

selves and to the people we represent. Unless we point the way towards opening up new avenues of industry, especially through our latent mineral resources, we are not doing our duty by this country and by its boys and girls, whom existing conditions force to join the great army of unskilled labour.

Progress reported,

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 3rd November, 1926.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Question: Miners' Phthisis, examinations ... | 1847 |
| Assent to Bill ... | 1847 |
| Bills: Coal Mines Regulation Act, 3R. ... | 1847 |
| Weights and Measures Act Amendment, 3R. ... | 1847 |
| Jetties, Report ... | 1847 |
| State Insurance, 2R. ... | 1847 |
| City of Perth Act Amendment, 1R. ... | 1860 |
| Guardianship of Infants, Assembly's message ... | 1860 |
| Metropolitan Market, 2R. ... | 1860 |
| Reserves, Assembly's message ... | 1873 |

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

QUESTION—MINERS' PHTHISIS EXAMINATIONS.

East Coolgardie Goldfield.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: Has Dr. Mitchell examined every man on the East Coolgardie goldfields who has been precluded under the Miners' Phthisis Act for tubercular reasons from further mining work, with a view to ascertaining whether he is unable to do any work?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to the Traffic Act Amendment Bill.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment.

2, Weights and Measures Act Amendment.

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—JETTIES.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—STATE INSURANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.40]: Whatever may be the result of the discussion on the second reading of the Bill, I feel sure the debate will reveal the fact that every member of the House is anxious to see that miners, who have unfortunately become infected with one or other form of miners' diseases will be rightly and fully compensated. I am desirous of assuring that something shall be done in that direction. I have always recognised that there is an obligation devolving upon the State to see, whatever the liability may be, that such men are treated in an adequate fashion. The whole question resolves itself into one regarding the method by which the necessary compensation shall be provided. One member may suggest one method, and another put forward a varying method. The Government have adopted a certain method that does not commend itself to me. Other suggestions have been made which, I am sure, will receive full consideration on the part of hon. members. Previous speakers have set out at length the steps that led to the present situation. No one can consider those facts without coming to the conclusion that a very important principle is at stake. In reviewing the facts we find that the Government, without legislative authority and in violation of the recognised practice regarding expenditure of money from Consolidated Revenue, embarked upon a business involving heavy risks. The Government now seek endorsement of their illegal act. If we as a House approve of the Bill, we shall establish a very dangerous precedent. If we were to adopt the course proposed by the Government, it would mean that all that

a Minister or a Government has to do is to take some such action in similar circumstances during recess—that action may be in defiance of the expressed decision of Parliament and in opposition to the recognised custom and practice—and, having committed the act, the Government will introduce a Bill and ask Parliament to endorse the illegal action. That will be tantamount to making members of Parliament nothing but rubber stamps. I do not subscribe to any such idea. This procedure, however, goes further, because if we endorse such actions as the one under review, we shall forfeit our control as a legislative authority. I admit there may be occasions—they would be exceptional instances—when some steps may be taken by a Government who will accept the responsibility for their action, necessarily relying upon subsequent ratification by Parliament, but I have failed absolutely to find in this case circumstances that would justify the exception. Parliament is the deciding authority in these matters and we must consider this Bill in its true light. One fact that I think has been more or less overlooked during the debate is that the Workers' Compensation Act, which embodies the third schedule over which this controversy has arisen, contains a provision that it should not come into force until proclaimed. Until the proclamation was issued, that portion of the Act was not operative.

Hon. J. Cornell: The whole of the Act came into force by proclamation.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, it was proclaimed to take effect in June last. One would naturally expect that before proclaiming the Act, the Government would first have seen that proper arrangements were made between the insuring companies and the owners of the mines, and would have placed freely before the companies the result of the investigations as to the men affected by disease. I share the opinion expressed by several members about the conduct and action of the Minister for Works. A company, I contend, is like an ordinary individual. The company and the individual in matters of this nature expect frankness and fair dealing, and I ask members whether in view of the revelation of the facts there was that degree of frankness and fair dealing which should have been manifested in a transaction of this kind. I have no hesitation in saying there

was not that open-handed frankness that we should have expected. I agree with Dr. Saw that the committee appointed lacked a most important member, namely a medical expert. I do not challenge the worthiness of the personnel of the committee, but to pursue such investigations a medical expert was of supreme importance and yet there was none on the committee. In the light of what has been revealed, it may be that Dr. Saw's view that a trap was set for the companies by the Minister is the correct one. If so, I ask whether that is a reason why we as a House should also fall into the trap.

Hon. E. H. Harris. Why do you call it a trap?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Dr. Saw described certain negotiations that took place between the parties as amounting to nothing more or less than a trap for the insurance companies. I submit that if the negotiations amounted to a trap, I should be sorry to think that the Minister, in taking the high-handed action he did, and the Government in embarking on State insurance without the authority of Parliament, hoping to get the sanction of Parliament subsequently, could claim justification for their action. Is it not tantamount to laying a trap for Parliament if the Minister and the Government adopted such an action as that? I do not say that a trap was set, but Dr. Saw said that a trap was set and I ask members, if there was a trap, is that any reason why this House shall fall into it? It is the duty of this House to avoid any traps, or if I may express it more mildly, to avoid making any mistake and to see that whatever is done is done in a proper and legitimate way. The companies clearly had no means of measuring their risk. They were given no data or information that would enable them to gauge the risk. It was only fair that they should have been given some information and definite information. How, then, in the absence of that information, could they have quoted a rate? It has been stated that they did not quote a rate. How could they possibly have done so? Their business is one of taking risks, of indemnifying people who require to be insured against the particular risks that they assume. In ordinary cases the companies can measure the risk, such as in insuring a house against fire.

Hon. J. Cornell: Their risk is easier than that of a bookmaker.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The insurance companies' fire risk is easily measured, because they can inspect the property to be insured. If they did not have an opportunity to inspect the property, they would hesitate about taking the risk. So likewise with workers' compensation and the third schedule, it was only fair to give the companies the fullest information, and let them know how they were placed. The companies, however, without being given any information, were asked to take the risk on the blind, and I consider they were justified in refusing, as anyone else would be in the circumstances. The companies made a very fair offer when they proposed to undertake the risk if the Government would guarantee them against loss. That was a perfectly fair proposal. As was pointed out by Sir Edward Wittenoom yesterday, Clause 8 of the Bill before us contains a provision that a policy issued by the commissioner under this measure "shall be issued on behalf of and is hereby guaranteed by the Government of the State." When we realise that the State Insurance Office is guaranteed by the Government against loss and that whatever the loss may be, the Government have to foot it, was it not a fair proposal on the part of the companies to undertake the risk if the Government guaranteed them against loss? It was doubly fair in view of the fact that the companies were not supplied with information as to the degree of risk they were required to undertake, and it was only reasonable that they should ask for some measure of guarantee. It showed that the companies were not hostile, as has been alleged, to the welfare of the miners, but were desirous of helping the Government out of the difficulty into which they had placed themselves by proclaiming the Act before they had made adequate arrangements to give effect to it. That is where the Government made their first mistake; they proclaimed the Act before they had actually concluded the necessary preliminary arrangements. Having thus referred to some arguments of other members, I must now confess that I experienced some difficulty in following the conclusions arrived at by Dr. Saw. In his opening statements he criticised the Minister for Works and showed that the Minister's attitude was insincere and unreasonable. Consequently, his conclusions baffled me somewhat. They are not supported with that degree of sound reasoning for which I have always given

the hon. member credit. Highly as I admire and esteem Dr. Saw, as I am sure every other member does, I must admit that his conclusions and deductions from his arguments in this matter do not coincide. It has been argued that the Government had no alternative to establishing State insurance, and that because the provision of compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act had been made compulsory, the corollary was State insurance. Various arguments have been advanced on that point. We have to bear in mind that when a man dies it is compulsory that he be buried. I ask, then, why have not the Government set up a business as State undertakers.

Hon. J. Cornell: Perhaps they are waiting for some of us to die.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It would be more appropriate for the Government to embark on a business of that kind than on State insurance.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not start at the other end—midwifery?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The hon. member will have an opportunity to advance that argument later on, when he may be able to show that it would be wise for the Government to establish institutions and do all that might be necessary for that very essential part of the life of society. The necessity for the burial of the dead is something that applies to all men and women. Every member of the community is affected, but the third schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act and the provisions that have led to the Government bringing forward this Bill have been necessitated not because of any need on the part of the community generally, but because of the need of one small section of the community. That is the difference. If all people were in a very impecunious state, the Government might claim it as justification for embarking upon such a business as I have indicated and then asking the sanction of Parliament afterwards.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: It affects all workmen.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is quite true. I listened intently to Mr. Dodd's address, and I agree with much of what he said, but I cannot go the full length and say it would be wise to justify the establishment of State insurance. I am with him in regard to the amendment of the Miners' Phthisis Act: I think his reasoning is sound and it is a proper basis to work upon. But reverting to my argument

about State insurance and the State undertaking other activities, I say that this particular form of insurance, as it is proposed to provide under the Bill, has been suggested because of the needs only of a certain section of the community, and not the community at large. So that there is a mighty difference when one is giving consideration to the matter; and it is not a question that affects the community as a whole. As there is a comparatively small section affected, there are other methods which, no doubt, could be suggested. I contend that the Government were precipitate in proclaiming the Act. The initial fault therefore, I repeat, lay with the Government and not with the companies. If the Government had acted with greater wisdom the present position would not have arisen. I am informed that in New Zealand and Tasmania, where State insurance departments are established, when the provision was introduced under the Workers' Compensation Act for compensating men affected with miners' diseases, the State department refused the risk. As a result those countries had to adopt other methods and provide compensation by other means. Reference has also been made to the position in Queensland. It would be interesting to receive some data on the lines asked for yesterday by Mr. Dodd, so that we might know in what way the State Insurance Department there has been affected by those diseases. It would be interesting to hear what the Leader of the House has to say in that regard, but there is no denying this fact, that from the public records in Queensland there has been a considerable loss spread over a number of years. I understand that the loss amounts to something like £100,000 over a period of eight years. Miners' disease, which has created so much difficulty, is confined to one section of the community, namely the mining community, and it should be possible to provide compensation for the affected men by means other than through the channel of the Workers' Compensation Act. I have come to the conclusion that I cannot support the Bill, but I am prepared to give favourable consideration to a Bill that will amend the Miners' Phthisis Act and allow that Act to be altered so that it will be all-embracing and will cover the whole of the diseases, because I recognise that compensation for those men who have been affected, is a State obligation.

