

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it no longer disagreed with the amendments insisted upon by the Council.

House adjourned at 2.20 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 19th December, 1933.

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

QUESTION—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT, DISCOUNT ON RATES.

Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Works: Will he give consideration to the advisableness of amending Section 254 of the Road Districts Act with the object of increasing the period over which road boards may grant a discount on rates paid to them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Section 36 of Act No. 35 of 1932 provides that discount may be allowed in respect of rates that may be paid before the 30th September, and, in special circumstances, up to the 31st October in each year. I do not propose further to amend it.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the under-mentioned Bills:—

- 1, Forests Act Amendment.
- 2, Metropolitan Whole Milk Act Amendment.
- 3, Land Tax and Income Tax.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.35]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills introduced without notice to be passed through their remaining stages in one day, and all messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day they are received.

This is the motion that is usually moved at this stage of the session. In fact—

Mr. Latham: It is a bit late.

The PREMIER: Yes; it is generally moved two or three weeks before the end of the session. If it is intended to close the proceedings of Parliament during the present week, it will be necessary to deal with messages from the Legislative Council on the day they are received, and also to pass Bills through all stages on the one day. I give members an assurance that any new Bills that will be introduced will be given due consideration. It is necessary to have this power. In another place the Standing Orders have been suspended for the last fortnight.

MR. LATHAM (York) [4.36]: I have no objection to the motion but I hope the Premier will not introduce any new Bills. I understand there will be some legislation from another place, but if any new Bills are to be brought forward, I hope they will not be of a controversial nature, otherwise we shall not get through in the time suggested by the Premier.

The Premier: There will be none that I know of, but there will be messages from another place.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and there is an absolute majority present.

Question put and passed.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: This is purely a formal Bill and provides for the continuance of Section 10A of the Act until the 30th June next. As soon as the State Transport Co-ordination Bill becomes law, it will supersede this provision, which normally would expire at the end of the month. The Bill provides for Section 10A to be operative to the end of June next. The Transport Bill will be operative as from the 1st July and after that date there will be no necessity for the provision dealt with by the Bill.

Mr. Stubbs: Do you think another place will have finished dealing with the Transport Bill by that time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He would be a courageous man who would prophesy about anything in these days, but that is what the Bill provides for. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. LATHAM (York) [4.39] There is only one danger and that is in the fact that the Minister is taking a risk. I think it would have been far better had the Bill provided for the continuance of Section 10A of the Traffic Act to the end of the year, with provision for it to cease by proclamation any time after the 30th June next. I am glad the Minister has confidence regarding the Transport Bill being passed, but the progress with it in another place is slow. I will not raise any objection to the Bill, but in the interests of those who are administering the Traffic Act, I do not think we can afford to take the risk that the Minister suggests. However, that is the responsibility of the Government and not of the

Opposition, so I will not pursue that point further. I merely draw attention to a possible difficulty.

Mr. Sleeman: You must know something.

Mr. LATHAM: No, I do not.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Remaining Stages.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.41] in moving the third reading said: The figures that Cabinet had before them when approval was given to the introduction of the Bill have been checked in the meantime, and I believe we now have estimates as correct as it is possible for them to be furnished. Regarding the complaint made by the Leader of the Opposition that information was not furnished by the Government when the Bill was previously before the House, I do not think the comment was altogether justified coming from the source it did, because frequently, when we sat in Opposition, we were left without vital information, particularly with regard to the finances of the State.

Mr. Ferguson: The Leader of the Opposition did not withhold information.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was denied by the Government with which the hon. member was associated, although the information was such that members and the country should have had.

Mr. Latham: I do not know of any such information that was withheld.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would instance the legislation under which the Finance and Development Board was set up. An indebtedness of £700,000 was incurred under that heading, but neither Parliament, the Press nor yet the people knew anything about it. That information was unknown until the Premier unearthed it

after we had taken office comparatively recently.

Mr. Doney: Had you asked for it and had the information been refused?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: During the last election the Premier made the statement time after time that the Act was inoperative and that no money had been borrowed under its provisions. He also made the statement in the Eastern States, and those statements were never contradicted by former members of the Mitchell Government. Only when the Premier made the statement on the floor of the House comparatively recently did the people know anything of the fact that £700,000 had been spent under that legislation.

