

turned, that policy, to a considerable extent, becomes that of the municipal council generally.

Mr. Withers: Not necessarily so.

Mr. McLARTY: No, but it does to a large extent. A municipal body is an important body and I do not think a mayor has a fair chance to put his proposals into operation in 12 months. There may be a lot of discussion about those proposals, and he may have to overcome opposition, so I do not think 12 months is a reasonable time to enable him to put that policy into operation. I hope the proposals to give a mayor two years office will be agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In municipal councils divided into wards the councillors themselves are elected by the ratepayers in respective wards, and are elected for a period longer than one year, generally for three years. The mayor, whether the municipal district is divided into wards or not, is elected by the whole of the ratepayers, and yet has only one year in office. If it is right to give councillors, elected by only some of the ratepayers, three years in office, surely it is not asking too much to give the mayor, elected by the whole of the ratepayers, two years in office.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 49:

Mr. LESLIE: I am prepared to concede that there is need for alteration of the system of voting in councils, where the council is divided into wards not only for electoral purposes, but also for the financial administration of the council, where the revenue of the council is divided into wards, and the expenditure in each ward is limited to the revenue of that ward. Then I say that the ratepayers in each ward, or the land owners or occupiers in the ward, are entitled to elect a member for the respective ward, because under that system each ward becomes a separate authority within the whole of the council. In a case where the finances of the council are pooled, as I believe is the case in the Perth City Council, and the money is expended over the whole area of the municipality, regardless of the revenue received from each ward, I am prepared to concede that the land owner or occupier should be limited in his voting power to the election of a representative for one ward, as Clause 3 sets out. In the short time at my disposal, I have endeavoured to draw up an amendment to meet

my case, but I cannot do it. I will ask the Minister to give consideration to it.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 22nd November, 1945.

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

QUESTION.

HOSPITAL NURSES.

As to Release from Army.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: Has any reply been received from the Commonwealth Government in reply to the suggestions made by the State Government regarding the release of nurses from the Army for service in public and private hospitals, as stated by the Chief Secretary on the 17th October?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The following reply was received by the Hon. the Premier, on the 19th inst., from the Hon. the Prime Minister, in reply to various suggestions which had been made, and the serious staff position which exists in public hospitals:—

Reference your telegram 25th October regarding shortage of hospitals staffs in Western Australia. Consideration has been given to your request for secondment of women's Army and Air Force personnel but regretted that existing pressure on Service establishments has made action not possible. Army advises that it has already adopted policy of giving priority releases to members of A.A.M.W.S. or A.W.A.S. who intend to commence civil nursing training, but that this cannot be extended to non-nursing employment in civil hospitals. Army

Air Force and Manpower authorities will co-operate to fullest extent possible in bringing to special notice of discharges the staffing needs of hospitals. It is presumed that your State officers will keep in touch with local Military Headquarters Rehabilitation officers and Commanding Officer, R.A.A.F. Discharge Depot, and Manpower Directorate.—Prime Minister.

Further action is now in process.

BILL—LOCAL AUTHORITIES (RESERVE FUNDS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Honorary Minister and read a first time.

MOTION—TROTTING CONTROL.

As to Inquiry by Royal Commission.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.36]: I move—

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should appoint a judge of the Supreme Court or a stipendiary magistrate as a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the administration, conduct and control of trotting in Western Australia; to make recommendations regarding any legislation he may consider necessary to implement his findings; and to report to the Governor.

Notwithstanding the fact that this motion is very important, I do not intend to take up much time in placing it before members. The simple reason for that is that members, like myself, are well acquainted with the position as it stands. We have had the report by Mr. Dunphy, who at that time was the Crown Solicitor, in which very definite charges were made, charges that call for investigation, which must come either from the Government or from Parliament. As the Government has not moved in the matter so far, I am doing so in this House. After the report of Mr. Dunphy was submitted, we had in the Press the reply from Mr. Percival, the secretary of the W.A. Trotting Association, who combated some of the allegations that had been made by Mr. Dunphy. Then Mr. Clark, the president of the Breeders, Owners and Trainers' Association, had something to say on the matter. These three gentlemen are men of repute who occupy important positions in their respective spheres. Those who are acquainted with them know that they have ability and are certainly not unbalanced. They are men who obviously consider they have ample justification for the respective stands they have made.