Hon. J. Cornell: You ask that the Consolidated Revenue shall carry the risk for all time?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No; a line should be drawn; every man should be closely examined and in that way we could determine who is affected, and provision could be made by the Government to compensate those men, not through the Workers' Compensation Act, but by an amendment of the Miners' Phthisis Act.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about the accumulated load and the prospective load?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am dealing with the retrospective part; I do not think it should be an obligation on the community for all time. The industry should bear the burden of seeing that the men are adequately compensated in the future, and the funds should come from the mines. But having regard to the benefit the State has received from the industry, I consider there is an obligation on the State to see that the men are adequately compensated and provided for. It has been suggested by some speakers that State insurance should be limited to mining. In my opinion that would not attain the desired end. I doubt the practicability of that, for it would still mean that if we passed the Bill and limited the powers under it simply to the mining industry, it would be the introduction of the thin end of the wedge and we do not know exactly where it would lead. We would still be violating that principle which I say is at stake, and which should not be violated without the express will of Parliament. In those circumstances I regret to say I cannot support the Bill, but as I have already intimated I shall be glad to give favourable consideration to any amendments that may be proposed to the Miners' Phthisis Act.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [5.10]: The position to my mind is one that calls on members to give reasons if they are not able to support the second reading of the Bill. After listening to the various contributions to the debate, there is not much new matter that can be introduced, nor is there much that can be said by way of approaching the problem from a different angle. Reviewing the position, we find that the evident intention of Parliament was to provide compensation for miners who had been disabled whilst working in the industry. There is in the Miners' Phthisis Act, a provision to enable affected

miners to receive compensation, or to be removed to other positions where they may be able to follow different employment. There is also a provision to permit of the examination of affected men, and in the event of any being found to be suffering from disease, the sufferer is provided with a form which discloses to him that he is affected and is therefore in danger of contracting tuberculosis. The tubercular miners come under Form D, which sets out—

Take notice that you are reported to be suffering from tuberculosis, and that in consequence you are hereby, from the date of service of this notice upon you, prohibited from being employed in, on, or about any mine or part of a mine to which Section 8, Subsection (1), of the above Act applies.

Then there is the other form "F," which reads—

Take notice that you are reported as having developed symptoms of miners' phthisis, uncomplicated by tuberculosis, and that further employment on, in, or about a mine or part of a mine to which Section 8, Subsection (7), of the above Act applies, may be detrimental to your future health.

There are 567 miners who have been declared to be suffering from miners' diseases. They come under the Third Schedule. There is also in the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act the list of diseases that arise from dust in mines. Those diseases are brought within the scope of that Act and in my opinion it is a pity that they appear in the schedule of that Act. There are other industries that could be brought within the scope of that schedule. Take, for instance, lead works, dye works, and works where arsenic is used, as well as various others—those works are expected to bear the burden of the risks incurred by the employees. But in the case of miners it is proposed under the Bill we are discussing that the Government shall be authorised to embark on State insurance and in that way legacies of past Governments, who neglected to deal with the question, are now to be handled.

Hon. J. Cornell: Miners' phthisis extends to stonecutters and the like.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am not going to be drawn away from the main issue. Of course wherever dust is inhaled there is serious damage to the lungs. It is not fair to expect that insurance companies or those who in various industries have to cover the risks of their industries, should be called upon to help bear this cumulative legacy of

sufferers from miners' complaint. The Miners' Phthisis Act was proclaimed in 1925, and the Workers' Compensation Act was proclaimed on the 1st March, 1925. But the section dealing with these diseases, excluded by Section 5 of the amending Act, was brought into operation in Kalgoorlie and Boulder on the 15th June, 1926. Since all that time had elapsed, and since it was expected that Parliament would meet at the end of July, there was no warrant for the Minister's launching out on insurance business. The question as to who was right and who was wrong in the negotiations between the Minister for Works and the insurance companies will not influence my vote. Parliament intended that each industry should bear the burden of its own compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act; that is to say the current liability, not the cumulative legacy. When provision was made in the Miners' Phthisis Act not only for tubercular miners, but for issuing certificates to other men affected with miners' complaint, and when the House had perused Mr. Cornell's valuable report and so knew exactly what was in operation in South Africa, the obligation was and is on the Government to deal with the cumulative legacy and to ask Parliament to authorise them to take such action as would be best suited to meet that need on behalf of the general taxpayers of the State. It is more difficult to deal with those men who have been provided for under Form F. That problem could not very well be dealt with by Parliament unless well thought out proposals were put forward by the Government or by a commission. One way of dealing with it would be by a select committee; but then we should not know whether the recommendations of the select committee would meet with the approval of the Government. All cases coming under Form F would have to be graded. I think Parliament expects the Government to carry the difference between the risk of these cases and the risk of cases existing apart from them; or those only slightly affected could be taken as part of the average state of the working miners in the industry. It is not only the Kalgoorlie and Boulder miners that we are concerned with; it is for us to endeavour to arrive at a solution of this knotty problem that will make it applicable to the metal mining industry in all parts of the State, to bring into operation a system that

will avoid the cumulative legacy at present existing on the Golden Mile. Consequently we should not have any tampering with this from the local aspect. The men that come under Form F are not incapacitated at the present time. They are not told that they cannot go on working in the mines. Moreover, until they are incapacitated they cannot get any compensation.

Hon. J. Cornell: Some of them are really incapacitated.

Hon. H. STEWART. But taking them by and large, until they are incapacitated they do not receive any compensation. By State insurance it is proposed to bring them under the Workers' Compensation Act. Those men are notified already that to stay in the mines is prejudicial to their health. Yet they must remain there until incapacitated, in order that they may secure compensation. That is a direct incentive to members, in the interests of those men, to persuade the Government to take such action as will remove those men from the mines under the Miners' Phthisis Act, which will discourage them from continuing in the industry.

Hon. J. Cornell: They should get compensation for the injury they have suffered already.

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes, I agree with that. There will be no difficulty if the Government, perhaps this session, bring down an amendment of the Miners' Phthisis Act to deal with the cumulative legacy, representing between 500 and 600 men, providing for proper tabulation, treatment, suitable offers of employment, compensation where necessary, and grading. It would be far better for that matter to be definitely dealt with by Parliament and the men put on a proper basis. In this regard we should not consider whether or not the industry is in a languishing condition; the industry should bear its burden and all sections of the industry should be brought under the operations of the Act. There was no justification for the action of the Minister for Works in setting up a State Insurance Office. That action and the cancellation of his approval of insurance companies as qualified to take employers' liability business was not only unworthy of a Minister of the Crown, but was sufficiently menacing to confirm me in my decision to vote against the Bill authorising State insurance. Some members seem to think State insurance is necessary to combat concerted action between the in-

surance companies as is practised in other sections of industry. But it does not matter whether they are insurance companies or companies of wool brokers unless they combine for mutual protection and assistance, they seem to go to the wall. If there is to be a remedy against harmful combination on the part of insurance companies I think it will develop along co-operative lines, for in that direction lies the solution of such vexed questions. In the "Mining and Engineering Journal," published recently in Melbourne, details are given of the system in New Zealand of letting Government and local government contracts to co-operative workers. In those cases the authorities rent out the plant. The result of working on those lines is that co-operative associations of municipal employees tender for work in open competition with other contractors. They have been successful in getting a considerable number of such contracts. They have done their work to the benefit both of the Government authorities and themselves, and have shown great self-reliance and been able to reduce overhead costs. Mr. Dodd made a strong appeal for the passing of this Bill. He admitted, however, that the general taxpayer, out of Consolidated Revenue, was the person who should bear the legacy involved in those who have suffered in the mining industry. After considering his speech I regard it as mainly opposed to the Bill. The only justification for passing the second reading would be if we could amend the title in such a way as to restrict the operation of State insurance to those cases that have already been certified, leaving the Government to deal with them only. This would be a practical way of overcoming the difficulty. It would compel the Government to deal with those cases and no others. It would not be long before the Government extended these operations. Much the safer plan would be to discard the Bill. The Government could then bring forward an amendment to the Miners' Phthisis Act, or introduce a special Bill. If any man fell by the way between now and the next few weeks, arrangements could be made whereby their dependants would receive the necessary protection. At one time I might have been tempted to vote for the second reading of the Bill, but not now. We have had the experience of several Bills that we have amended in this Chamber and turned out as good measures, but they have not been acceptable in another place. I saw indi-

cated that it was desirable to have a State Insurance Office as a check against the general insurance offices. We all know the kind of check upon the timber trade that is constituted by the State Sawmills. The same atmosphere permeates all State trading concerns. One of the great arguments in favour of the sawmills was that it would make for cheaper timber.

Hon. E. H. Gray: But for the State Sawmills timber might have been dearer.

Hon. H. STEWART: That is hardly possible. The Minister says, "I will make this concern a payable one." He then enters into an honourable understanding with the timber companies, and up goes the price of all timber. It is no exaggeration to say that the price of timber to-day is twice as high as it was when the State Sawmills started. Shooks are required by the producer. We use half a million fruit cases per annum and export nearly half a million cases of fruit, at all events over 400,000 cases. Since the war and the increase in the tariff the timber companies have charged more for jarrah cases than that for which we could in pre-war days purchase pine shooks from Norway. It takes only half the time to put together a pine case, and there were no losses due to irregularities in length or cutting through gum veins, and other difficulties that are encountered in the case of jarrah. People are quite content to use the local material, but since the State Sawmills started, prices have risen beyond anything that was thought possible. This kind of argument, therefore, does not hold water. In the circumstances I have no option but to vote against the second reading.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.40]: This is one of the most important Bills we have ever been called upon to consider. The Government have illegally brought into being another concern which will make inroads into the revenue of the State. We all agree that the unfortunate miners who are suffering from diseases should be looked after and compensated. This matter should have been taken up years ago. To-day only the State is in a position to find the large sum of money that is involved. Had the matter been taken up at the proper time, the mining companies could have been called upon to contribute to the compensation. To-day it is idle to ask any of the existing companies to meet the liabilities that were created in the past. It is a struggle for most of the mines to carry on. Members

have asked what will happen if the Bill does not become law. There is plenty of time to discuss that point. The Government could introduce a special measure to deal with the matter. I have studied this controversy in all its phases. I do not think the Minister for Labour was sincere in attempting to arrive at a good business agreement with the insurance companies. Whether the companies fell into a trap, as Dr. Saw suggests, I do not know. If the Minister had been sincere, he could have done a great deal better than he did. During the war, insurance companies operating in Western Australia were called upon to put up between them a sum of about £280,000, as a sign of their good faith. This money was paid to the Government. Seeing that the companies put up something like £5,000 apiece, one would have thought the Government would have met them in a business way. Slowly but surely the Government have been effecting their own insurances with Lloyds', outside of the other companies. It would be interesting to know how they would be placed if claims of great magnitude had to be met. There may be some difficulty in testing claims. Some of the policies were endorsed by many names. We know how difficult it is, when the time comes, to fight an insurance claim, though it is very seldom it has to be done. If the Government are called upon to fight a claim outside the State, because the company they have reinsured with is domiciled elsewhere, they will find themselves in a difficult position. I am opposed to the setting up of the State Insurance Office, but I am most anxious to assist the unfortunate men who, in the course of winning gold from the earth, have contracted these dreadful complaints. It makes one inclined to think that because of the great sacrifice men have made it was a pity the mining industry ever existed. As regards the Bill before us, there is ample time to make special provision for the men concerned, who should be protected in every way. The Bill, however, does not represent a proper way of doing it. Parliament never intended that such a position should be created. The desire of Parliament was to do what was right for the miners, but not in this way. The present Government have taken advantage of the position to foist on the country one of their particular ideas. We have had expensive illustrations of those ideas in the past. Without fear of contradiction, I say it is

impossible for any Government to conduct a trading concern satisfactorily.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Are not hospitals State trading concerns on all-fours with what the Bill proposes?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The ramifications of Government departments are such as to make it impossible for the head of a State trading concern to do justice to his position as he would if acting for a company or a firm. That is another reason why we should not embark on State insurance. A great deal has been said about the profits of insurance companies; but when one analyses the matter one finds, as has already been explained by Sir William Lathlain, that those profits are obtained from the investments of the companies and not from what they make out of insurance.

