mine in Australia for not less than 500 days in the seven years. That would mean an average of 71 days. I consider that the period of residence in the State should be ten years with considerably more than 71 days of work per year. All those figures are enigmatical and it is difficult to understand their intent.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Can you explain the "hard-luck" clause?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I shall come to that in a moment. There is the question of dealing with the dividends mentioned by Mr. Craig. I am with him in his attitude; I think it would be quite wrong to do as suggested. When I read the "hard-luck" clause, my mind went back to the late Mr. Holmes, and I could imagine his saying that this looked like a big loophole or a nigger in the woodpile. That just about expresses my feelings in the absence of any further explanation. In conclusion, I am of opinion that the Collie men have a definite claim to consideration, especially in view of the fact that men who have drawn salaries of up to £1,000 a year, who have been able to live under the very best conditions and have had opportunity to make provision for their old age, are drawing pensions from the State, instances of which I gave earlier in my remarks, and I would not be a party to denying pensions to the Collie miners, which they consider is their right, notwithstanding that the Government might have some bigger schemes in view for the distant future.

On motion by Hon. T. Moore, debate adjourned.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

Message from the Assembly requesting a conference on the amendment insisted upon by the Council now considered.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [3.58]: I move—

That the Assembly's request for a conference be agreed to, that the managers for the Council be Hon. C. F. Baxter, Hon. G. B. Wood, and the mover, and that the conference be held in the President's room at 4.30 p.m.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South): I am opposed to the holding of a conference. It is nearly time we did the right thing, instead of wasting the time of the country. We should not go into conference on such a ridiculous question as this. I, with one or two other Labour members, supported the Government on this point on two or three occasions, and I consider it sheer waste of time to ask this Chamber to go into conference on a Bill which has been turned down before by the House. Two of us voted in favour of it on a former occasion because we did not wish to see the Ministers left on their own. If the House agrees to the holding of the conference, the members appointed to it by this House will proceed to the meeting with the full knowledge that the House is definitely opposed to a particular provision of the Bill. Why should not a municipality have the right to discharge its officials? The electors have the right to sack us, and we have the right to sack our officials. It is a standing disgrace that the Assembly should ask for a conference on this Bill.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan): In ordinary circumstances, I should always be agreeable to a conference, but certain things have happened since this amendment was insisted on by this House that make me extremely doubtful as to whether the conference will be of any value. The circumstances I refer to are these: Communications have been sent from the Minister's department to the various municipalities asking them to endeavour to induce their representatives in the Legislative Council to reverse the attitude they have taken up on this matter and adding that, if this were not done, the Minister would drop the Bill. If that is the case, if the Minister is determined in that event to drop the Bill,

then I think we might just as well drop the Bill straightaway. I have been communicated with by certain authorities which say that the Bill is really a matter of convenience and not a matter of any great public importance. Whilst they are not altogether opposed to the idea, they are entirely antagonistic to the suggestion that if this amendment is not agreed to the Minister will drop the Bill. They say, "Well, if that is his attitude, let him drop the Bill and have done with it."

THE HONORARY MINISTER (in reply): I am surprised at the attitude taken up by Mr. Williams and Sir Hal Colebatch.

Hon. C. B. Williams: This is the third time I have taken it up. I was with you on the first occasion.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I know nothing about a communication having been sent out by the Minister's department.

Hon. H. L. Roche: It was sent out all right. I got a copy.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: I have seen copies of it.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: This is the procedure we have always adopted when a request has been made by the Assembly for a conference. This House is always ready to compromise, and I think the request is reasonable. The amendment is also reasonable. Despite the opinions expressed by Sir Hal Colebatch and Mr. Williams, I see no reason why we should not accede to the Assembly's request. We should do so as a matter of courtesy in order to allow another place to put forward its viewpoint on the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	12
Majority against				1

AYES.	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. W. R. Hall	(Teller.)
NOES.	
Hon. I. B. Bolton	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Tuckey
	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.*Assembly's Request for Conference.*

Message from the Assembly requesting a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and notifying that at such conference the Assembly would be represented by three managers, now considered.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.10]: I move—

That the Assembly's request for a conference be agreed to, that the managers for the Council be elected by ballot and that the conference be held in the President's room at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

Conference Managers Appointed.

The **PRESIDENT**: I think I might read to members Standing Order 332 which deals with the holding of a ballot:—

Each member present shall give to the Clerk a list of the names of such members as he may think fit and proper to be chosen at such ballot; and if any list contain a larger or lesser number of names than are to be chosen, it shall be void and rejected. When all the lists are collected, the Clerk with the mover, acting as scrutineers, shall ascertain and report to the President the names of the members having the greatest number of votes, which members shall be declared to be chosen. If two or more members have an equality of votes, the President shall determine by lot which shall be chosen.

The House will have to elect three members by ballot.

Ballot taken.

The **PRESIDENT**: There is an equality of votes for the manager who will be placed third, and the Standing Order I have quoted provides—

If two or more members have an equality of votes, the President shall determine by lot which shall be chosen.

I shall now choose by lot.

Ballot resulted in the Chief Secretary, Hon. J. G. Hislop, and Hon. C. F. Baxter being appointed as managers for the Council.

Message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

Sitting suspended from 4.25 to 5.8 p.m.

Conference Managers' Report.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I have to report that the managers appointed by the Council met the managers appointed by the Assembly and failed to arrive at an agreement.

The **PRESIDENT**: Then the Bill is lost.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.9 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 23rd February, 1943.

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The **SPEAKER** took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (2).**VERMIN DESTRUCTION.***As to Rabbits on Crown Lands.*

Mr. **DONEY** asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Has he noted that the report by the Chief Inspector of Rabbits tabled on the 28th January—which embodies a reply to my question dealing with the responsibility of the Agricultural Bank and other departments for the destruction of rabbits on lands controlled by them—is only a recital of conditions existing before my question was submitted, and takes no cognisance of my request that the Agricultural Bank, the Lands and other Government Departments should initiate some new method which would recognise that the responsibility for rabbit destruction on lands controlled by them is their own and not that of local vermin boards or of adjoining private land owners? 2, If it can be shown by the department concerned that to do this work itself would entail the use of more manpower than when done by existing means, will he come to an arrangement with individual vermin boards