What is the position of Parliament and the public in respect of this important matter? What is the position of those who are affected by the allegations? There is Mr. Stratton and the members of his committee, together with those associated with them. These charges hang over their heads and they are charges that would tend to deprive these men of their characters. There is only one way of clearing the matter up, and that is by way of a thorough inquiry. It will be appreciated that Mr. Dunphy's inquiry was merely a voluntary matter. He could not compel the attendance of witnesses and, as he had not the requisite power, he could not take evidence on oath. His was a searching inquiry and he gathered quite a lot of information. I shall not deal with that phase because it would be ridiculous to do so, seeing that everyone who has followed the developments is fully seized of the position. The only way in which to put the position right and to clear the characters of those people is, in my opinion, to appoint a Royal Commission. The reputations of those men are at stake and therefore I ask in my motion that the Government should appoint a judge of the Supreme Court or a stipendiary magistrate as a Royal Commissioner, as either of these gentlemen would have had the training and experience required to conduct the inquiry satisfactorily.

In the interests of the people concerned, as well as of the public generally, I consider the motion should pass through as quickly as possible. I realise, of course, the position of the Leader of the House, as I myself occupied the position for several years. I know he cannot give an answer at once nor can he carry the business through today. It is a matter upon which he will have to consult the Government before arriving at a decision. I feel sure that all members of this House would be satisfied if we reached that stage today; we could then leave the matter in the hands of the Leader of the House, who could bring the business forward again next Tuesday. The point, however is this: We should lose no time whatever in proceeding with the matter. I am not troubling about the Bill; that is an entirely different matter and must be regarded from a different standpoint, and it should not enter into the discussion of this motion. Should members require me to add anything to what I have said, then I can do so when replying. As

a matter of fact, I do not see why I should wash dirty linen in this Chamber. Like other members, I do not know who is right and who is wrong, and I will not know until a proper inquiry has been held. Therefore, without occupying any further time of the House on a matter on which I consider there is no necessity to do so, I commend to members the motion standing in my name.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.43]: I second the motion. May I be permitted to commend Mr. Baxter upon the brevity of his remarks. I agree with him that Parliament and the public must be just about fed up with the newspaper controversy and the aspersions cast upon the reputations of the various people connected with the sport of trotting. It is high time that these should be inquired into in the way proposed by Mr. Baxter. A Royal Commission should be appointed, armed with powers to compel the attendance of witnesses and to take evidence on oath. I wish to add one point. It is that throughout our British Commonwealth we pride ourselves, and with some reason in the main, upon insisting on a fair deal for everybody.

When Mr. Dunphy's report was tabled, it enabled the many conclusions to which he came to be published in the Press. Mr. Dunphy was fair enough to say that many of the statements made to him were unsupported, and were not given on oath. He also says in his report that much of the evidence was hearsay. But as his report was tabled, it enabled the Press, as I said, to publish these unfounded statements, thereby adversely affecting the characters of the people mentioned, as stated by Mr. Baxter. In the meantime, those people are under a cloud. By his motion, Mr. Baxter is giving them the right to come forward to clear their reputations. That is why last night I took some exception to certain statements that were made. I shall follow Mr. Baxter's example by being brief. I conclude by saying that my desire is that those referred to shall have an opportunity to clear their names, and that is why I favour the appointment of a Royal Commission.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [4.45]: It seems extraordinary to me that at this stage a motion should be submitted to the House for the Government to appoint a Royal Commission. The position, as it appears to me,

is this: An inquiry was made and it is said that it was ex parte. It was not, because I understand that both sides appeared before Mr. Dunphy. It is admitted that Mr. Dunphy did not have the powers of a Royal Commissioner and did not take evidence on oath; but he was convinced that the state of affairs justified Government interference and that trotting control should come under legislation in the same way as galloping. Mr. Dunphy was then instructed by Cabinet to prepare a Bill. A Bill was prepared and brought down to this Chamber by the Chief Secretary. In introducing it in his usual customary courteous manner—

