

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 3rd October, 1928.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills:—

- 1, Electric Light and Power Agreement Amendment.
- 2, Municipal Council of Collie Validation.
- 3, Supply (No. 2), £1,250,000.

MOTION—COLLIE POWER SCHEME.

Debate resumed from the 26th September on the following motion by Hon. J. Ewing (South-West):—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should forthwith proceed to establish in the Collie coalfields area a generating plant capable of supplying electrical current for lighting and motive power throughout the whole, or in the greater portion, of the State.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.37]: I support the motion. The advisability of establishing an electric generating plant upon a large scale at Collie has been emphasised in this Chamber on many occasions. The figures quoted by Mr. Ewing cause us to realise the enormous growth of the use of electric power within the metropolitan area, and I am sure every member desires that not only the residents of the metropolitan area—who enjoy probably the cheapest electricity that is to be obtained in any part of Australia—but also other members of the community, should be placed within reach of electrical power. When we realise what is being done in other countries, and more particularly in England, where during a lapse of years this matter was somewhat neglected, we must

acknowledge that the time has arrived when we should look far into the future and provide for the establishment of electrical works of great magnitude. May I be permitted to read what I said in the course of the first speech I had the honour of making in this House—

I congratulate the Government upon having given substantial assistance to the local bodies in the South-West in order that cheap electrical power may be available to them. In England to-day no question is receiving more attention, or is regarded as of more importance, than that of cheap electrical power. The British Government, realising its importance as the chief factor in cheaper production, contemplate the erection of five or six enormous generating stations in various suitable centres to supply all the requirements of the nation. It is stated that the scheme, when completed, will effect a saving of £5,000,000 per annum, besides giving a great impetus to many languishing trades. I consider that the time is ripe for the undertaking of a scheme on similar lines in Western Australia, because in addition to the South-West, there is the Great Southern line as far as Albany and the whole of the Eastern Railway to be supplied. I am not sure how far the current can be carried; but I gathered from Mr. Lovekin, after his last trip Home, that on high power the tension could be distributed over wonderfully great distances. Collie as a distributing centre is most favourably situated, because it stands almost equi-distant from numerous principal centres. Another important factor is that Collie produces enormous quantities of small coal, which as a commercial commodity is now practically worthless, but the whole of which could be used in generating power which would be transmitted in the directions I have mentioned.

I went on to state that we should keep in view the possibility of electrifying our suburban train service, at any rate. Under present conditions that is not possible. May I point out also the number of uses to which electricity is now being put. In the near future electric power will be not only an essential commodity, but an urgent necessity in practically every home. Some little time ago we thought that the installation of what is known as the vacuum cleaner constituted a striking innovation, but now we have to realise that cooking and washing are done by electricity, and according to the latest news electricity also scrubs and polishes. Thus we have an idea of what the future holds in store for us as regards the consumption of electric current. Great Britain after the war was rather backward in this respect, but when she was resuscitating the whole of her industries she was faced with the fact that her production of electricity was costing too much, and that power was

being generated in too many places. In point of fact, cablegrams received during the day upon which Mr. Ewing made his speech stated that it was proposed to reduce the number of generating stations from 136 to, I think, 18. In Western Australia a similar system prevails. If we go to Bunbury or Collie or Katanning or Wagin or Albany, we find that each of those towns has its own generating station. It may be said that that is a local concern of the towns in question, and that they are producing power at a fairly reasonable cost; but the fact remains that the operation of so many plants results in economic loss to the nation. If electricity were produced in one place such as Collie, it could be generated at a very low cost indeed. There is, no doubt, the initial outlay, which is exceptionally heavy owing to the cost of the cable, about £2,000 per mile. However, as I have previously stated, the situation of Collie is extremely favourable for the distribution of power throughout the most populous areas of the State. It has been stated that the power could even be transmitted to Geraldton at very high tension. I do not profess to be an authority on electricity, except so far as to know what is being done in other countries. In Britain during this year contracts have been let for the expenditure of another £1,000,000 in connection with the scheme I have outlined. As to the arrangement with the municipality of Collie, I stated, later on, after that had been passed, that I was not quite sure whether that was in the best interests of the State as a whole. That scheme might have been a good thing for Collie and Bunbury, but in my opinion it was not in the best interests of the whole of the State because there were certain concessions granted to the company which probably would have interfered with the rights of a plant on a big scale. There was the question of water rights and also the price to be paid for the small coal, because, as I was informed afterwards, an agreement had been entered into by the companies with the town council of Collie in regard to the price to be paid for the small coal, and in my opinion that price was far in excess of its commercial value. If the Government would contemplate the erection of a big plant at Collie, it would be laying the foundation of a scheme which in the near future would be essential, and it would be much better to lay such foundation now rather than spend