Mr. Doney: That is rather different from being denied information on the floor of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That information was not supplied to us.

Mr. Latham: I think that is the only instance you can quote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was an important matter.

The Minister for Lands: You told us that you had got through on a certain amount of loan funds and we found out that £700,000 extra had been expended.

Mr. Patrick: That is what we were told.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have given the facts. So far as can be estimated at the moment, the Bill now before the House involves an additional expenditure of £72,000. The provision that enabled the goldfields wages and salaried workers to be brought into the same relationship to the basic wage there as their co-workers on the coast enjoy with respect to the basic wage here, means that, over a period of two years, the adjustment will cost us a little over £20,000, so that under these two headings the Government will be involved in a cost, arising out of their decision to deal with those two phases, of something over £92,000. The provision regarding the goldfields workers will operate over a period of eight months, and under the Bill a period of six months will be covered. It is estimated that, on that basis, the cost will be £50,000 to the end of June next. That does not include the cost of the adjustment of anomalies that will occur particularly with regard to the border-line cases, nor yet for the adjustment in connection with pension cases that we undertook to have inves-

tigated and to grant relief where we thought it desirable. It is hard to estimate what the cost under the last two headings will amount to, but it is thought in all probability by the time the whole position is straightened out, the Government will be involved in a cost between £110,000 and £115,000 per annum. We had this in mind from the outset, and the Treasurer anticipates being able to live within the deficit estimated when he presented the Budget. The figures may prove to be a little out one way or the other, but they have been investigated from many angles, and they are as correct as it is possible to get them at this juncture. I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. LATHAM (York) [4.46]: I could not quite follow the Minister when he said that the previous Government had withheld information. I know of no instance of their having withheld information. Regarding the Finance and Development Board Act, I think members were perfectly aware of the intention of the Premier of the day to borrow money for capital for the Agricultural Bank and to assist farmers. I believe the whole of the money raised was used for that purpose. I know of no instance of the money so raised having been used for other purposes.

The Premier: To the extent that it was used for the Agricultural Bank, it relieved ordinary loan funds.

Mr. LATHAM: It consisted of short-dated loans. A sum of £500,000 was borrowed, and I believe £250,000 was repayable in 12 months and £250,000 at the end of the second year. I presume that the repayments were made.

The Premier: No, they were not.

Mr. LATHAM: Some of the money was probably repaid.

The Minister for Justice: Where would you have got the money?

The Premier: It is still there on call.

Mr. LATHAM: It is satisfactory to know that the money is still on call. It shows the confidence that the Commonwealth Bank had in the Government of the day. I do not know of any other money that was borrowed under that authority, and I know that the money borrowed was used to assist farmers.

The Minister for Lands: You know that the Government of the day were boasting that they got through on only a certain

amount of loan funds, and no reference was made to the £700,000 borrowed under the Finance and Development Board Act, which amount relieved loan funds.

Mr. LATHAM: Spread over three years, the total did not amount to much, and I am not sure that it was not taken into account.

The Minister for Lands: No, it was not.

Mr. LATHAM: I am glad to have that information.

The Premier: You had £700,000 of loan money more than the published figures indicated.

Mr. LATHAM: It represented £250,000 a year, and I presume it was made available to the farmers by way of additional advances. When the present Government finish their term, I hope their figures will prove as accurate as did those of the previous Government. It is too near Christmas and would be inadvisable to revive matters of the kind of which we know, but we could show where a mistake of a paltry couple of millions was made in the financial statement.

The Minister for Lands: Where was that?

Mr. LATHAM: What is the use of looking back? Our object should be to ensure that a similar mistake does not occur again.

Mr. Raphael: You would not like us to rake up something against you.

Mr. LATHAM: I presume that portion of the £115,000 will come from loan funds, I do not know how much will come from revenue, but the Treasurer will be asked to find a fairly large sum, especially when we consider what has already been provided for. Such money as is chargeable to loan can be provided for. Apparently less work will be done for the amount of money expended. It will be fairly difficult, however, to provide the quota from revenue, and a fair amount of the money for those salaries will come from revenue. That is why I asked the Premier the other night whether he proposed to bring down supplementary estimates and provide for the additional amount. I suppose that at present the Government are unable to say how much of the £115,000 will be from loan and how much from revenue.