Hon. J. Cornell: Where did they get the money to make investments?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Would the Government go in for investment as well as insurance?

Hon. J. Cornell: Where did the companies get the funds to invest?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Money is invested in insurance companies, paid into the business. Whilst prepared to do all I can for the mine workers, I am unable to support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [5.48]: The introduction of this measure, and also the opposition to it, serve to emphasise, if need be, the dangers lying in wait for anyone who engages upon the arduous work of mining. Those who have for years been engaged in the mining industry—the industry that turned the spot light on Western Australia—have done much for this country and have had little reward other than the wage paid to them. Many of them have failed in health because of the industry, and have not received any compensation. The accident statistics of the Commonwealth, let alone those of Western Australia, disclose that a far greater percentage of men are injured in mining than in any other industry. Further, mining is responsible for a greater number of men affected by industrial diseases than is any other industry. The defeat of the Bill will have far-reaching effects if the Government do not, in that event, introduce some other measure to afford the relief which I believe every member of the Chamber is anxious to grant to the mine workers. The opponents

of the Bill, and also some of its supporters, are keenly opposed on principle to State trading. Opponents of the Bill justify their attitude simply on the ground that they are against any extension of State trading. I admire their fidelity to principle.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But you question the wisdom of their attitude?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, having regard to the circumstances. Amongst the supporters of the Bill in this Chamber are some who cherish the idea that the State is capable of conducting trading concerns economically and advantageously as against private enterprise. Such members consider that greater efficiency can be obtained through the State than through existing agencies. Other members of this Chamber realise what will be the effect of the defeat of the Bill, having regard to the 3,000 men engaged in the gold-mining industry of Western Australia. Those men are materially affected by the measure. We have on our statute-book a law making insurance obligatory on the employer. Those who operate in insurance have definitely declared that they will not do this business. The Government then determined to establish a State Insurance Office in order that the employer might be enabled to comply with the Act by insuring his workmen, and in order that the workmen might get any compensation due to them. I am concerned not only for the 3,000 mine workers, but also for the interests of the business people on the goldfields and for the revenue of the State railways. Another circumstance to which I pay regard is that the mining area covered by the Bill produces no less than 70 per cent. of Western Australia's total output of gold. Giving frank expression to my personal view, I say that I consider the function of the Government is to regulate industry and not to enter into competition in trading. I am as keenly opposed as any other member to State trading, chiefly on the ground that it adds to the number of Government employees. Wages and salaries in State trading concerns are frequently fixed by Ministers, who have regard for votes. I do not say that particularly of the present Government or of previous Governments. However, Governments must have an eye on that aspect when appointments are being made. Such a condition of things is not in the best interests of the State. If there is any business in which the Government might be able to give an adequate

service, and possibly at a reduced cost, it is insurance, for the simple reason that insurance does not involve buying and selling but is worked on an actuarial basis. Calculations are taken out showing what is the risk on the basis of statistics and the history of the industry, and on those figures the premium is fixed. If experience shows that the premium is not high enough, the amount is increased until what is fair between the parties has been arrived at. State insurance is one of the very few enterprises which might be conducted by the Government on more satisfactory lines than the State trading concerns established here. In order that justice may be done to those whose lives and homes have been blighted as the result of work in the mining industry, I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill. Let us bear in mind the specimens of manhood that have gone west or have been sent to Wooroloo from the mining fields. I do not know whether many members of this Chamber have visited the Wooroloo Sanatorium, but I assure them that a high percentage of the cases there are from the goldfields. Nearly every T.B. patient at Wooroloo has worked in the gold mining industry. For years we have had a Workers' Compensation Act which provides that if a man is disabled by an accident in the course of his employment he shall receive a certain sum per week until he has recovered, and that if similarly he loses a limb or an eye he shall receive corresponding compensation. Now, there are cases in which mine workers have lost a lung as the result of silicosis, and yet no compensation has been granted to them. The mine worker with a hole in his lung receives no compensation. The Bill provides that such sufferers shall receive the compensation to which they are entitled. Judging from the debate so far as it has proceeded, I should say that some members are under a misconception, and that they do not realise the difference between the Workers' Compensation Act and the Miners' Phthisis Act. It seems to be believed that all the men affected are to be brought under the Miners' Phthisis Act.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Widen the scope of the Act.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That would not achieve the object desired. There seems to be an idea of defeating this Bill and then waiting for something else to come along. But the Government have actually entered into contracts, have accepted premiums in

respect of men engaged in the industry who have since been declared unfit for employment. Those men are now in receipt of weekly payments of £3 10s. as the result of the contracts entered into. If the Bill is defeated, all those men will be immediately thrown on their own resources, if they have any, or else on the Charities Department.

Hon. H. Stewart: The contracts can be validated under the Miners' Phthisis Act.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Will time permit of that being done? Some people are careful of what they do on the eve of a general election. It might be excellent tactics not to introduce any other legislation on this subject. Again, it might be good tactics to pass such legislation. I really believe that if another Bill were introduced, hon. members would give it earnest consideration; but whether that course would be desirable from the Government standpoint is not for me to say.

Hon. H. Stewart: The Bill could be got through in one sitting.

Hon. J. R. Brown: We have heard that before.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The debate in this Chamber on the subject of miners' phthisis will be within the recollection of hon. members. Not long after that discussion you, Mr. President, and I went through a political campaign in which miners' phthisis was the chief topic. Having been closely associated with the working of the Miners' Phthisis Act and with the mine workers, I am in a position to voice the opinion of the men as to the compensation they should receive. Last session Parliament passed a Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act. Under that amending legislation it was made compulsory for employers to insure their workers. There were many divisions during the course of the debates in connection with the amending legislation and I have gone through them. I find that we did not divide on the question whether it should be made compulsory for employers to insure their workers. When the Premier was speaking to his electors on the goldfields he told them that the Workers' Compensation Act of Western Australia was the best in the world. I am inclined to think the Premier was right. If insurance is to be obligatory, and heavy penalties are provided for the punishment of employers who do not insure their workers, the question arises as to what will be the position if the Bill is not passed.

Hon. R. J. Brown: The Government will be in an awkward position.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I am inclined to think that one of the first things that would happen would be that the companies would discharge their employees until some remedy had been found for the position that would arise. I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to Section 5 of the Workers' Compensation Act, which sets out, *inter alia*,—

This Act does not apply to persons in the naval or military service of the Crown, but otherwise applies to workers employed by or under the Crown to whom this Act would apply if the employer were a private person.

I have already referred to the Third Schedule. This will include many workmen, among them inspectors of mines who are in the service of the Crown and come within the scope of the Bill, because their duties take them underground. When the Minister is replying, I would like an assurance from him that all such Crown employees have been insured under the provisions of the Third Schedule. I quite understand that Crown employees may have been insured in the ordinary way, but I wish to have an assurance that such of the employees who are concerned have been insured under the Third Schedule. In connection with the insurance controversy, we have had a perfect barrage of accusations and insinuations from both the insurance companies and the Minister for Labour as to the information asked for by the companies. I regard the position as on a fifty-fifty basis, with honours even as between the Minister and the companies. As the Minister was in the position of custodian of the interests of the community, and was charged with the duty of maintaining industry, the refusal of the companies draws attention to another point. It has been frequently stated, both inside and outside Parliament, that the Government did not supply the whole of the information that was sought by the insurance companies. It has been further stated that shortly after the refusal of the companies to quote for the business, the information that they desired was published in the "Worker." Is any hon. member of this Chamber in a position to guarantee that, if the State Insurance Department were abolished to-morrow, the private insurance companies would quote for that business? The companies refused to quote in the past and gave as the ex-

planation for their action that the Government had refused to make available the whole of the information at their disposal. That information has since been published. Are the companies willing now to quote for the business, or have they definitely made up their minds not to transact any of the business? That is a very important point to my mind. What will their attitude be now?

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do you say that the information they required has been published?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The statement was made here frequently that the information that the companies could not obtain from the Government was subsequently published in the "Worker." If that is so, the companies should indicate now whether, seeing that they are in possession of the information required, they are prepared to undertake the business.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is an important point.

Hon. H. Stewart: Perhaps some of the insurance companies do not take the "Worker."

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: But in their published statements the insurance companies pointed out that the information had appeared in the "Worker."

Hon. E. H. Gray: The "Worker" is a widely read paper.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I follow it closely myself. The Minister for Labour was accused of exceeding his powers. It has been said that, in defiance of the Act we passed in connection with State trading concerns, he established the Insurance Department. It has to be remembered that the Minister was confronted with a certain set of conditions. Hon. members should put themselves in the position of the Minister and then ask themselves what attitude they would have adopted had they been face to face with such a set of conditions. Sir Edward Wittenoom, in the course of his speech yesterday, told us what happened regarding the insurance companies. He said they were entitled to transact or to refuse business. I agree with Sir Edward in his contention. That hon. member also said that the companies had gone into conference. When unions go on strike, the position is often referred to as "going into conference." That method is frequently objected to. Objection has been raised in this Chamber frequently to such a course of action, particularly as industrial organ-

isations do not take a referendum of their members to determine the question whether or not a strike shall be indulged in. When the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill was before us, the suggestion was made that a provision for a referendum of the members of a union should be inserted.

Hon. H. Stewart: But that matter was not taken up.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I am very strong on the point. I mention that point at this stage because we have been told that the companies were not unanimous in their decision to refuse to undertake this business.

Member: Did the companies quote for the business?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Certainly not. I am dealing with the arguments that have been brought forward. If a referendum of the companies had been taken on this question, it could have been determined according to the will of the majority. I quite realise that the companies have the right to reject any business, but I draw attention to the fact that they did not give this matter the consideration that individual companies might have given it had it not been for the fact---

Hon. A. Burvill: That they went on strike.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Whatever may be said of the insurance companies from the standpoint of business acumen, it is clear that in this instance they did not disclose any political sagacity when they determined not to quote for the business. They knew very well that Parliament had given the Minister the right to reject any incorporated company. When they were dealing with this question, the Minister had the joker up his sleeve and he used it---

Hon. H. Stewart: As no other Minister would have used it.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If hon. members had been confronted with a similar set of circumstances, I think they would have acted as the Minister did.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you not think that all the information available should have been given by the Minister to the companies?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes. The companies say the information was not made available and the Minister says that it was. I think it is fifty-fifty, as between the Minister and the companies.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The information was later given to the "Worker."