further money as it is proposed to do in the extension of the plant at East Perth. To the lay mind it seems almost incredible that we should be carting coal from Collie to East Perth, when the power itself could be transmitted from Collie. No matter what we may do in extending the plant at East Perth, we can never materially reduce the cost of the transmission of coal from Collie to East Perth. I do not intend to speak at length on the motion, except to support it as much as I possibly can. Many of us will remember that all these big schemes which, at the time they are proposed, are often cast aside, give rise to regret because of their having been discarded for the time being. I know of nothing that promises for greater success than the establishment of works of this description at Collie to undertake the supply of power to all the districts it is possible to reach within the area it is intended to cover. During the discussion certain statements were made in regard to the supply of power to the City Council. This is a subject that has been debated for many years. May I inform the House that the original agreement was that the City Council were to be supplied with current at cost price, and the cost price then had not reached .75d. Afterwards it was agreed that it should be the cost price, but that it should not exceed .75d. That is the arrangement that was made, and further than that, the arrangement the Government have with the City Council is in the best interests of the Government because the City Council take far more current from the Government than the Government themselves use, and if it were not for the fact that the Government were working in co-operation with the City Council, it would not be possible for the Government to produce the electricity they require with which to run the trams at anything like the price they do at the present time. In connection with electricity there is a great deal to learn, but one of the principal reasons why the co-operation between the two bodies is of great benefit to the Government is that the greater part of the power used in the day time by the Government is used for the running of the trams, while the greater part used by the City Council is used at night time principally for lighting purposes. That keeps an equal tension on the whole of the plant, which enables current to be produced reasonably cheaply. It is also very effective in not

only giving a good supply, but in keeping the power at that particular level tension. Those are special points in regard to the agreement, and the House will not believe that the arrangement is altogether in favour of the City Council and not in favour of the Government. That, however, is beside the way. The point I wish to stress is that with Mr. Ewing I think the time has arrived when serious consideration should be given to this question. We all know that even if it should be decided to adopt such a proposal, it will take a considerable time to bring it into operation. Therefore now is the time when something should be done. Reports should be furnished and statistics gathered to show whether what is suggested can be done economically and well. We are all aware of the rapidity of the growth of Perth, and if we only look back, say over the last five years, we cannot fail to realise, as was shown by the figures quoted by Mr. Ewing regarding the increased consumption of power, that in the very near future something more than the East Perth plant will be necessary to meet our requirements. But apart from the metropolitan area, the great value of Mr. Ewing's scheme is that it will equally favour all the towns that will come within the transmitting distance. I heartily support the motion.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and on motion by Hon. H. Stewart read a first time.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH SUPER-ANNUATION FUND.

Received from the Assembly and on motion by Hon. J. T. Franklin read a first time.