The Minister for Railways: The £115,000 is on an annual basis, and does not represent the expenditure for the balance of the financial year.

The Minister for Works: It will be £50,000 to the end of June.

Mr. LATHAM: I am pleased to have that information. It is much more satisfactory to us to have the information than to have a Bill merely thrown at us and to be told we must accept it. A little candid information allays any suspicion by the Opposition, and creates a good impression outside the House. While the Minister has not told me all I wanted to know, I am glad he has given some information of what is proposed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Remaining Stages.

Report of Committee adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on amendments Nos. 2 and 3 to which the Assembly had disagreed and proposed an alternative amendment to Nos. 4 and 5 in which it desired the concurrence of the Assembly. It did not insist on amendment No. 7 conditionally on the concurrence of the Assembly in the proposed alternative amendment.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT ACT, 1931, CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.53] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this small Bill is to continue for another year, that is, until the 31st December, 1934, the operation of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1931. That Act was part of the financial emergency legislation imposing reduction in the salaries of officers under the Constitution. As members are aware, the rates of reduc-

tion are the same as are imposed under the Financial Emergency Act, namely—

Not exceeding £250 per annum ..	18%
Over £250 and not exceeding £1,000 ..	20%
Over £1,000	22½%

The officers affected by the Bill are the Lieut.-Governor, Private Secretary Government House, Clerk of Executive Council, Chief Justice, Puisne Judges and eight Ministers. Consequently I have pleasure indeed in introducing the Bill.

Mr. Latham: We shall have pleasure in supporting it.

The PREMIER: It gives me pleasure to contribute my percentage to help see us through the depression. Those officers were not included in the Financial Emergency Act. The salaries of members were included, but not the allowances to Ministers. The Bill requires no further explanation and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Remaining Stages.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of ten amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair: the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2.—Delete the words “at the end thereof,” in line 10, and substitute the words “after the words ‘section ninety-three’ in the fifth line of the said section.”

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I propose to agree to the whole of the amendments.

Mr. Latham: I suppose they originated with the Government.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They originated in the Health Department, where errors were discovered in the drafting. This amendment is merely to correct an error. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 8.—Delete the word “adding,” in line 22, and substitute the words “deleting all the words.”

No. 3. Clause 8.—After the word “proviso,” in line 23, insert the words “and substituting.”

No. 4. Clause 9.—Delete the number “(5),” in line 27, and substitute “(4a).”

On motion by the Minister for Health, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

No. 5. Clause 31.—Delete the word “twenty-four,” in line 4 of page 15, and substitute the word “forty.”

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Act makes provision for the repayment of moneys to a local authority if that authority does the actual work of sewerage of a house. It also provides for 24 quarterly payments, which extend the period for repayment over six years. The Council's amendment extends the period to ten years, but no longer than the date of the maturity of the loan itself. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 6. Clause 40, paragraph (a).—After the word “through,” in line 16, insert the words “or under.”

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 7. Clause 40, paragraph (b).—Delete the words “by like,” in line 21, and substitute the word “without.”

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am glad the Council discovered this mistake. The words “by like” appeared in the clause, as it is compulsory to give a month's notice for the commencement of work entailing

the running of a sewer through private property. The latter part of the clause deals with the maintenance of the sewer after completion. Had the clause not been amended, and had anything happened to the sewer, a month's notice would have been required before it could have been repaired. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed: the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 8. Clause 40, paragraph (b).—After the word "maintain," in line 22, insert the words "or repair."

No. 9. Clause 40, paragraph (c).—Add at the end of the paragraph the following words:—"There shall be payable to such owner in addition to any sum claimable under the last-mentioned Act, all loss which may arise or be consequent upon the exercise by the local authority of any of the powers herein, including the depreciation (if any) in the value of the land through or under which any sewer or drain may be made."

No. 10. Title.—Delete all the words after the word "to," in the first line, down to and including the word "provision," in the sixth line, and substitute the words "amend the Health Act, 1911-1923, in order."

On motions by the Minister for Health, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Council's Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it did not insist on its amendment No. 4, but insisted on its amendments 3 and 5, to which the Assembly had disagreed, now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair: the Minister for Police in charge of the Bill.