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I know that the Minister and the companies abused each other, and I merely draw attention to the position. Section 7, Subsection 4, of the Workers' Compensation Act reads---

If it is proved that the worker has at the time of entering the employment wilfully and falsely represented himself in writing as not having previously suffered from the disease, compensation shall not be payable.

If the Government went out of the insurance business to-morrow, and the private companies decided that they would quote for the business, it would be within the province of the employers, on behalf of the companies, to call upon their employees to sign a document setting out that they were not suffering from any symptoms of miners' phthisis. If that were done, the 560 men who have been shown to have symptoms of miners' phthisis would be thrown upon the scrap heap and banned from the mining industry. That is a point that hon. members should bear in mind. As a result of the examinations in the Federal laboratory at Kalgoorlie, I do not know that anyone, except the Minister and those directly concerned with the examinations, is aware as to who has been affected by symptoms of the disease. If the employers call upon their employees to sign the document I suggest, this action may work to the detriment of the men concerned, because the companies may say that as those men are already affected, the companies will not insure them against miners' phthisis. We have to look at the position as it confronts us. The Government have either to deny the unfortunate men the benefits of insurance that we conferred upon them by legislation, or carry on. The Government would have to carry out their obligations to the men, quite apart from any question of breach of faith with the men. From a political standpoint, the Government would not dare to do otherwise. The Government of to-day and their supporters denounced their predecessors in office because they did not give effect to this legislation. The confidence of the men had been severely shaken and therefore the Government determined to introduce legislation, but when they did so, they applied the Third Schedule to one portion only of Western Australia—Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Men have been examined in other parts, yet the Third Schedule has not been proclaimed outside the Golden Mile, and therefore the other men do not reap any advantage. If

the miners in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder district are entitled to the benefits accruing from the proclaiming of the Third Schedule, I submit that the men in other parts of the State are equally entitled to compensation at the earliest possible moment.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Are not these particular diseases more or less restricted to the gold mining industry?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, and I am pointing out that the operations under the Third Schedule have been confined to the Golden Mile, and I want to know why they have not been extended to other parts of the State so that the miners there can secure adequate compensation.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I was pointing out the present position and some of the alternatives. The Government could deny the miners the benefits of insurance by allowing the Act to remain a dead letter. An alternative would be for the mining companies, if they so desired, to establish a co-operative company and conduct their own insurance, which would mean that neither the State nor the private insurance companies need come into the business. A third course would be to repeal the compulsory insurance provisions under the Workers' Compensation Act, but that would be a retrograde step, because Parliament has agreed to the principle of compulsory insurance and I do not think we would be justified in going back. If the Bill passes the second reading, which I hope it will, the members who are so hostile to State insurance and who realise the necessity for the miners being covered by insurance would be able to move amendments with a view to limiting the measure to industrial insurance or to operations under the third schedule. If that were done I do not think it would be fair to the taxpayers of the State, but I am merely pointing out what might be done in Committee. We have been told that the business, particularly under the third schedule, is unprofitable. The Minister for Works stated in another place that the public had been robbed by the insurance companies. If the public feel that they have been robbed, they will have an opportunity to do their business with the State Insurance Office, while those who consider they have received a fair deal from the companies will doubtless continue to do business with them. Reference has been

made to the practice in South Africa. There the miners are scheduled, but under our Miners' Phthisis Act and Workers' Compensation Act, we cover the whole of the mines in the metalliferous industry. If a man works in a scheduled mine in South Africa, he has first to obtain a certificate, an initial certificate that entitles him to work below ground. Men suffering from respiratory affections or lung diseases cannot pass the medical test and are not allowed to enter a mine. Having qualified to go below, the miner is provided with a further certificate that entitles him to continue mining. From time to time he is examined, and so long as he passes the examination he may continue to work underground. In South Africa it is an offence for a man to work in a mine unless he holds a certificate. Then there is a primary stage and men who become affected are put into that stage and are paid compensation on the basis of twelve times or six times as the case may be, the wages they are earning. It has been suggested that we might compensate our men on a similar basis. It would be difficult to estimate the figure, but the Government should undertake certain liabilities in that direction. It is a matter that should be carefully investigated and compensation to affected men should be paid on that basis. There are many anomalies under our Workers' Compensation Act and Miners' Phthisis Act. I could point to men who have been engaged in the industry for 25 years and are suffering from dust. Although they have worked in the industry for so long, a number of them have been working for themselves, prospecting and otherwise, and have not subscribed to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund for some time. When they are overtaken by disease they find that the compensation due to them from the fund is very limited, amounting in some instances to only a few shillings per week. Again, there are men suffering from tuberculosis who had been in the industry only two or three years, and they are receiving the same amount of compensation as a man who had been working in the industry for 20 years. They receive pounds where other men who had been in the industry 25 years receive only shillings. Some of the affected men with two or three years' service were fortunate enough to be engaged in mining when the new scale was proclaimed under the Miners' Phthisis Act. The anomalies are pronounced and if possible should be rectified. I submit that to solve some of

our difficulties we should revise the whole scheme of compensation. The Government could, with advantage, amalgamate the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. This scheme has been in operation for years and has been the means of providing compensation for a large number of men. The total amount paid by the fund to the 31st January, 1925, was £76,838. The fund was first proposed by Mr. Dodd whose suggestion was sympathetically received by the mine managers in the district. The contributions are voluntary, the men and the companies each paying one-third, and the amount is subsidised by the Government. If the schemes were amalgamated, the unions would favourably consider continuing to pay into the fund, a suggestion to that effect having been made when the Minister for Works recently conferred with the A.W.U. If the scheme were revised, the voluntary contributions might be continued so long as any of the present contributors remained on the roll. Next we come to the legacy of past years. The 560 affected men are in various stages of infection, and the doctor at the laboratory could assist materially if the Miners' Phthisis Act were amended to permit of his grading them. The individual miner who receives a notice is not aware whether he is in the first or second stage of silicosis. It would materially assist the Government or the private insurance companies quoting for that class of work if they knew how the 560 men were graded. Naturally a higher rate would be demanded to cover affected men. If £4 10s. per cent. is a fair rate for the average man in the industry, the Government might pay the difference for the affected men who still remain in the industry. Injured men should receive compensation as I suggested earlier in the evening. The amount should be assessed and they should be given a lump sum. When the Federal Disabilities Commission were sitting in Perth quite a number of prominent citizens of the goldfields gave evidence. They emphasised the magnificent advantages that the State had derived from the mining industry, and they now consider it would be an act of grace on the part of the Government if the whole of the Federal grant of £350,000 were devoted to the gold mining industry. Certainly that amount was granted for the benefit of the industries suffering disabilities as a result of Federation. We have few industries in the State

and none has suffered so much from Federation as has gold mining. It is proposed under the Estimates to devote £152,000 to the erection of a central power station at Kalgoorlie, while the balance is to be utilised to reduce taxation. The proposal to reduce taxation has evoked a chorus of approval from all parts of the State because everyone who pays taxation will benefit more or less by the reduction. Mr. Seddon, when dealing with that question recently, quoted some figures relating to the difference in taxation. The Government propose to utilise £200,000 of the Disabilities Grant to relieve taxation to the extent of 33½ per cent., but in considering the best method by which the distribution of that sum should take place, one would have thought the Government would have had some regard for the men whom they claim to represent so ably, namely, the workers. We find that the difference in the taxation proposals of the Mitchell and the Collier Administrations runs to the extent of shillings and pounds. I have worked out the figures as they would pan out per week in the 52 weeks of the year. On a salary of £208 the worker, under the proposals of the Collier Government, will receive four-thirteenths of a penny per week advantage. The man in receipt of £500 will receive an advantage of 1s. 10d. per week; the man on £1,000 will receive 3s. 5d. per week; the man on £5,000 will receive £7 0s. 7d., and the man with an income of £10,000—the maximum—will receive an advantage weekly of no less a reduction than £18 11s. 9d. I am pointing out these facts because, had such a proposal been introduced by other than a Labour Government to give the worker an advantage of four-thirteenths of a penny per week by way of reduction in his income tax, and the man receiving £5,000—

The PRESIDENT: I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Bill before the House.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I am just about to complete my remarks under this heading. I had intended to show that instead of devoting the £200,000 to the relief of taxation, the Government would have been acting wisely if they had set aside that money to form the nucleus of a fund for the compensation of the unfortunate men stricken by disease on the goldfields. Had the Government done that, I believe the action would have met with the approval of this Chamber. If the Government had allocated the

£200,000 towards the object I have just mentioned, of the 560 men affected, 50 claims could have been met and payment of £4 a week could have been made to each. That would have absorbed £10,000 per annum, which would have been about the sum earned by the investment of the £200,000. Before concluding I should like to say a word or two respecting the criticism that has been levelled at the Bill in this House. Mr. Stephenson said there was not sufficient information to warrant the insurance companies quoting a rate. I have already said that now that the whole of the information is available, we might hear whether the companies would be prepared to quote. Mr. Macfarlane's objection was to the mines not having been cleaned up, and he added that after that had been done, the companies would be able to quote. There are 560 men who have symptoms of phthisis, and of that number the percentage who would have been obliged to leave the industry would probably be light. If, however, we were to remove the 560 from the industry, the probability is that many of the mines would have to close down for the reason that, owing to the fear of contracting the disease, there are very few young fellows coming forward to take on the vocation of mining. If the men affected were graded, it would be possible to employ a large number in the industry for perhaps the next ten years or so, and the employment of those men could be carried out without further detriment to their health. Whilst we provide for medical examinations, there is no provision for a periodical examination. That is a very important matter. A few weeks ago the Chief Secretary, in reply to a question asked by Mr. Cornell, indicated that the Government had an intention to carry out such examinations. It is necessary that all the men in the mines should be examined from time to time. Another important point that I omitted to mention was the fact that the men working in the mines are taken to the laboratory to be examined. An exhaustive examination is there made, but it is possible for a man to come from outside and obtain employment on a mine merely on the production of a doctor's certificate which can be obtained on the payment of 10s. 6d., a certificate declaring that he is not suffering from tuberculosis. If tests are to be carried out, they should be conducted as is done in South Africa—all

should go through the laboratory and be tested thoroughly before being permitted to enter a mine. That applies to all classes, whether they are actually employed in the mines at the time or whether they come from outside.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: If all are not examined, we will go back to the old condition of affairs.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That will be so. Sir Edward Wittenoom said there was no necessity for State insurance. We have compulsory insurance of the men and we are going to close the only avenue there is at the moment—the State Insurance Company. It is equivalent to saying that there is no need to insure the worker. I feel confident that Sir Edward Wittenoom will not take the attitude that workmen should not be insured. If, however, there is only one avenue, that is the position that will surely arise. I hope that members who voted for the compensation Bill, which provided that insurance should be compulsory, will not now stultify themselves by voting against the Bill under consideration. We must have regard for what might be termed the criminal negligence of the past, which has resulted in so many men engaged in the mining industry being maimed, and in order to grant them that measure of relief to which they are entitled, I ask members to carefully weigh the arguments before deciding to vote against the Bill. I support the second reading of the Bill.