BILL—FEEDING STUFFS.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: The conditions governing the sale of feeding stuffs now find a place in a composite Act which deals with fertilisers and feeding stuffs. Both of these

sections required modernising and in effecting this it was considered advisable to separate the sections dealing with these two distinct subjects. The Bill now submitted relates to feeding stuffs. It has been framed around two important feeding stuffs in this State, viz., bran and pollard. Already under the old Act it has been found advisable to deal with these foods, but it has been felt desirable to make provision for dealing with other foodstuffs as our development requires. In support of the contention that changes are necessary, I might say that about two years ago the necessity arose for bringing bran and pollard under the operations of the Fertiliser and Feeding Stuff Act. The Department, after considerable inquiry and difficulty, proclaimed standards for these with very satisfactory results. To provide for future requirements it is desired to obtain under the present Bill power to deal with other commodities. It is also proposed that stock licks shall be brought under the operations of the Bill. Though not recognised as "foods," yet they come within this class. The proposal is also in accordance with a resolution passed at the conference of Ministers of Agriculture recently held in Perth, that—

Each State provide for the compulsory registration of proprietary stock licks, stipulating, as in the Fertiliser and Plant Foods Act, that a guarantee be given of the constituents comprising same.

This provision has become necessary because of comparatively recent advancement in the science of feeding. As the result of investigations it has been found that stock may suffer seriously through mineral deficiencies, and that those deficiencies may be met by feeding certain materials to stock. Under the conditions which obtain in Australia where stock is, in the main, grazed upon natural pasture it is not possible to give the necessary ingredients in that way, and, in order to meet the need, the deficiencies are supplied in the form of stock licks. To illustrate the need for this during the past year it was found in certain districts of this State that stock had developed an abnormal appetite, and were dying as the result of eating rabbit bones. It was thought at first that death was due to poison in the rabbit carcasses. Investigation by the veterinary staff, however, proved that death was due to an organism which was toxic in its character, and that the craving for the

bones was due to a deficiency of phosphate in the pasture upon which the stock was fed. By supplying this mineral deficiency by means of stock licks or hand-feeding, the craving was overcome, and the mortality ceased. The work of the scientists who conducted the investigations connected with mineral deficiencies has been proceeded with, and in consequence means of compounding licks have been made available and a big commercial demand for the licks has been created. In some instances the licks have been put upon the market without due regard to the needs of the animals and sold at rates altogether out of proportion to their cost, even allowing for a fair profit. It is felt that the time has arrived when stock raisers should be protected against such dishonest tactics. It is also desirable that if stock raisers are to use these licks with advantage to the stock—which is of the first importance—they should know the principal ingredients. Provision is made in the Bill whereby stock licks will be dealt with in a manner similar to that in which fertilisers are dealt with—that vendors of stock licks shall state of what such licks are composed. The same principle applies to other stock foods.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: You will not get Mr. Nicholson's support for that. He opposes the principle as regards human beings, much less stock.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In order that vendors supplying such goods may not be unnecessarily hampered in the transaction of trade, it is provided that the provision shall not be given effect to until the particular food in question has been proclaimed a stock food by the Governor-in-Council. The Bill provides three methods by which the purchaser may become acquainted with the composition of the food. Firstly, the standards may be prescribed to which certain foods must comply. In the present Bill standards for bran and pollard have been elaborated, such standards being the result of much investigation. The proposed standards are slightly different from and somewhat more liberal than those which have been in existence during the past twelve months. This is the result of experience gained since the former standards were first proclaimed. I may say it has been somewhat difficult to determine satisfactory and reasonable standards for these two commodities, for it must be realised that both

bran and pollard are by-products, and not the main product of the milling industry. In the interests of the stock-raising industry it was advisable that the standards should be fixed as high as possible; yet on the other hand if fixed unduly high they would hamper the millers and probably increase the cost of production, limit the output, and thus have the very reverse effect of that desired. It is hoped that the standards now proposed will have none of the objections to which I have referred. Secondly, the vendor may indicate to the purchaser the composition of the food by giving him an invoice certificate setting out in detail the composition of such foods. That is the main provision in the Imperial Feeding Stuffs Act. Thirdly, in the case of standardised foods, the seller has the option of registering the standard composition with the Department of Agriculture, and it is anticipated this provision will be largely availed of in connection with stock licks, as manufacturers in Melbourne who have standardised two licks have had no hesitation in giving detailed information of the ingredients. Clause 2 repeals the Acts mentioned in the First Schedule. This is necessary because at present feeding stuffs are dealt with in a composite Act which also embraces fertilisers. The Acts repealed are the original Fertiliser and Feeding Stuffs Act, 1904, and the amendments of 1905 and 1911. Clause 4 gives power to make regulations. The Bill is framed around existing standards for bran and pollard; hence the reference here made to them.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That gives the Government power to legislate by regulation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It gives power to make regulations.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Yes, but you can alter the standards by regulation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The standards proposed for bran and pollard are such as experience during the last year has indicated are desirable, and should cause no undue hardship to the miller who desires to supply commercially pure bran and pollard. Provision is made for altering the standards by regulation should it be found desirable to do so.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That should not be.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It should not be necessary to approach Parliament every time an alteration is necessary, in view of the fact that regulations have to be