No. 3. Clause 4.—Delete the word "thirty-six," in line 3, and substitute the word "thirty-four."

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: This deals with the duration of the Act. The

alternative to agreeing to this amendment is to ask for a conference. In the circumstances, we do not consider this is a question on which, at this late hour in the session, and with so much important Government business still to be put through another place, we should ask for a conference. It has been pointed out that the commission should have a continuity of policy, seeing that it has a surplus of between £60,000 and £70,000 to handle during the year, and that the departments concerned should also have an opportunity to look ahead in determining what financial assistance they required. Another place however, has not seen fit to fall in with this idea, and insists upon its amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed: the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 5. New Clause.—After Clause 3, insert a new clause, to stand as Clause 4, as follows:—

Amendment of Section 15.

4. Section fifteen of the principal Act is hereby amended by the addition thereto of a paragraph, as follows:—

(f) A copy of every account furnished by the Commission to the Minister under paragraph (d), together with a copy of the certificate of the auditor in regard thereto, shall be laid before each House of Parliament within thirty days after the receipt of such account and certificate by the Minister, if Parliament is in session, and, if not, then within thirty days after the commencement of the next session of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: This amendment is of no great importance, and I do not propose to carry the argument with another place any further. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

MOTION—COLLIE COAL.

Use by Government Railways and Utilities.

Debate resumed from the 18th October on the following motion by Mr. Wilson (Collie)—

1. That this House recommends that 100 per cent. of native coal be used on all lines

of the railway system, with the exception of the Marble Bar-Port Hedland line, and that 100 per cent. of native coal be used in other Government utilities requiring coal.

2, That a board of experts be appointed from all interests identified with the production, selling, and using of Collie coal to determine the basic standard equitable value from every standpoint of the native coal versus the coal imported from Commonwealth States, and that such standard have currency for 10 years.

3, That in order to avoid importing coal and to safeguard the Railway Department from under supplies, roof-covered store dumps for Collie coal be constructed at convenient depots throughout the State.

4, That the Railway Department adopt a scheme whereby the mixing of the hard and soft coals shall show a financial improvement on the cost of native coal as at present supplied to the department.

5, That the covering with tarpaulins of wagons of coal at the pit's mouth be initiated.

6, That the cost of the tarpaulins, etc., be refunded from the royalty paid on local coal.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [5.16]: This is an extraordinary motion. I do not think the House is competent to direct the Commissioner of Railways in the general management of the system. I moved the adjournment of the debate not because I was greatly interested in the motion, but in order to enable the Minister for Railways to express his views, so that one might know the departmental position. I do not know why the motion has not been discussed from the Government standpoint. To the first paragraph, as to the utilisation of local coal, I have no objection; but to go further and direct the Government how much of the coal shall be purchased and how it shall be stored and so forth is to go beyond the knowledge of the Chamber as to how those things had best be done. The mover may be competent to direct the management of the railways in these matters, but it would be an extraordinary procedure for the House to accept his statements without giving the Commissioner of Railways an opportunity to explain exactly how the motion would operate in the event of Parliament carrying it.

The Minister for Railways: I gave the House that information.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I regret that I did not hear the explanation.

The Minister for Railways: The motion has been on the Notice Paper for two or three months.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I oppose the motion, regarding it as unwise. I sympathise with the policy which has been in operation for years of consuming within the State a maximum percentage of the production of the State; but I am certainly not prepared to go any further. Apart from the first paragraph, I oppose the motion.

MR. LATHAM (York) [5.19]: I hope the House will leave this matter entirely to the Commissioner of Railways. Recently I had an opportunity, in company with two other members of this Chamber, of observing the fire which was lit on a hill by the locomotive of a train. We were passing along the road in a car at the time. The Railway Department always refuse to admit any liability, but I think we could have furnished proof on this occasion that the train had caused the fire.

Mr. Wilson: What hill was that?

Mr. LATHAM: One of the hills along the railway line. I believe the fuel used was Collie coal. If desired, the information could readily be obtained. I am prepared to leave this question to the Minister and the Commissioner, feeling assured that they will do the right thing. If the House insists on carrying the motion, I shall have to move an amendment adding to the first paragraph the words "Provided that the price shall not exceed the amount set out by the Royal Commissioner, Dr. Herman, in his report." We cannot instruct the Commissioner of Railways to purchase his coal at any price. The people of the State have to pay for the coal. I have no desire whatever to send money out of the State unnecessarily, but why tie the Commissioner's hands by telling him he must take Collie coal at any price? For a number of years we have purchased within the State all the local coal that could possibly be used with safety. All Governments have done that.