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

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—GUARDIANSHIP OF INFANTS.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—METROPOLITAN MARKET.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan) [7.58]: I congratulate the Government on giving the House an opportunity to deal with this Bill. A Bill of a

similar nature was presented to another place last year but it did not reach this House. The object of the Bill is to create central markets in the sense that all the marketing that is now done in the city shall be carried on in one place instead of being spread over a big area, as is the case at the present time. The demand for a central marketing place comes from the sellers and the auctioneers of the different products, and also the buyers. All recognise that it was a waste of time to carry on as they have been doing for a considerable time. All were at a disadvantage by reason of the fact that buyers and sellers were not all close handy to pass from one line of produce to another, without having to journey some distance. I feel I am perhaps a little more experienced than most other members in the subject of the Bill. I will endeavour to place the House in possession of the facts with a view to influencing members as to the proper course to be taken. Marketing and the control of markets were first vested in the local authority by the Wilson Government in 1906. When the Scaddan Government came into power they conceived the socialistic idea of establishing State markets. This was brought about through a deputation of sellers and packers asking for a centralised area on which to conduct their business, and where all sales should take place. The Scaddan Government went so far as to resume quite a lot of land in Marquis-street, for which they had to pay something over £80,000. They intended to take the marketing into their own hands and make of it a State concern. However, before that could be done they went out of office and Sir James Mitchell came into power with a mandate from the people to abolish all State trading. Sir James Connolly was then member for Perth. I was in the City Council at the time, and I remember his coming to the council and saying he had had a chat with Sir James Mitchell about central markets. He advised us to wait upon Sir James Mitchell and point out that the City Council should be granted permission to go on with the work begun by the Scaddan Government. We waited on Sir James Mitchell, and he told us that if we were prepared to put before him a comprehensive scheme he would endeavour to have a Bill put through the House accordingly. In consequence of that assurance the City Council appointed a committee to investigate the position. Evi-

dence was called from all sections of trade, the producer, the seller and the buyer.

Hon. A. Burvill: Is not the producer the seller?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: No. You know that well enough.

Hon. J. Cornell: Who is the seller, if he is not?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: He is the seller only through his agent, the auctioneer. There was at that time an idea that the markets would not be successful unless they had as adjunct a railway siding. We also took evidence from the prospective tenants and the auctioneers, including the kerbstone people and even the housewives. The question of site occasioned a great deal of trouble. Fortunately we co-opted the late Mr. E. E. Light, Engineer for Existing Lines, who did the council very great service. Much has been said about the arbitrary way in which the council fixed on the old gasworks as a site, contrary to the wishes of many people. Every possible site within the Greater Perth area was investigated. The gasworks site was the last to be considered, and proved to be the only one where we could get the essential railway siding. Mr. Light told us that the Marquis-street site was useless, because as soon as the Railways were in a position to carry out their developmental plan they would acquire that site for themselves. Across the railway line the council had seven acres of land, but Mr. Light said it would be impossible to get a siding there since it would involve shunting across the main line. Then the Dyer-street site had to be counted out because the tramway would have to run under the culvert, which was too low for the purpose. But for that we could have had that site bounded on three sides by tramways. Then there was the East Perth site, north of the East Perth station, but it was found that the resumption cost was so heavy as to mean over-capitalising the scheme. When it was learned that the gasworks were to be closed down we realised that we could satisfactorily establish the markets on that site. In the meantime there had been deputations to the Premier or to the acting Premier, keeping him well posted with the work of the investigating committee. Sir James Mitchell, to our astonishment, told us we would have to undertake the catering for chaff and grain because the then existing chaff and grain market on the railway property had to be shifted. He also

said we would have to undertake the management of the stock and cattle markets. This necessitated looking at the scheme from a different angle, for it involved greatly increased cost and not one, but several sidings, would be necessary. Nevertheless it was determined that the gas-works site would still be a good one for the purpose. Sir James Mitchell then made a strong point of cold storage, thus involving still greater capital cost. To try to meet that we put up a scheme to him, and he said he would get a couple of expert officers to investigate it, and if they approved of it he would have a Bill drafted and presented to Parliament. That Bill was never drafted. Possibly the failure of the Marketing Bill last session was due to the way in which Sir James Mitchell handled the position. Certainly he gave the City Council very much encouragement, but on the other hand he did not give them the help necessary if the thing was to be put through. Had he done so, the City Council would not have come in for so much criticism last session. I have here an extract from the report of the Mayor, dated 12th November, 1921. It reads as follows:—

For some years past the Council has been considering the advisableness of establishing centralised municipal markets in Perth for all kinds of produce, but the matter has been delayed consequent upon the difficulty of obtaining definite advices from the Government as to the attitude they would adopt in regard to the matter. A series of questions was submitted to the Premier repeatedly during recent years, but produced no reply. On the 8th February last, a further deputation waited upon the Premier and repeated its queries. It was pointed out that before committing itself to the purchase of land, and the expenditure of several thousand pounds in paving and shelter, the Council wished to be assured that the Government would not enter into competition with it, as was contemplated by a previous Government some years ago. Further, the Council wished to know in the event of it establishing centralised municipal markets in Perth, whether the Government would introduce legislation to declare the municipal markets as the markets through which all produce shall pass? In fact, was the Government prepared to give the Council a monopoly in Greater Perth? The Premier, in reply, stated that the Council need have no fear of Government competition as long as the municipality provided a market and operated it in the interests of the producer and the consumer. The city might require legislation, but before that was promised, the Government wanted to be satisfied that the market would be erected to meet requirements. If a monopoly were granted it would be subject to conditions making it impossible for the Council to impose too heavy charges. The Premier arranged that the Town Clerk and a

second representative from the Council should meet two Government officials to go into details.

It was not until May that the Government made arrangements for the conference referred to. The Government was represented by Mr. W. B. Hardwick (Government Architect) and Mr. E. H. Golding (Agricultural Department), and the Council by Mr. Mills (Chairman) and the Town Clerk. Two meetings were held, and a report was submitted by the Government representatives to the Premier, the result of which was that on the 8th August the Premier announced that he was prepared to grant the Council the powers they desired, provided they are prepared to adequately cater for the market requirements. The next step was to prepare a Bill, and he would arrange for the Town Clerk to interview the Solicitor-General on the matter. The Town Clerk later discussed details of the Bill with the Solicitor-General, and it is understood that a Bill is being drafted for submission to Parliament.

A Bill was never drafted by the Government. At the deputation Sir James hedged, and said it was the duty of the Council to supply the Bill. The Bill was supplied at considerable expense. It was presented to Parliament by the member for Perth, but we all know its fate. It was not condemned on its merits, but for other reasons, many of which were not pertinent to the question. The Bill before us has all the features of the Bill presented by the member for Perth, except that it is in better shape by reason of the fact that chaff, grain, etc., can be dealt with at the siding as is done at present. I hope the cool storage provision, as it relates to the trust, will be eliminated from the Bill, or so dealt with that just sufficient provision will be made for it to cover the area concerned. If the trust take the Act as they find it, they will naturally make the mistake of over-capitalising on the cool store, and adding considerably to the expense of the whole scheme without benefiting anyone.

Hon. A. Burvill: Cool stores are sometimes a help to consumers.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I will explain my point of view. The trust, as suggested in the Bill, will hold office in perpetuity. It will regulate and control the market. The City Council and the public bodies strongly object to the powers given to the trust. They say the Government are taking from them that which is their particular right. I have here a letter from the Metropolitan Local Government Association, written by Mr. R. P. Rodriguez, solicitor and secretary to the association. This concerns the city of Perth and the municipi-

palities of Fremantle, Claremont, Midland Junction, North and East Fremantle and Cottesloe, and the road boards of Armadale-Kelmscott, Bassendean, Bayswater, Belmont Park, Claremont, Cottesloe Beach, Gosnells, Wanneroo, Melville, Perth, Peppermint Grove and South Perth. The letter states—

At a special meeting of my association held last evening, the Central Marketing Scheme, now before Parliament, was thoroughly discussed, when the following resolution was unanimously passed:—"That this meeting of the Local Governing Bodies of the Metropolitan Area emphatically protests against the proposal of the Government to take the marketing control of fruit and vegetables out of the hands of the peoples' representatives in the person of the Perth City Council, and place such control unrestrictedly in the hands of an irresponsible nominee trust. We regard such action on the part of the Government as a direct attack on the usefulness and efficiency of all local authorities and inimical to the general interests of the ratepayers."

This scheme is considered by the local authorities as a direct attack on their powers, and see no reason why the markets should be taken out of their control, and wish to voice their emphatic protest against the whole scheme, and trust that when the matter comes before your house that you will, in the interests of local authorities, throw out the Central Marketing Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is pretty strong.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: These authorities feel strongly and that is why they speak strongly.

Hon. J. Cornell: I could read you sheafs of letters from producers.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I agree with what they have said, but do not wish to see the Bill thrown out. The market is being established for the purpose of handling produce that has for years been coming into the metropolitan area. This consists of fruit and vegetables, poultry, eggs, dairy produce, pork and veal. Let us consider how far cool storage is required for these things. I ask members to join me on Friday morning in a visit to the existing markets. They will then be able to support me in my views, and to see that the cool storage provision should be limited. Vegetables are brought in two or three times a week. They are bought up and taken away immediately. There is no necessity for cool storage in that case. Eggs and poultry are dealt with in the same way.