submitted to both Houses of Parliament, and either House has the power of disallowance. The proposed standards shown in the second schedule are slightly more liberal than those proclaimed in the first instance—twelve months ago—because experience has shown that it is not necessary to go so far. The clause also gives power to make regulations for the removal of impurities and foreign ingredients from any food stuffs. There will be reasonable margins as it is realised in commercial products that rarely if ever is it possible to obtain absolute purity. Physical and chemical standards may be prescribed for any food for stock, just as they are now prescribed for bran and pollard under the second schedule of the Bill. This provision is made in order to deal with other foods which may from time to time be placed upon the market, just as during the last two years it was found necessary to deal with bran and pollard which had not been necessary previously. Stock licks are brought under the heading of “stock food.” Stock licks may not be considered a food, but this is not so. They are not medicines but compounds placed on the market in order to supply mineral deficiencies, and these minerals are just as necessary as other food constituents such as “fats” and proteins.” It is necessary, therefore, that stock licks should be brought under the Act so that those using them may know what they contain. Otherwise they cannot intelligently give their stock the deficiencies which they are aiming to supply. Clause 5 sets out three methods by which feed stuffs can be controlled:—1. Standards of quality may be prescribed to which certain foods must comply, as with bran and pollard. 2. The quality of the food may be made known to the purchaser as a result of giving him an invoice certificate setting out the principal ingredients and their percentages. 3. Vendors who standardise their foods or licks have the option of registering the standard composition with the Department of Agriculture. The vendor may then simply state that he has sold a food under a standard name. It is anticipated that the third provision will be largely availed of in connection with stock licks. The subclauses of this clause are consequential upon these principles. Clause 6 deals with limits of variation which are permissible in matters of this kind. This practice is followed in our Fertiliser and Feeding Stuffs Act as it applies to fertilisers, and also in the

Imperial Feeding Stuffs Act as it applies to feeding stuffs. Clause 7 provides for penalties for breaches of the measure. It will be noted that any person who includes any ingredient deleterious to stock or any worthless ingredient which has not been disclosed will commit an offence against the Act. Clause 8 gives to inspectors power that already exists under the Fertiliser and Feeding Stuffs Act. The remaining clauses deal with provisions to be found in the Fertiliser and Feeding Stuffs Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. A. Stephenson. debate adjourned.

BILL—RAILWAYS DISCONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th September.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [515]: It is more than 31 years since the Kanowna railway was constructed, and it was considerably later that the Celebration line was acquired by the Government. We are now once more confronted with a proposal by the Government to discontinue those particular railways. It is regrettable that the circumstances are such that the Government should see fit to lift those lines, particularly the Kanowna line, for I have great faith in the district, and I believe the line will be required at some future date. We have to realise that the Government, through the Railway Department, must exercise economy. When similar proposals were before the Government in 1922 and again last session, we urged that the lifting of the lines should be deferred. The Government were not favourably disposed to that suggestion, but the House forced the issue upon the Government by rejecting their proposals. Since we adopted that course last session, the lines mentioned in the Bill, to use a railway phrase, have been “spiked over.” Nothing has been allowed to traverse the lines, and I presume that if the House were to defeat the Bill on this occasion, the same conditions would prevail. I realise that it is difficult to ask hon. members to reject the Bill in view of what is likely to happen should we adopt that course.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What do you mean by “spiking over” a line?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The points are spiked and no traffic is allowed to run over

the rails. We spiked the intentions of the Government, but they spiked our guns by spiking the lines, and I suppose that is what will happen again should we defeat the Bill. I would like to know why discrimination has been shown in dealing with these railways. On the last occasion the Bill included a short length of railway at Bunbury. It is excluded from the Bill on this occasion, and the Honorary Minister did not advance any explanation as to why that particular line was being retained.