The Minister for Railways: It is agreed that that has been done.

Mr. LATHAM: Then why not leave well alone? To ask for the use of 100 per cent. of local coal on our railways is to run a risk. It might result in the purchase of a few hundred more tons of Collie coal in the summer months, but an incidental result might be to ruin struggling farmers. I know that no member looks after his electorate better than does the member for

Collie, but I do hope he will let this matter stand over until such time as the State can afford to make a change. At present it cannot. I certainly desire a proviso to the effect that the State shall not pay any old price.

The Premier: It might be something to the effect that price and quality shall be to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. LATHAM: I consider it wrong to instruct the Commissioner of Railways as the motion proposes.

Mr. Wansbrough: It is a recommendation, not an instruction.

Mr. LATHAM: It is more than a recommendation. I know that in some parts of the State imported coal is used during certain periods of the year. That is done for the protection of landholders. We have to consider seriously the price of Collie coal, and its suitability during the summer months for certain portions of the railway system.

The Minister for Railways: Very little except Collie coal is used.

Mr. LATHAM: There are, of course, certain sections of the railway system on which imported coal is used. I do not think the member for Collie desires the House to run any risk with regard to those sections. The Commissioner of Railways is a highly qualified officer, and should not be trammelled by this Chamber. The Government, of course, would not allow him to import a lot of coal if Collie coal could be used. If the motion is not withdrawn, I shall ask for an amendment of the Government Railways Act making the Government carry the responsibility involved.

The Minister for Railways: It is already provided that the Commissioner shall use the most efficient spark arrester available.

Mr. LATHAM: If this motion is insisted upon, I shall test the feeling of the House on the point I have indicated.

Mr. Wilson: There was a fire on the Midland railway a few weeks ago. Was that caused by Collie coal?

Mr. LATHAM: I am glad that two hon. members and I witnessed what happened the other day. We were right alongside the fire.

Mr. Wilson: Where was the fire?

Mr. LATHAM: Between Green Hills and Quairading. I acknowledge, of course, that every fire is not to be blamed on the rail-

ways. Careless people, throwing matches on the side of the road often cause fires.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [5.27]: I am entirely in accord with the views expressed by the Leader of the Opposition. In my opinion, it is highly undesirable for us to instruct, or even recommend, the Minister for Railways and the Commissioner on what is, after all, a technical question and a matter of administration. While I wish to see local products used, I shall vote against the motion purely on the ground that it is outside the province of this Chamber to direct or recommend the Government railways in a matter of this description.

MR. LAMBERT (Yilgarn - Coolgardie) [5.28]: I do not agree with the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) that this is purely a question for the Commissioner of Railways. After all said and done, it is a question of the general policy which has been adopted for some time by this State, in view of our economic position in the Federation, to give preference to local industry. That policy, I understand, has not been altered. The Tender Board to-day give a preference of 10 per cent. to local products over the products from elsewhere. In view of our position within the Federation, it being absolutely impossible for us to take any advantage of the fiscal policy pursued by the Commonwealth Government, we must give some protection to the struggling primary and secondary industries of Western Australia. I cannot at the moment speak of the relative values of the two fuels utilised on our railways. Possibly, having regard to the nature of Collie coal, a considerable improvement could be effected in its economic utilisation. I cannot say whether our present locomotives are suitable for the effective burning of coal similar to Collie. The Railway Department should devote some serious attention to that aspect. The question of the use of native fuel is one that sooner or later must be met on the Eastern Goldfields. If the present policy is persevered with, we shall find that an industry up there, employing 1,000 persons and using native fuel in the shape of wood, will cease to exist. That is a very serious outlook for the goldfields and for my constituency. So I join in the desire of the member for Collie that Parliament should,

in a general sense, express the view that, as far as possible, our native fuel should be used in Western Australia.

The Minister for Railways: That has been the policy for the past 20 years.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Leader of the Opposition indicated that he would not agree to a general motion being carried, while on the other hand he wants to bind the Commissioner of Railways to a price fixed by an authority set up a little time ago.