Hon. J. Cornell: Cool storage would be required at the central market.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: No, because the buyers take delivery at once.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is not cool storage a necessary adjunct to a good marketing scheme?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: There is plenty of cool storage already available.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is owned by private people. They ought to go by the board.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: That is a remarkable statement. Pork and veal may be said to require cool storage, but every butcher in town has his own cool storage. He handles the meat himself, and it is sold before the end of the week. Members may say that cool storage is necessary for fruit. The class of fruit that comes into the metropolitan market is intended for quick home consumption. When the soft fruit season is on, the idea would be to put the fruit into cool stores, and stabilise the price for the advantage of the producer. That is quite impossible. Most of the fruit, when it arrives in the city, is more suited for the factories. It is not up to standard, and is small and out of condition.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is not of the quality that should be stored.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: It is not suitable for the shops. Other fruit is, perhaps, in sufficiently good order for sale, but there may be no market for it on the day on which it arrives. It would have to go into cool store, and be sold the next day. That is the limit of the usefulness of cool stores. Soft fruits will not keep well in cool store. For that reason not much money should be spent in providing cool storage accommodation, because the return would not provide interest on the outlay. Such accommodation would be of very little use to the grower. The fruit that is fit for local consumption would be taken away to the shops or packed off to the country. Export fruit is dealt with in a different way. The right class of cool storage for this fruit must be at the shipping port, whether at Fremantle, Bunbury or Albany. Fruit must be cooled before it is shipped. It should not be stored at any distance from the ships and then transported to the port, because it will rise in temperature before it arrives at the ship's side. It must be chilled close to the ship, taken there in the quickest time, and stored in the ship so that it may remain in good order until it reaches its destination. These remarks apply to apples and pears for export. Every great

apple district has its own cool storage accommodation. I refer to Mt. Barker and Bridgetown. Most of the up-to-date orchardists have cool stores on their orchards, and the number of these is increasing. In time all the most flourishing orchardists will have this accommodation. That is why I say that cool storage accommodation at the metropolitan market must not be over-capitalised, lest this should lead to greater charges being imposed in respect to other parts of the market.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It would increase the charges to the producer.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Yes, but the producer would not benefit. Imagine what the trust would do if it had instructions to provide cool storage. The idea, under the previous Bill and the present one, was to grant the right to establish markets, but not to interfere with the trading. The producer is in no way hampered or injured in regard to the way he markets his goods. He will not benefit except by reason of the greater facilities there will be for selling and the better conditions under which the goods will be sold. The price will not be improved. I take it that whoever controls the market will give facilities to all classes of selling, as is done to-day. Instead of this being carried on under a number of roofs, it will be done under one roof. I cannot therefore see the reason for opposition on the part of the producer. His interests are being safeguarded because the marketing operations will be brought within a confined area. The opposition on the ground of a monopoly is due either to misconception or to the dissemination of false information. Sir James Mitchell put the matter clearly in another place when voicing the case for the Perth City Council. He said that the trust would have only the security of land and buildings to offer, and would not be in the same happy position as the City Council for obtaining capital. There is also the difficulty of errors in estimating cost, and the trust would have to go to the Government for money. On the other hand, the City Council have power to borrow upon reference to the ratepayers. The interests of the ratepayers would be safeguarded by the council conducting the central markets, since a trust would not be liable to municipal rating. The exemption of the trust from rating would be a great wrong to Perth ratepayers.

Hon. A. Burvill: But there would be a benefit to both consumer and producer.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The City Council have not received considerate treatment from the Government for some time, and they have a right to maintain their position in this matter.

Hon. J. Cornell: The City Council are not doing badly out of the electric current contract.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: And the Government are doing better.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: When the control of traffic fees was taken out of the hands of the City Council, it meant another 3d. in the pound to Perth ratepayers. The control of the Weights and Measures Act has been taken from the Council, and now there is a desire to deprive that body of the area of the proposed central markets, representing six or seven acres in a part of the town where land is fairly valuable. That area, together with all necessary conveniences, would have to be maintained by the City Council for the benefit of the trust. It is also to be borne in mind that Perth ratepayers find their quota—a fairly large one—under the Federal roads scheme. For every pound furnished by the Federal Government, the taxpayers of this State have to find 15s.; and a considerable proportion of the local taxation will come from the metropolitan area. Yet we are told that the Main Road Board's work will not benefit the city to any considerable extent.

Hon. A. Burvill: Their work will attract trade to the city.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: If the right to the central markets is taken away from Perth ratepayers, they will not be receiving proper treatment at the hands of Parliament. If the idea is to establish central markets on the basis of their returning interest and sinking fund and working expenses, that should be stated in the Bill. The tenants of the markets, with whom I have a good deal of sympathy, know that their tenancies will be at fairly moderate rates under the City Council, and that there will be no risk of their having to seek premises elsewhere by reason of the demands of rapacious landlords. I may say that that kind of thing is fairly rife. Under the council the tenants would feel that they had the certainty of continuing at reasonable rents, and this would ultimately be for the benefit of producers, consumers, and the community as a whole. It is sug-

gested that on the proposed trust there should be one representative of the producers, one representative of the consumers, one of the City Council, and two representatives of the Government. It is easy to see that under those conditions the Government would have three representatives, since a representative of consumers could hardly be elected—he would have to be appointed by the Government.

Hon. A. Burvill: But the City Council are consumers too.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The City Council have separate revenues. As regards a representative of the consumers, it would be difficult to find out what consumers were entitled to vote.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Do you not think the consumers would be safeguarded by the representatives of the Government?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I regard the suggestion of a representative of consumers as foolish. The City Council propose that they be empowered to control the central markets on the same lines as they handle the electricity and gas section of the municipality. There could be two representatives of the producers and one representative of the market tenants or sellers. The markets would be so conducted as to enable all classes of producers either to sell their own products or to sell through the marketing agencies. In my opinion that would be the safest form of control.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about the consumers?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I am convinced that it would be foolish to have a representative of consumers.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why, then, have a representative of sellers?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Because the sellers are really concerned, and therefore are entitled to representation. It is the sellers who have urged the establishment of central markets for years past. Latterly the consumer has come into the picture, declaring, rightly or wrongly, that he should have representation. Both the Government and the City Council concede that representation should be given to the consumer; but it is no use establishing a committee of management or a trust which would be cumbersome. Again, the Bill exempts Victoria Park. I have not heard from the Honorary Minister any reason why that important part of the greater Perth area

should be exempted. The exemption of a section so handy to Perth by reason of motor and tram services would tend to defeat the object of the Bill; the old objectionable features would be repeated just across the river. In my opinion, the exemption is due to a desire to protect the kerbstone market in Victoria Park. However, that trade could be better catered for in the marketing area. Centrally situated markets catering for the kerbstone trade in the same way as for private auction or treaty would be better for all concerned. The omission of Victoria Park would go a long way towards minimising the advantages of the Bill. Mr. Nicholson has given notice of various amendments to be submitted in Committee. I hope members will accept my invitation to inspect the markets on Friday morning. I repeat that the people who build the central markets should in no way interfere with the selling of produce. Let the producers or the sellers conduct the business of selling in accordance with accepted conditions of tenancy. The markets should be built very plainly—almost as a shell—so that the interior could be rearranged from time to time in accordance with the varying business of tenants. The trade of some tenants will decline while that of others will increase. Such rearrangement of the accommodation would not be possible if there were strong party walls. It has been explained to me that dealing by private treaty can best be conducted under the plainest sort of roof; so long as there is a roof to cover the seller's vehicle and the seller himself and the customer, that will suffice. All that is needed is a small structure with a gangway or an island platform. Sales would be made from the tail of the cart. If the matter is left to a trust, no doubt we shall have a repetition of the mistake which was made in New South Wales. There a huge costly structure has been put up, and the conditions are such that the place becomes very close indeed when a number of vehicles and animals get into it. If the building is left quite open and the marketing is done in the morning, the conditions will be ideal for obtaining the best results at the lowest cost. The inner work of the markets might be of a more substantial kind, but the building itself should be a shell, with possibly a row of shops. The interior should be left so as to admit of easy alteration as the business of tenants may warrant. I hope the tenants will not be treated in a way that will place

ordinary shopkeepers of the city at a disadvantage. The shopkeepers of Perth have to pay the greatest amount of rates, and that paid as water and municipal rates is indeed heavy. Those rates alone, without any rent, represent a heavy tax. If the tenants in the market area that will be prescribed, pay rents, those rents will be very low. Special favouritism will be extended to them as against the people having shops in other parts of the city, where they are forced to comply with the demands of the landlords and other conditions that may obtain. I hope the House will give careful consideration to the matter and will support the amendments which will be placed before them along the lines I have indicated.

HON. A. BURVILL (South-East) [8.46]: I support the second reading of the Bill. Mr. Macfarlane has viewed the question from the standpoint of the merchant, dealer and seller, whereas I will view it from the standpoint of the producers. I have had 30 years' experience in the marketing of produce, and I should know something about the subject. I have not the slightest doubt that Mr. Macfarlane knows more about the selling part of the business than I do. A measure of this description has been long promised and long needed. Scattered markets are not in the interests of either producer or consumer, but very much to the advantage of the speculative dealer, who gets his commission from both sides. The object of a central market is to bring the producer and the consumer into the closest possible touch. It will eliminate as far as possible overhead expenses, commission, cartage and railway charges. By having the market situated so that the goods can be delivered straight from the trucks to the stalls, it will work to the decided advantage of both producer and consumer. It will mean less handling and less cost, and the goods will be tabled in better condition. It is the desire of the producer to get his commodities to the consumer as directly as possible. This move will tend towards that objective. At present the auctioneers represent the medium between the dealers and the producers. Both the producer and the auctioneer are at the mercy of the dealer who is the person who really fixes the price of commodities, not the producer, who does not sell the goods but has them bought from him.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Do you think the producer could fix the price in any case?

Hon. A. BURVILL: Very seldom.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Do you think he could do so under any conditions?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I believe that the central markets will enable him to better control the goods, which will be to the advantage of the consumer as well. I believe this is a move in the right direction for the consumer. The produce is sold in the markets to-day and the producer has no voice at all in what is going on. I am talking about the men who have to send their produce 300 or 400 miles to market. Such men cannot see their goods sold, and they have to trust the business to the auctioneers. Experience shows that the auctioneers are not masters of the situation at all. The dealers buy the goods and then put their price on them. They fix the prices that have to be paid for the commodities, because the position can be so arranged that the market can be kept at the stage they desire. They always fix the prices to be paid by the middlemen, and the consumer has to pay what is demanded of him. The producer has to accept what he can get. The provision of central markets will eliminate some of that extra cost and thus both consumer and producer will benefit. The dealer is the master of the consumer, as well as of the producer. That has almost always been the position in the auction markets of the city. I say that deliberately after 30 years' experience. In the first place, the owner sells through an agent who gets his price, and the producer has to take anything that is offered. Marketing of produce, in my opinion, will never be satisfactory until the auctioneers and dealers are paid servants. It will never be satisfactory to the consumer and producer alike. I consider that in bringing the produce to the consumer, the dealer or auctioneer or packer should be in the service of the producer and of the consumer. At present the object of the dealer, auctioneer or packer is to gain the mastery of the situation. I do not blame him and, in point of fact, he is master of the situation at the present time, except on rare occasions when there is a scarcity.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Then the law of supply and demand operates.