Hon. G. Fraser: That line caters for a national industry!

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, a racecourse! The Kanowna line, for instance, runs to a centre from which hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of gold has been taken.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And it serves a pastoral district now.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, the district surrounding Kanowna is pastoral, and practically all the wool grown in that district has been brought into Kalgoorlie through Kanowna by motor trucks, because the Government have not made provision for the transport of the wool over the railway line.

Hon. J. Cornell: Some of our best racehorses have been bred in that district.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I believe a recent cup winner was bred there. I would like the Honorary Minister to explain this discrimination. Then there is the Sandstone railway, which earns a few shillings once a fortnight.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: There are great possibilities there.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: When the Government were investigating the desirability of constructing a line to Wiluna and were considering whether it should go from Leonora or Sandstone, they thought so much of the possibilities of the latter district, that it was suggested that the line should be lifted and taken some distance away so that the line could proceed from Meekatharra!

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: That was from the mining standpoint. I referred to its possibilities from the pastoral point of view.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The pastoral prospects there are nothing to be compared with what they are over the Leonora-Wiluna country. If we are to consider the possibilities of the pastoral industry in that particular district, that can be done by looking up the returns to discover what traffic has been carried over the Sandstone line since mining operations ceased there.

Hon. G. Fraser: Is there anyone living at Kanowna?

Hon. J. Cornell: Yes, and there is a pub there.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If the hon. member, when he recently visited the goldfields, had not been so interested in the races, he could have gone to Kanowna and seen the district and ascertained the population for himself.

Hon. A. Lovekin: At any rate, the gold produced paid for the railways years ago.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes. I know that the Government lose a certain amount of interest on account of a few buildings at that centre, but the Kanowna line stands in exactly the same position as lines in other parts of the State. When he introduced the Bill, the Honorary Minister said, "We are dealing with railways that we are satisfied are non-utilitarian." I suggest that the Lakeside railway, which was constructed into the forest country and led out towards the Widgiemooltha forest, could have been utilised if the Government had adopted the same methods as the Kurrawang Firewood Company. The company made a success of their railway by carrying heavier loads and not having a lot of top hamper as we have in connection with our Government railways through the bush. It has been suggested that the Government may sell this railway and I would not be surprised, in the event of the Government doing so, if the Kurrawang Firewood Company bought it.

Hon. H. Seddon: The company sold the line to the Government.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That is so. It may suit the company to extend their line by buying back the rails at half the price paid for them by the Government, and if they did that, it would enable the company to bring the wood direct into the Kamballie station and thus supply the mines through that centre. There is another point. I presume that the Government intend to utilise the material that will be available should the two lines covered by the Bill be lifted. On the last occasion we were informed that the material to be lifted would be used in connection with other lines. We have not had any such explanation this time. Is it intended to leave the lines to rust and deteriorate, or do the Government propose to utilise the available material elsewhere? If the Bill be passed, I hope it will not be taken as a precedent to enable other non-utilitarian or non-paying lines being dealt

with in the same way. The line to Marble Bar does not pay, nor does the line at Ravensthorpe. If the policy of lifting railways that do not pay were to be adopted—

Hon. J. R. Brown: The Government would lift a lot.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes. The Honorary Minister should give the House some definite statement as to the policy of the Government regarding lines that are non-paying and that exist in various parts of the State.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—FERTILISERS.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Registration of fertilisers:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1, line 2, the word "July" be struck out, and "November" inserted in lieu.

This is done at the request of those engaged in the manufacture of fertilisers.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That amendment will necessitate a similar alteration in a later portion of the subclause.

