

The Premier: Who objects to the fullest inquiry?

Mr. SIMONS: I hope the Premier will not object to the appointment of a select committee.

The Premier: You ought to bring down an amending Bill and submit that to a select committee.

Mr. SIMONS: Such a Bill could be more intelligently handled in the light of the evidence that would be taken at the inquiry.

Hon. P. Collier: The motion provides for that amongst other things.

Mr. SIMONS: The Conservator is an apostle of a new forestry religion, and like other men of his kind he is in danger of being crucified. I am anxious to press for the appointment of a select committee with power to take evidence in any part of the State where forestry interests are concerned. Let us get the rights and wrongs of what is called the forestry clash. I hope the Government will not prevent the collection of the necessary evidence so that we may have the whole position cleared up and a proper solution of the difficulty arrived at.

Mr. MONEY (Bunbury) [10.7]: This matter has been introduced in consequence of the question having arisen as to the extension of the leases under the Forests Act of 1919. The Act was passed with the clear intention that those who paid rent for their leases would be allowed the opportunity afterwards of cutting during the period when the mills were closed in consequence of the war. The Leader of the Opposition was responsible for this particular amendment in the Bill. In lieu of rents the lessees of leases or concessions were to pay the full royalty during the period of the extension. In other words, if there had been no war, there would have been exactly the same cutting done as there will be under the extension, because the extensions only apply to leases or concessions on which operations were suspended during the war. The Government thus get the advantage of the full royalties in lieu of rents, and therefore obtain an advantage through the suspension.

Hon. P. Collier: That has to be deducted from the royalty.

The Minister for Mines: No, you struck that out.

Hon. P. Collier: That was my amendment.

Mr. MONEY: It was put in at the instance of the Leader of the Opposition. Not only have the Government been paid royalties on the timber but they have been paid rents for the period during which there was no cutting. It is clear from the Act that this was the intention of Parliament. Every member in the House understood the condition at the time. There is a section dealing with the matter which says that the Governor in Executive Council, that is the same as Cabinet, shall grant an extension.

The Premier: And not Mr. Lane-Poole.

Mr. MONEY: The matter of the extension of the leases or concessions is entirely one for Parliament and for Cabinet. No extension can be granted except in conformity with the Act, otherwise it would be granted contrary to the intentions of Parliament. On that point there can be no argument. I cannot understand why so much attention has been given to this question. I have the highest opinion of Mr. Lane-Poole, who is fully seized of the importance of our forests. Unfortunately, he is apt to see that and nothing else. He is evidently over zealous and over anxious to conserve our forests, and he has forgotten that part of the forest policy which concerns Parliament and Cabinet. He has been ill advised on this matter. I believe that he may still recognise that this particular question is one that should be left to Parliament and that Parliament must prevail.

On motion by Mr. Mullany debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.13 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 8th September, 1921.*

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

### QUESTION—VENEREAL DISEASE, TREATMENT.

Hon. J. E. DODD asked the Minister for Education: 1, How many times since last enactment of Section 256 of the amending Health Act has the Commissioner of Public Health had occasion to use the powers contained therein? 2, How many medical practitioners have notified the department of failure on part of their patients to continue treatment, and what action has been taken? 3, How

many "notifications" have been received from private practitioners that they are treating patients suffering from venereal disease?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Once. 2, During same period as covered by above question, 30. In each case the person reported has been written to and directed to resume treatment. Subsequent action has depended upon the result of that direction. 3, During same period, 542.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAYS, SPECIAL PAYMENTS TO STAFF.

Hon. A. H. PANTON asked the Minister for Education: 1, What special payments were made to members of the Railways salaried staff in connection with the railway stoppage of January last? 2, Who were the officers so paid? 3, What were the reasons for such special payments?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, £10, £5, and £5. 2, L. T. Hickey, general secretary Central Transport Committee, £10; W. E. Grose, secretary Transport Sectional Committee, £5; C. Raymond, secretary Allocation Committee, £5. 3, The recommendation of the president of the committee as recognition of exceptional service rendered by them whilst engaged in the work of the Central Transport Committee.

#### BILLS (5)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Courts of Session.
  - 2, Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments.
  - 3, Local Courts Act Amendment.
  - 4, Evidence Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Assembly.
- 5, Fromantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.
- Passed.

#### BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

##### Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short measure, designed to serve a purpose which, I think hon. members will agree, is necessary. Under the Adoption of Children Act of 1896 it is provided in Section 10 that the order of adoption shall confer the surname of the adopting parent on the adopted child in addition to the proper name of the child. It is proposed in the Bill to strike out those words "in addition to the proper name of the child." It is considered desirable that when people wish to adopt a child, particularly an infant, they shall wipe out the past altogether and the child shall be brought up as their own child, unencumbered by any other name whatever. Mr. Lovekin, the other day, made reference to the very large number of adop-

tions carried out recently. I am sure the hon. member will agree with me when I say that great credit is due to the department for the work done in that connection. There have been upwards of 80 adoptions during the last year, and in the great majority of cases those adoptions were of very young children. Also, in a very large number of those cases the people who adopt the children are foster parents to whom the children have been allotted by the department and who are receiving a weekly sum for the maintenance of those children. But, after a time, the foster parent's affection for the child becomes so strong that the foster parent desires to adopt it, although that act of adoption means that the foster parent gives up all claim on the State. In practically every case it is the wish of the adopting parent that this provision of the Act, which compels the child to take its original name as well as the name of the adopting parent, shall be repealed. That is the sole purpose of the Bill, to strike out that provision, so that in future the only obligation will be that on adoption the child takes the name of the adopting parent. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.40]: I am going to ask the Minister if he will agree to leave the Committee stage till the next sitting, as I propose to suggest an amendment to meet very serious difficulties which have arisen under the parent Act. The Minister is quite right in congratulating the department on their efforts in bringing about the adoption of very many children. Either 85 or 87 have been adopted this year, a very great relief to the State. Since 1916, when the present secretary took charge, there have been 588 adoptions, which mean many tens of thousands saved to the State, besides the betterment of many scores of children. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [4.42]: I also have pleasure in supporting the Bill, because it is in keeping with what is taking place in many other countries. Those who have read the history of Russia will know that either in Moscow or Petrograd, I forget which, they have a magnificent institution for the reception of children.

Hon. J. Cornell: So, too, in Paris. Why quote Russia?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: It is a very fine institution, and is entirely maintained by a tax on gambling and pawn-broking. Children are taken in without any name, simply on a ticket. Just a number is exchanged. The experience there, as here, is that when the children reach 10 or 12 years of age they are adopted by the foster mothers. Occasionally the real parents bring back the number and wish to have the child. But generally the children have become so attached to the foster parents that they re-

fuse to leave them. This institution works no end of good. The only trouble is that the conditions are made too comfortable. Such a degree of heat is provided, and there is so little fresh air, that when these children go out to poorer homes or go to work, they cannot withstand the change and, in consequence, there is a good deal of mortality amongst them. However, something of a similar nature happens there as here; the children are adopted or sent out to foster parents. It is a very great success. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

#### Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill containing only one effective clause. Whilst I am sure that hon. members all appreciate to the full the advantage it is to the House to have you, Sir, presiding over its deliberations, they must feel regret that it has meant the loss of your services on the floor of the House. This is one of the measures upon which I, personally, would have liked to hear what you had to say. The Bill is to amend the Act passed in 1911. I have read carefully the debates which took place in Parliament when the Bill for the Act was brought before it, but I can find no reference to the particular point we now propose to amend. The Act of 1911 gave power to the Governor-in-Council to grant to any person, on such terms and conditions as to the Governor may seem fit, a license to the exclusion of all other persons to take, collect, and gather, for any term not exceeding 14 years, from any portion of the coastal waters of the State and the foreshore or adjacent land above high-water mark, being Crown lands within the meaning of the Land Act, 1898, any marine animal, life, or product of the sea not being any of the fish mentioned in the second schedule, or any amendments thereof. The second schedule contained a list evidently comprising the whole of the edible fish in our waters, thus precluding anyone from having the exclusive right to take these edible fish. Certain restrictions were imposed in regard to the area which might be granted under license. It was also provided that nothing in the Act should authorise the issue of any exclusive license to take, collect or gather hawk's-bill turtle, trepang or dugong. The purpose of the amending Bill is to remove that proviso, and make it possible for the Governor-in-Council to grant exclusive license for the taking of hawk's-bill turtle, trepang and dugong. In moving the second reading of the Bill in 1911 the then Colonial Secretary made reference to inquiries which had come from people in London who professed to re-

present large capital, and suggested that if this Bill were passed, and the Governor had this power to grant exclusive licenses, a good deal of money would be brought into this State from companies to be formed for the purpose of carrying on operations.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is there any limit to the area over which persons would be allowed to operate?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Act says—

No license shall be granted under this section, in respect of any length of foreshore exceeding 75 miles, until the expiration of 14 days after the draft of such license has been laid upon the Table of each House of Parliament.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: For how long?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: For a period not exceeding 14 years. I do not know whether the hawk's-bill turtle, the trepang or dugong were excluded on the ground that they were edible fish, but they are not included in the schedule dealing with edible fish. Trepang of course is used only for food. The flesh of the dugong is eaten, but its value lies chiefly in the oil that is obtained from it. The edible turtle is known as the green-back. The hawk's-bill turtle is not looked upon as edible, nor is the logger-head, which is a large species of turtle. The value of the hawk's bill lies in its beautifully modelled plates, which we know as tortoise-shell. There are some fine specimens of this shell to be seen at present in the exhibition hall in Barrack-street, prepared by Mr. Stewart after his recent trip to the district.