Hon. A. BURVILL: What happens is that all concerned are at the mercy of the dealers, particularly where perishable pro-

duce is concerned and where the market is over-supplied. Their object is to get their commission. I say they should receive a good commission, but the fact remains that their objective is a speculative one. They desire to see a depressed market, a market that will enable them to buy at an advantageous price, thus permitting them to sell equally advantageously when the market becomes inflated. In both instances the market is artificially created.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What are you talking about? You cannot do that with too many lines of perishable produce.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I have known of instances of produce being sent to the market. I remember some apples that were sent. They were bought in at a very low rate and were taken to the cool stores and held. Later they were tabled and sold by the auctioneer again. Thus the auctioneer gained his commission twice over. The dealer manipulated the market and secured an advantage of about 300 or 400 per cent. The grower, who went to the trouble of producing the apples, had to take what he could get, although he had had to wait 12 months for a return. Clause 13, subclause (5), is a good one. It reads—

Regulating the method of selling in the market, and preventing every kind of fraudulent device in relation to the sale of marketable commodities, and prescribing that sales by auction or otherwise may be conducted by officers of the trust.

That should prove of great benefit to those concerned.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I think that will mean exploiting the public.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The present system amounts to exploiting the public, both producer and consumer. We should have a properly constituted market. If that were so then the prices would not be subject to the fluctuation that is so apparent at present. Under those improved conditions the people concerned would be able to understand what was the real market value of commodities from day to day.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That policy will make a close corporation of it.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am entirely opposed to the City Council having charge of these markets rather than the trust proposed.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The City Council would not have charge of the marketing but of the building only.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am opposed to the City Council having control. The markets

should be under a trust, because this is a matter that concerns the whole State. Mr. Macfarlane mentioned that the dealers and packers take charge of produce in Perth and send it elsewhere. Very often that produce has to be sent over a distance of a hundred miles before it gets to Perth, which is the central point for the distribution of those commodities. I cannot see that the City Council should interfere in such a matter other than as representatives of the consumers.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Where is it suggested that the City Council shall come in?

Hon. A. BURVILL: A number of conferences between representatives of the City Council and of country districts have been held. After mature deliberation those concerned have decided against the markets being handed over to the control of the City Council. It has been stated that the council would be willing to have two representatives of producers on any trust if the council were given control of the markets. I hope an amendment will be agreed to in Committee under which two representatives of the producers will be appointed to the trust. On the other hand, the growers would prefer to have a trust composed as outlined in the Bill with one representative of the producers only, rather than have the markets handed over to the City Council. The most remarkable thing is that the nearer one gets to Perth, the more hostility is displayed towards the City Council and the proposal to give them charge of the central markets. I have a letter from the president of the Bedfordale Agricultural and Horticultural Society in which he expresses the hope that the members of this House will try to obtain for the producers two representatives on a trust of five members. He further states—

It has come to our knowledge that strong efforts are being made by the City Council to have the control of the proposed new markets vested in them. To that course we enter an emphatic protest. In spite of the fact that the City Council promised that they would be willing to grant the producers two representatives on the trust, we still prefer that the markets should be controlled by a Government trust as suggested in the Bill. . . . The system of marketing fruit and other perishable products is badly in need of organisation, and we claim that this could be better accomplished by the proposed trust than by the City Council.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That is where you are wrong again; the city Council would not interfere at all.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I have a letter from Bickley over the signature of P. G. H. Loaring, secretary of the Central Citrus Association, in which he states—

This Bill was fully considered before a thoroughly representative meeting of growers and producers. The clauses of the Bill were, in the main, heartily approved, and a committee was formed to wait on the Minister, first, with the object of endeavouring to obtain two representatives of the growers on the trust, and failing this, to convey the approval of growers and producers generally to Mr. Troy. I am under the impression that an amendment may be moved to give control to the City Council. I desire to bring these facts before you. The growers and producers are absolutely opposed to the City Council having control, and desire the Bill to pass in its present form, if it is found impossible for growers to have two representatives on the trust. When the City Council formulated a Bill some time ago no representation whatever was given the producer. The City Council can only be interested in its ratepayers, and may therefore be parochial in its ideas and conceptions. The Government, whether Labour, National, or Country Party, must view matters from a national view point, and I am requested to ask your support in passing this Bill in its present form with the Government as controlling factor. I trust, therefore, you will do your utmost to give expression to the wishes of the growers and producers who, after all, find the commodities that make such a Bill necessary, and deserve and are entitled to the fullest consideration.

Coming nearer to Perth the Osborne Park Market Gardeners' Association write:—

As you may have seen from the Press, a meeting of the market gardeners of Osborne Park was held to discuss a proposed amendment to the Market Bill giving the Perth City Council control. This meeting was one of the best ever held at Osborne Park and the number in attendance was an indication of how serious the market gardeners are in the matter. They are definitely and unanimously opposed to the City Council having any control over the markets, no matter what bait the council may hold out in the form of increased growers' representation. The following resolution was passed:—"That it is the desire of the primary producers of Osborne Park that the members of the Legislative Council support the Market Bill in its entirety, and that on no account do we wish the Perth City Council to have control."

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Who is the secretary of the association?

Hon. A. BURVILL: The letter is signed, "G. Durnford, Hon. Sec."

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Both those gentlemen told me they were indifferent who owned the market.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am entirely in agreement with the growers that the market should be under the control of a trust ap-

pointed by the Government. I should like to see the Bill amended to give the producers greater representation in the selling of their own products. Mr. Macfarlane referred to cool stores and kerbstone markets. I think the kerbstone markets may well be let alone. They seem to be working well, because they are bringing the consumer and producer into direct contact without the intervention of middlemen. When it comes to catering for the country districts 300 or 400 miles from Perth, however, there must be a medium and that medium, whether dealer, auctioneer or packer should be at the service of the producer and the consumer. This can best be achieved by having the marketing operations carried out under one roof. I do not mean to say that this measure will give the producers all they want or the consumers all they need, but it will be a move in the right direction. Cool stores properly managed will be the key of the situation. I do not see why cool stores should not be properly installed under a trust and, if they are provided, they will be a benefit to the producer as well as the consumer. I am perfectly aware that there are dealers who go to the markets and buy certain perishable products, put them in their cool stores, keep them for a few days and then make a good speculative profit in which neither the producer nor the consumer shares. The trust might well consider the advisableness of providing a cool store in the market for the benefit of both the producer and the consumer. I have no decided objection to giving the City Council one representative on the trust.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: You are generous.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I hope, however, that the Bill will be passed in its present form, save for an amendment to give the producers an additional representative.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [9.8]: As I shall be precluded at a later stage from expressing an opinion on this Bill, I wish to do so now. Whether the Bill becomes law or not, I do not think it will interest one producer or one consumer in the South Province. If there is one question on which all thinking men are agreed, it is that a proper market in the City of Perth is long overdue. There can be no two opinions about that. One thing about which Australia in general and Western Australia in particular know little or nothing is that of

markets and marketing facilities. If we wish to gain a full appreciation of what marketing means, we have to go to the Dutch community. This is exemplified in the Union of South Africa, which is largely Dutch and where the institutions are based on Dutch ideas. The municipality of Perth should have established markets years ago.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It was not their fault that they did not.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Within recent years I have had opportunities to see what municipal government can achieve. In this State I have seen how municipalities can go to the other extreme, namely, by doing nothing, as compared with what municipalities in other parts of the world can do, namely, everything. There are municipalities in other countries having a much smaller population than has Perth that have long ago introduced systems of distributing pasteurised milk in hermetically sealed bottles. Yet in our metropolitan area not one municipality, let alone an aggregation of municipalities, has reached out towards that end. While the municipality should control and conduct a metropolitan market, we are faced with the position that another place, by a substantial majority, has repudiated any suggestion that the proposed market should be vested in the Perth City Council. That should be our guide. If we insist upon amending the Bill in the direction of taking the control from a trust and vesting it in the Perth City Council, I fear that the chance of getting an up-to-date market will be indefinitely deferred. That contingency I wish to avoid. I shall support the second reading and, if I had an opportunity to speak in Committee, I would oppose any amendment designed to give control to the City Council. Much has been said on the question whether the market should be controlled by the City Council or by a trust, and much has been said about the constitution of the trust. Regardless of who controls the market, the duties to be performed will be identical and will consist of expeditious service to the patrons of the market. If a metropolitan market is to be run on any other lines, it will be a failure and it would be better to refrain from establishing it. The market will be situated where the producer may send his produce and where the consumer may purchase what he requires, and the people who control the market and operate in it will be there to act as a medium between those who raise the

produce and those who buy it for consumption. I do not think that any of the abuses that some members seem to fear will occur and, if they did, the public would not long tolerate them. We can trust whoever may be appointed to control the market to give the service that the market will be designed to give. That is my view of the marketing project. The question has been raised as to whether or not cool stores should be a necessary adjunct of the market. I think the market, as a market, without a cool store is like going duck shooting without a gun. We in Australia, and Western Australia in particular, know absolutely nothing about the great benefits to be derived from cool stores. Mr. Macfarlane asked what use cool stores would be as an adjunct to the market so far as stone fruit was concerned. I will give a simple illustration of what cool storage will do. Stone fruit is sent by rail from Southern California to Quebec and other parts of Canada, a distance of close on 5,000 miles, and it is delivered in those places in almost as good a condition as the fruit was in when despatched. That is what cool storage can do.

Hon. A. Burvill: That is what we want here.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: You cannot get a financial return from the cold storage of stone fruit.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In this country we have never tackled the question of cool storage. We look upon it as a luxury. Elsewhere they look upon it as a necessity. If we evolve cool storage in the manner that it should be evolved, and make it a necessity, we will educate the people to the benefits to be derived from it, the great saving that it accomplishes and the great improvement it makes in those articles that are not required for immediate use. Cool storage should be provided for those people who make their purchases, say, in the morning and perhaps have no wish to take those purchases home until later in the day. After all, it is a question of service and I have yet to discover that any human being with any sense in his anatomy will object to pay for service. He does object to pay for what he does not get, for perhaps bad service. Another point I desire to touch upon is the question of buildings, as well as the question of tenants. I fail to see how these matters can enter into the discussion at the present time. All that con-

cerns us now is the establishment of markets, and whether they are to be under the aegis of the City Council or the aegis of a trust. I have perfect confidence that those who will administer the markets, whether they be representatives of the City Council or a trust, will see to it that suitable buildings are erected and that the tenants will get a fair deal. I, too, have received a copy of the letter that was read by Mr. Burvill. I reiterate my opening remarks, that I think if an effort is made to bring about control by the City Council, the Bill will be lost and we shall go back to where we were before.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan)

[9.20] Every member will agree with the views expressed by the previous speaker, that the construction of the markets has been too long delayed, but I think that the City of Perth at least can be excused for being in any way guilty of any delay, or of remissness in seeking to carry out what was a proper function and duty of the local authority. We have heard from Mr. Macfarlane to-night a full and complete history regarding the negotiations that took place over a long period of years in connection with the proposal to establish markets. It has to be borne in mind that it is over 20 years since the City of Perth first made an effort to get markets established after consultation with the Government. When the City Council did try to establish those markets they were met with opposition on the part of the Government of the day, that Government having announced their intention to establish markets in the city. No person, whether representing the city or the country, would say that a local authority would be justified in constructing markets when faced with opposition on the part of the Government. And so the matter has dragged on year in and year out, with the intervention of the war and the dislocation that took place, and now that efforts are again being made to establish markets, we find that the Government are seeking to erect them in the metropolitan area. I am going to suggest to hon. members, whether representing a city or a country province, that what they have to consider is whether or not, within the space of not many years, they will not be doing something which will act and re-act detrimentally to those centres which may become centres of greater population than is the

case to-day, if they do not give power to the local authority to establish markets. It is quite true that it is intended to limit the operation of the Bill, if it be passed into law, in the first place to the metropolitan area. But can anyone tell me that once a trust like this is established, whether that trust will allow the other local authorities to exercise those powers from other districts. Take, for example, our larger towns. They are developing to-day. We look upon them as small towns at the present time, but within a very few years we shall see many of these towns carrying as great a population as Perth is carrying to-day, and that is not viewing things with a wonderful outlook either. We have seen greater growth and greater development in cities in other parts of the world than we have seen here. But once there is an onrush of population—and I believe it will come to Western Australia—then those places which we regard as small country towns just now, will be able to pose as proud cities. The support that is to be given to the Bill by Mr. Burvill will destroy absolutely his hopes of a place like Albany rising to a more important position.