Mr. Latham: One is just as sound as the other.

Mr. LAMBERT: But it is a totally different thing. The use of our native coal is a matter of policy, and so should be laid down by Parliament. On the Eastern Goldfields the Kurrawang Company has hauled over their railway a quantity of firewood in the aggregate greater than the quantity of wheat that has been grown in Western Australia.

Mr. Latham: Are you now advocating coal for the mines?

Mr. LAMBERT: No, I am only showing the relative position between the two. Last year on the Eastern Goldfields some 260 tons of crude oil were used, and this year probably it will run into 5,000 tons, to the prejudice of our native fuel. So it is time Parliament took a hand in the matter. I do not know that we can get exact figures from any of the authorities that have been set up. I have seen a caustic review of an electrical undertaking at Yallourn, with which Dr. Herman, who as Royal Commissioner inquired into the Collie coal industry, is associated. As to whether Dr. Herman is at all competent, I am not prepared to say, but I am sure he has little or no knowledge of steaming coal. Dr. Herman was sent to Germany to specialise in one coal, lignite, I think they call it. That is used extensively in Germany for power production. Dr. Herman was sent there by General Monash, and he brought out the briquetting plant.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will connect all this with the motion.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have never wavered in my support of local industry, whether secondary or primary. Collie coal constitutes a big primary industry, and there are linked up with it the economic production of power, and its use in our locomotives. Every nerve must be extended in the effort

to bring those problems into closer line with the up-to-date methods obtaining in other parts of the world. Some time ago I asked questions as to the effect of local authorities buying foreign oil fuel at the expense of our local coal which is a distinctly wrong principle. I hope that Parliament without desiring to bind the Commissioner of Railways technically, will recommend that, when cost and quality are reasonably comparable preference should be given to the local product.

Mr. McDonald: Everyone agrees with that.

Mr. LAMBERT: If we go that far as a general direction to the Commissioner, it is perhaps as far as we can be asked to go. So I think at least a portion of the motion can stand, for it presents an opportunity for reaffirming our policy of many years past.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [5.37]: I support the motion, and I compliment the hon. member on having brought it before Parliament. Everyone must agree that we should use our own local coal. We are all, Government and people alike, out to find employment for those without work, and when we are using our local product we are serving to provide employment.

Mr. Lambert: France is doing it to the extent of 7s. per bushel on wheat.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: A motion like this shows that we have faith in our own country. But I take the point that the Commissioner of Railways, or the Minister for Railways, should have the right to select the Collie coal they find most suitable for use on the railways. We have coal that, possibly, is equal to the imported article, and therefore we should give support to our own.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [5.39]: I also congratulate the hon. member on having brought down this motion. In normal times, perhaps, it would not be necessary to bring pressure on the Government to support local coal. The Minister for Employment has shown us to-day that, through his energetic attitude in advocating the use of local products, employment has been found for 2,000 persons who previously were out of work. If the people of the State will support local products, not only will our own unemployed be absorbed, but

it will be necessary to bring others into the State to carry out the work that will be required. The Government might well show their sincerity by agreeing to this motion, for they, too, should give preference to local products.

The Minister for Railways: Do not we always do that? One would think the Government never did it.

Mr. RAPHAEL: To a certain extent perhaps they do, and in upholding this motion we are giving the Government a further opportunity to support local industries with the backing of the House.

Mr. Latham: The Government are well aware of the position.

Mr. RAPHAEL: I do not think it will do any harm if the Government know that Parliament stands behind them in the use of 100 per cent. of Collie coal on the railways. The people will then accept with greater confidence the policy the Government have suggested to them in the use of local products. Unlike the gold mining industry, Collie coal has in this House but one supporter who can put the claims of the industry before the Chamber. So it is up to the House to stand behind him in his effort to see that 100 per cent. of Collie coal is used on the railways. From time to time in the past it has been suggested that if any difficulty occurs at Collie the Railway Department will bring coal from the Eastern States. The Commissioner of Railways has always been ready with that threat, but has not always been supported by the Minister. It is up to the Government to support Collie coal, and I hope the motion will be carried.