Hon. J. Nicholson: De Rougemont also got some turtles.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: At London sales held in May last Australian tortoiseshell fetched 27s. per lb., but some West Indian shell sold at as high a price as 125s. per lb. These prices are not regarded as high, for the price of anything of that sort is low at present. The green-back is found as far south as Shark Bay, and north as far as Wyndham. The hawk's-bill is found almost entirely north of the North-West Cape. By far the greater number is found between Collier Bay and Admiralty Gulf. No systematic attempt has in the past been made to exploit what is considered to be a very valuable industry. When the 1911 Act was introduced, the fact was emphasised that not only would it have the effect of encouraging investment of capital in this industry but also of protecting the article itself, for the reason that it would prevent the indiscriminate capture of the particular article which might be fished for under the Bill. Although it is impossible at present for the Government to grant exclusive licenses to any Australian company to develop and exploit these products, the fact remains that people do come from other parts of the world and take away these creatures in large numbers. They pay no licensee fees and are entirely without any supervision.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do you propose to prevent them in future?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. When an exclusive license is granted to a company, for instance, no other persons will be able to come in. The coast-line so far as it is covered by the area comprised in the exclusive license will be protected against anyone else, and those who do get the license will pay such fee, royalty, or rent as is agreed upon between the Government and themselves.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: It must be within the three-mile limit.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. We have no jurisdiction outside that. I do not know that they can carry on at all unless they have the right to operate within the three-mile limit.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I do not suppose so.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Fisheries Department say that large numbers of people come over from Koepang and the adjacent island, and collect and remove large quantities of hawks-bill turtle shell, trepang and dugong, and that we derive no benefit from that trade.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Where do they handle the product, from their boats or from the shore.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know; probably they distribute it wherever it is most convenient to them. There are people possessed with a good deal of knowledge of this coast and the possibilities of the industry, who are prepared to operate there straight away. When an exclusive license is granted it will be given under conditions which will ensure that the people concerned shall not hold the area in idleness. They must put up the necessary capital and make something of the industry.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are you framing regulations to that effect?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We already have regulations. These have been framed under the 1911 Act. It has been proved that the proviso which excludes the granting of licenses for this particular purpose makes the proposition unattractive. I have discussed the matter with the Fisheries Department and have read carefully the debates that ensued when the 1911 Bill was dealt with. I again express my regret that you, Sir, who took so prominent a part in the debates upon the 1911 Bill, and who approved warmly of the general provision for the granting of exclusive licenses, particularly for the purpose of developing industry and of protecting these resources so that they should not be depleted by indiscriminate handling, cannot express your opinion regarding this particular measure. I do not intend to press for the Committee stage until every member has had an opportunity of fully inquiring into the question. My opinion is that the passing of the Bill will prevent the unauthorised taking of large quantities of hawks-bill turtle, trepang and dugong, and will encourage our own people

in Western Australia to establish a valuable and permanent industry. I move —

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. G. W. MILES (North) [4.55]: I hope we shall be given an opportunity to look carefully into this matter. There are millions of pounds worth of fish in the sea along our coast, including turtle, trepang and dugong. I do not wish to see the Bill rushed through, or a monopoly created in any of these products. In the tortoise shell we have a valuable industry which should be the means of employing, for instance, many of our incapacitated soldiers. One of the officers of a ship that trades along the coast has taken up the hobby of polishing turtle shell, and I understand he has made as much as £35 in a round trip of a month. He has been doing this work in his spare time, and carving the shell into combs, bracelets, handles for ladies' handbags, and so forth. The industry should prove of great advantage to the State. I do not want anything to be done that will create a monopoly, for we want to make the best we can out of the industry. I do not know that the Government are fully seized of the importance of this industry. It strikes me that some of our limbless soldiers could be found profitable employment in this direction. I only rose to draw the attention of hon. members to the value the turtle is to Western Australia, not only the hawks-bill but the edible fish as well.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Greig, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.56]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 20th September.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 4.57 p.m.*