The CHAIRMAN: That amendment will be made consequentially.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1, line 3, the word "financial" be struck out.

This amendment is consequential upon the one already agreed to and if my amendment is accepted, there will be a consequential amendment later on in the same subclause.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I take it the effect of the amendment will be that the registration will take place in November of the year in which the application is made. That will mean the applicant will be registered to the end of the year.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Minister was approached by the manufacturers with an intimation that the month hitherto prescribed was not suitable and they asked that

it should be altered to November, to which the Minister agreed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I would point out that the clause refers to "the financial year." It occurs to me therefore that the insertion of the word "November" demands that this reference to "financial year" should be excluded.

Hon. H. Stewart: These words cannot be read into the clause with the amendment that has already been carried.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The clause is quite clear. The word "financial" was evidently inserted by the Parliamentary draftsman to denote that it was the beginning of the financial year. There is no need for the word, for it has nothing to do with the case. Many superfluous words are inserted in Bills, and only lead to confusion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If hon. members will look at the wording of the amendment I propose to move later, they will see that the year is defined. I move—

That in lines 3, 9, and 13, and in Subclause 2, lines 17 and 18, the word "financial" be struck out.

Hon. H. STEWART: I want an explanation concerning paragraph (c). It seems to me that it prohibits a man from registering two brands of fertiliser. The fertiliser may be one of two different chemical compositions. Some amendments have been made in another place, and they may have altered the effect of the clause. I should like to know why the registration is refused, because a different brand may have been registered in the name of the applicant.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That further consideration of this clause be postponed.

I will get an explanation of it for the hon. member.

Motion put and passed; the clause postponed.

Clause 7—Particulars on application:

Hon. H. STEWART: Paragraph (h) says that any lime or lime compound present as a constituent of any manufactured fertiliser, shall not be separately declared. Why is this provision inserted?

Clause put and passed.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.*Death of Mr. T. J. Heron, M.L.A.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.41]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

It is my sad duty to move this motion, because news has just been received that a member of the Legislative Assembly (Mr. T. J. Heron) has died suddenly. We are all greatly shocked at the news. I can say no more at the present moment except to ask the House to carry this motion.

The PRESIDENT: In putting this motion to the House I should like to join the Chief Secretary in the remarks he has made. I am sure I am expressing the deep regret of every member when I say how profoundly shocked we are at the tragic death of a man whom we in this Chamber, always knew as a bright and genial personality. We know very little at present as to what happened, but I am sure all members will join with me in expressing the deepest sympathy towards the family of the late member upon the dreadfully sudden calamity that has overtaken them.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd October, 1923.

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

QUESTION—ABORIGINES, BROOME DISTRICT.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Agriculture: What number of aborigines does he estimate are within one hundred mile radius of the townsite of Broome?

The **MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** replied: Approximately 1,200, including half-castes deemed to be aborigines.

QUESTION—COMMONWEALTH BANK, INTEREST RATES.

Mr. ANGELO asked the Premier: 1, Has he noticed in the local Press that the Commonwealth Bank, Savings Bank Branch, has increased the rate of interest on deposits? 2, Can he ascertain and advise the House of the total amount of deposits in this State with the Commonwealth Bank, including its Savings Bank Branch, as at the 30th June last? 3, Also the total amount of advances in this State by the Commonwealth Bank, including its Savings Bank Branch, by (a) loans to the Government of Western Australia; (b) by loans to local authorities; (c) by loans to private persons, companies, etc.; (d) other loans and investments?

The **PREMIER** replied: 1, Yes. 2, Average amounts of deposits in Commonwealth Bank for the quarter ended 30th June, 1923, as follows:—

Not bearing interest ..	£1,028,534	9	0
Bearing interest ..	£1,320,175	18	9
Savings Bank Deposits	£2,817,572	10	1

Total .. £5,166,282 17 10

3, This information is not available. It would have to be obtained direct from the Commonwealth Bank.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills—

1. Municipal Council of Collie Validation.
2. Electric Light and Power Agreement Amendment.
3. Supply Bill (No. 2) £1,250,000.