Members: Why?

Hon. E. H. Gray: You want to create another marketing trust in Albany or Katanning.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There will be no other marketing trust for Albany, Katanning, York, Northam, or anywhere else, which towns I trust will grow in importance.

Hon. A. Burvill: There is a harbour trust at Fremantle and a harbour board at Bunbury.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The hon. member does not see, shall I be permitted to say, as far as his nose. Perhaps that is not Parliamentary; if it is not, I will withdraw the expression and say he does not see as far ahead as one would like him to see. If the hon. member could possibly view the hopes I have at least for that thriving town of Albany—if not very thriving at present, I hope it will be thriving as the years go on—he would realise that those hopes were greater than he himself possesses. I am going to urge him to change the views to which he has given expression to-night. I am justified in asking Mr. Burvill to do that. My reason is that if the hon. member will look at the Bill he will see it is quite true that it is limited in the first place to

the metropolitan area. The board or trust will consist of five members and those five members will have to be appointed by the Government. It is true it is provided that one of the members shall be a representative of the producers, but it does not say by whom he shall be appointed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: We are going to alter that.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: How is it going to be altered?

Hon. A. Burvill: They have organisations.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: They may have, but I do not think any satisfactory nominations can be made under the proposed conditions. One district will be operating against the other. The conditions prevailing in one district will be different from the conditions in another. We know that the position regarding the wheat belt is different from the position in the Great Southern districts. There will be such a diversity of interests created that I doubt very much whether any one man could fittingly represent the whole of the producing districts of this vast State.

Hon. A. Burvill: How will the City Council get over that problem?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Another of the members shall be a representative of the consumers. How is that possible?

Hon. G. W. Miles: We will cut that right out.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Then we might as well cut out the city. If the consumers are not to have representation on the board it is high time the markets were shifted to Albany, or somewhere else where they can be properly conducted. When markets are conducted in the city, it is the right of the municipality to control them. That is an established principle throughout the United Kingdom. I do not know how the consumers' representative is to be appointed. It will be an extraordinary sort of trust.

Hon. J. Ewing: Nominated by the Government.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Exactly. Another member is to be nominated by the City Council. That will be simple.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It is a very small sop for what they will lose.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Quite so. The first two representatives will be nominated by the Government, not by the individuals themselves. Are the Government the proper authority to appoint a representative of the consumers? Would there be any

need for the producer if the consumer did not exist in the city? I should like to know if the consumers have not as great a right to be represented on the trust as have the producers.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is what the Bill provides for.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It provides for certain nominations, but it does not provide any machinery for the accomplishment of that. The proper method would be to give the consumers certain voting powers. In Clause 12 it is provided that on the publication in the "Gazette" of a proclamation that the market has been established, the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, enabling the municipal council to provide a market place, shall cease to have effect in the metropolitan area.

Hon. A. Burvill: Why has the city never had a market?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have already explained why the market was not established. That clause means that no longer will the City Council have the right it has at present to establish a market. As other cities grow up throughout Western Australia and want to establish markets, they will be met with this position, that there is a market trust in existence with all machinery in the metropolitan area, and that the proper thing is to extend the powers of that trust so that it will control the market in the new city.

Hon. J. Ewing: It does not follow.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It will follow, as night follows day.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is a dogmatic statement.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is a curious fact that once such a trust is established it will not yield one inch of its powers, and so the local authorities will be deprived of the right to exercise functions peculiarly theirs, a nominee trust of the Government being set up instead. If Mr. Burvill and others think they are doing a good thing for their own local authorities, I leave them to it and they can bear the odium. That clause will react in a serious way in other centres in future days. The trust will be established and will seek to add to its powers rather than to suffer any reduction of those powers. Last year the City of Perth endeavoured to get a Bill through. I do not understand why this hostility should be evinced towards the city. If the people of

the State realised what they were doing in evincing this hostility they would see that actually they were doing the greatest possible damage to themselves and to the State.

Hon. A. Burvill: They are fairly unanimous.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It must be through gross misunderstanding. I do not know who made the representations to persons in the country districts in order to produce the various letters that hon. members have received. There is about the letters I have received a strange unanimity, indicating that they have been the result of concerted action.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Perhaps they were inspired by city councillors.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The representatives of the city have used their best efforts in carrying out those tasks for which they are not always thanked, but sometimes are roundly abused. Those representatives are the representatives sent by the people, and it is hardly meet in us to question the judgment of the electors.

Hon. G. W. Miles: How about shifting the capital city to Albany?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have suggested that that might be done. Then, perhaps, Mr. Burvill would have a very different story to tell. Instead of his suggesting the amendments he has put forward, in all probability we should find him advocating something akin to what I have been advocating to-night. The City of Perth endeavoured to get a Bill through last year because the Government had failed to carry out their proposals and establish markets, for which land was resumed long ago. That is why the city has never established markets.

Hon. J. Ewing: Where is this land?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In West Perth.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The Railways will require that site presently.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The City of Perth in its Bill sought no further powers, practically, than are embodied in the Bill before us.

Hon. A. Burvill: It gave the growers no representation whatever.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If that Bill had come before the House, the hon. member could have moved as an amendment that the growers should have representation. I am surprised at this hostility on the part of the country towards the city. It is unwise. The capital city of any country is a very important centre. If that city is not

maintained worthily, and if the people of the State do not take a pride in the city they cannot expect others to take a pride in it, or even in the country districts. So in the end the country districts will suffer more than the city. I have always sought to compare the capital city of any country with a sort of front or show window of that country. It should represent all that is highest and best. If every member of the community would use his or her best efforts to advance the interests of the city, and take a pride in the capital, he would be doing more for the State than others who indulge in foolish and carping criticism from time to time.

Hon. J. Ewing: There is no antagonism towards the city.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Apparently there is evinced a foolish antagonism. It is an antagonism which seems to me to be of the type that is sometimes disclosed as between employer and employee. Nothing could be more regrettable as regards the prosperity of the State than antagonism between sections of the community. I hope that members representing country districts, who take any pride in the advancement of the State, will at least recognise that they should break down these antagonisms and allow them to finish as quickly as possible. In the Bill drafted by the City Council last year practically nothing more was asked for than is set down as for the trust. This was power to conduct sales within their own boundaries, a power which is the right of any local authority exercising jurisdiction within its boundaries.

Hon. E. H. Gray: If the City Council were elected by all the people that would be all right.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the hon. member knows anything of the provisions of the Municipalities Act, he will know exactly how members of the Council are elected.

Hon. E. H. Gray: On a very restricted franchise.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I cannot follow the hon. member. He should look up the Act. Clause 12 of the Bill says that the trust may by by-law prohibit the sale by auction in the metropolitan area of produce or provisions elsewhere than in the markets established under the Act. This is absolute prohibition. The clause deprives the municipality of the right to establish its own market.

Hon. A. Burvill: You have not finished the clause.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It goes on to except sales by auction of grain, straw, chaff, hay or other produce sold on Government railway premises, etc. All the powers that are at present vested in municipalities will gradually disappear. I should regret to see municipalities and local authorities suffer this loss of powers which are peculiarly theirs. It is foolish of these different societies, which have urged members to support this Bill, to move as they have done without more fully considering the matter. The position is so serious as regards the future welfare and development of the country, and the cities I hope to see here, that I am prepared to move at a later stage that the Bill be referred to a select committee.

On motion by Sir William Lathlain, debate adjourned.

BILL—RESERVES.

Assembly's Message.

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

House adjourned at 9.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd November, 1926.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Assent to Bill | 1873 |
| Urgency Motion: North-West, damaging statements | 1873 |
| Motion: Wroth Bankruptcy case, order discharged | 1878 |
| Bills: Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment, returned | 1878 |
| Weights and Measures Act Amendment, returned | 1878 |
| City of Perth Act Amendment, 3r. | 1878 |
| Wire and Wire Netting, Report | 1878 |
| Legitimation Act Amendment, 2r. | 1878 |
| Guardianship of Infants Act Amendment, Council's amendments | 1880 |
| Reserves, Council's amendments | 1887 |
| Navigation Act Amendment, 2r. | 1888 |
| Public Education Acts Amendment, 2r. | 1890 |
| Police Benefit Fund Select Committee, to adopt report | 1890 |
| Annual Estimates: Department of Mines | 1892 |
| Department of Agriculture | 1905 |

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Traffic Act Amendment Bill.

URGENCY MOTION—NORTH-WEST AND ABORIGINES.

Damaging Statements.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale):—

Dear Mr. Speaker, I desire to give you notice that at the beginning of the sitting of the House this afternoon it is my intention to move the adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 47a, for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the publication of an article in the Melbourne Press headed "Wild Savages and Cannibals," in which article statements are made damaging to the north-west portion of this State and to the State generally.

Before the motion can be made it will be necessary for seven members to rise in their places.

Seven members having risen—

MR. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [4.35]: I have not done this without thought, for I have no wish to disturb the routine in any way. At the same time I offer no apology for bringing the matter before the House, because it is most important to the State and particularly to the north of the State. For some time past the present Government, and indeed the previous Government, have done valuable exploring and surveying work in the North with the idea of settling people on certain blocks for agricultural purposes. This has been a very expensive work, and the Government have done a very good thing for the State in going on with it. Ministers hope to interest financial groups in England, and perhaps in other countries, with the idea of getting them to take up those particular blocks and cultivate tropical products, which should be very advantageous to the State. It is well known that an influential group is negotiating with the Government with a view to launching extensive operations in the North in respect of shipping interests and also of other industries that will be of very great value to the State. To facilitate the completion of the schemes it will be necessary to import numbers of settlers, or at least to send numbers of

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