MR. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [5.43]: It would be wrong for the House to carry a motion instructing the Government and the Commissioner of Railways that 100 per cent. of native coal is to be used on the railways. Notwithstanding the oft-repeated assertion of the member for Collie, we know that Collie coal is more liable to spark than is the Newcastle product. There is in the agricultural areas any amount of evidence to prove that more fires are started when Collie coal is used on the railways than when Newcastle coal is used. So it would be wrong for the House even to suggest to the Commissioner of Railways that local coal should be used in the agricultural

districts, particularly during the harvest period, or indeed during the summer months at all. For many years the Midland Railway Company refused to use native coal, particularly in the summer months.

The Minister for Employment: They are not using it now.

Mr. FERGUSON: Yes, they are.

Mr. Wilson: They are not using any Collie coal to-day.

Mr. FERGUSON: The point I should like to make is that the less they use, the fewer fires they set alight on the line where the crops, the feed and the grass are more liable on account of the prolific growth to become alight than in any other parts of the State. With a desire to assist the member for Collie in seeing that Western Australia uses local products, I suggest that he should alter his motion so that it might appeal to those members of Parliament who represent districts where for many months of the year there is a grave risk of fires when the stubble, the grass and the crops are in an inflammable condition. We do not want to take an unnecessary risk and possibly bring ruin to many farmers. As it stands, I hope the motion will be defeated. Unless it is amended, I shall not support it.

The Minister for Railways: Put in the words "wherever practicable."

Mr. FERGUSON: We should cut out the words "100 per cent."

The Minister for Employment: We could make it read "100 per cent. wherever practicable."

Mr. FERGUSON: Wherever it is possible to use 100 per cent. Collie coal, I want to see it used; even if it is not as economical as imported coal I will still say that the local article should have that measure of preference that the Minister for Employment gives to those products he has done so much to foster during recent months. The Tender Board gives 10 per cent. preference.

The Minister for Railways: And sometimes more.

Mr. FERGUSON: At least to that extent Collie coal should have preference, but it should not be utilised in those districts where it constitutes a menace to the country side. I hope the member for Collie will re-draft his motion, so that it will appeal to members.

MR. WILSON (Collie—in reply) [5.50]: I do not know whether I am permitted to adopt the suggestion that has just been made. Some members opposite have taken exception to the first paragraph of my motion.

Mr. Ferguson: That is the crux of it.

Mr. WILSON: No. 2 is as much the crux of the motion as is No. 1, that is so far as it concerns me. I am willing to allow the words "wherever practicable" to be put in, and I would be prepared to amend the motion. Could I move the amendment?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is replying, and he cannot move to amend his own motion.

Mr. WILSON: Then can somebody else move it before I reply?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is either replying or he is not replying.

Mr. WILSON: I want to meet members opposite in respect of the suggestion that has been made, and if I am permitted I shall add the words "wherever practicable."

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better allow someone else to move the amendment, and he can reply later.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT

(Hon. J. J. Kenneally—East Perth) [5.52]: Before the member for Collie replies to the debate, I move an amendment—

That after "that", in line 1, the words "wherever practicable" be inserted.

The opening sentence will then read, "That this House recommends that wherever practicable 100 per cent. of native coal be used, etc." If it were a question of the Government not doing practically what is provided for in the motion, I would have spoken earlier. It is the policy of the Government to see that wherever possible local products are used.

Mr. Ferguson: And it has been the policy of every other Government.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Yes, they have given evidence of it. It is desired to see that the products of the State are used to the utmost possible extent. We have to realise that wherever practicable this should be done. Early in the history of Collie coal there used to be numerous stoppages in the industry. Ultimately at the instigation of the disputes committee of the A.L.P., a conference was

convened of the representatives of the miners, the locomotive enginedrivers, and the A.L.P., and the question was discussed of getting all the bodies behind the proposition to use as much as possible of the native fuel. An understanding was arrived at that in the first place the miners would see that the Government got the best possible coal there was in Collie, and that if the combined parties advocated that 100 per cent. of the native coal should be used wherever possible, and worked to bring that about, the miners would undertake that before any stoppage took place in the industry which would throw one branch of the conferring parties out of work, they would consult with the other bodies and give those bodies the opportunity of functioning in the interests of industrial peace. So an agreement was arrived at, and instead of stoppages in the industry taking place, we have had a great number of years in which grievances have been settled without any dislocation of the industry. As a result of the agreement, we waited on the Commissioner and prevailed upon him to get rid of the large amount of Newcastle coal that the department was in the habit of carrying "at grass." This coal had to be turned over every few years, and having to turn it over meant that to that extent we could not burn the native fuel. The Commissioner agreed that if Collie coal was made available continuously he would get rid of the coal "at grass." That condition remained until such time as the compact with regard to continuity of supply was broken. Then the Commissioner found it necessary to get in a supply of Newcastle coal, a supply for contingencies such as we thought we had got away from. It must be realised that the carrying of the motion will mean that those who are responsible for the production of the coal and who desire to see that their own people are kept at work will take the necessary precautions to avert unemployment. The coal is the lifeblood of the railways and, as is known, 10,000 men and women are dependent upon the railway system alone. Then if the railway system is stopped, that figure becomes greater by reason of the dependence on the industry of so many people in other occupations. Consequently steps must be taken to see that sufficient local fuel is used to enable that railway lifeblood to be kept cir-

culating. Thus I can easily subscribe to the motion, with the addition of the words in my amendment, "wherever practicable," in the hope that we shall be able at all times to burn as nearly as possible 100 per cent. of the native coal. I am speaking as one who took initial steps to advocate the using of 100 per cent. of Collie coal on our railways.

Hon. N. Keenan: If the amendment be agreed to, will members still be able to debate paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [6.1]: Before the motion is fully acceptable to members generally, I consider it desirable that a further amendment be incorporated. I move an amendment—

That after "practicable" the words "and having due regard for the protection of the country districts against the risk of fire" be inserted.

There is no necessity to amplify the amendment, because the meaning is perfectly clear in the words themselves. I move the amendment so that there will be no doubt in future as to what was in the minds of members.

Mr. Raphael: It will be a great advertisement for Collie coal if this is broadcasted.

Mr. DONEY: I do not know what that has to do with it. Anyone who knows anything at all about the question, will readily understand the reason for my amendment.

MR. WILSON (Collie—on amendment) [6.2]: I cannot accept the amendment.

The Minister for Employment: The word "practicable" covers that position too.

Mr. WILSON: To accept the amendment would be tantamount to an insult to the Commissioner of Railways and would imply that he did not know whether it was practicable to use Collie coal. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) wishes to provide an advertisement regarding outbreaks of fire caused by Collie coal and to make it known to the world. Reference to the report of the Railway Department for the year ended 30th June last, shows that in 1924, 5,637 tons of imported coal were used, and in 1930, 7,822 tons, whereas in 1931, only 4,524 tons were imported. Then in 1932, when the previous Government were in power, the importations of Newcastle coal

for consumption on the railways jumped to 27,158 tons. I am often led to believe that the outbreaks of fires in the crops of farmers have a direct relation to the prices some people get for their wheat. When high prices are offered, very few fires occur as the result of the use of Collie coal. I have been in other countries of the world, and I know that all coals set fire to grass and crops at certain times. Newcastle coal has set as many fires alight in the Eastern States, as Collie coal has in Western Australia. Members should inspect the country in New South Wales from Newcastle to the Maitland district, and if they did so, they would note that there is not a blade of grass within 100 yards of the railways. It has all been burnt as a result of the use of Newcastle coal. Very few fires are ever seen on the hills from Brunswick Junction to Collie. In fact, that country is hardly touched by a fire. It is only on some of those unknown and unfrequented hills that fires occur, such as the one referred to by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Latham: You ask the Minister for Agriculture about that.

Mr. WILSON: Those fires do not receive much publicity in the Press. As for fires in the Midland Company's area, Collie coal is not burnt on the Midland railway during the summer months. I will bet the member for Irwin-Moore a new hat on that.

Mr. Ferguson: That is an indication that they will not take the risk.

Mr. WILSON: The Midland Company have been very well served with their big block of land close to the sea-board.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Collie must confine himself to the amendment before the Chair.

Mr. WILSON: I will not accept the amendment, because it is an insult to the Commissioner and suggests that he does not know what the word "practicable" means. It also serves to advertise the fire-causing propensities of Collie coal. In fact, I regard it as an insult for any member of this House to move such an amendment.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.