The **PRESIDENT**: Order! The hon. member is well aware that under the Standing Orders he must not allude to a Bill in the present discussion. I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to Mr. Baxter's motion.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am endeavouring to do so. I was pointing out that there is no justification for passing Mr. Baxter's motion. I wish to try to demonstrate what appears to be the underlying motive for the appointment of this proposed Royal Commission. However, I will defer for the present any reference to the Bill. I have no axe to grind. I suppose I do not know two men in the Trotting Association personally; and if my recollection serves me aright I have attended only one trotting meeting in three years. Mr. Dunphy's report has been severely condemned by some members of this Chamber; it was said that he had the temerity to report to the Government in the way he did on what was more or less hearsay.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Why not stick to the motion?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Now we have the spectacle of a motion being launched to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire whether or not certain aspersions cast upon certain individuals have any substance in fact. Who thought of having the report laid on the Table?

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: You did.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, I did.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You are not sorry, are you?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Well, I am, because it has supplied ammunition for some members to pillory Mr. Dunphy with.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Do you call it ammunition?

Hon. J. CORNELL: A bit of ammunition of a similar character used on the hon. member would not go amiss. It does seem extraordinary—

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I ask for a withdrawal of that remark.

Hon. J. CORNELL: What remark?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Mr. Cornell said that similar ammunition would not go amiss on the hon. member, inferring that some of the statements made by Mr. Dunphy would apply to me. I ask for a withdrawal.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not know that I inferred anything other than the interpretation that Mr. Bolton chooses to place on my remark. If an hon. member throws stones he must expect a stone or two back in return.

Hon. W. J. Mann: He does not expect mud back!

The PRESIDENT: Order! I understand the hon. member to say that the implication placed by Mr. Cornell on his remarks is not correct.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is so. I had no intention of disparaging or besmirching Mr. Bolton's character in any way. He is too old a friend of mine for that. Several members have condemned what Mr. Dunphy said about certain individuals and to use an old phrase of mine I will add, the horse, foot, artillery and the Air Force. At the conclusion of their remarks members have so to speak—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member knows well that it is improper to allude to a debate on a Bill not before the House. The proper time to allude to the debate that he is dealing with is when the Bill is before the House. I am asking the hon. member to abide by the Standing Orders with which he is perfectly familiar—as familiar as I am.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Without reflecting on you, Sir, I suppose the old adage "Familiarity breeds contempt" applies to me.

The PRESIDENT: That is highly disorderly.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There must be something in Mr. Dunphy's conclusions to justify the motion and I suggest that, instead of throwing a spanner in the works now—and I am on dangerous ground again—we could get a Royal Commission otherwise. We

could get a joint Royal Commission by agreeing to the Bill, referring it to a Select Committee and asking another place to join in that committee, and then requesting that the committee be made an honorary Royal Commission. By doing that we would do the job properly. It does not appeal to me to say that there should be a Royal Commission. Having put our hands to the plough we should go on. We should accept what Mr. Dunphy has said, and what he has suggested should be done. If further inquiry is then found to be necessary we should make it as I have suggested.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Commonwealth Powers.
Returned to the Assembly with amendments.
- 2, Electricity.
- 3, Railways Classification Board Act Amendment.
- 4, Air Navigation Act Amendment.
Passed.

BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had disagreed to amendments Nos. 1 to 6 made by the Council now considered.

In Committee

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2 (page 2)—Delete the words "one or more" in line 7.

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reason for disagreeing in the case of all these amendments is as follows:—

Each local authority and each friendly society should have the liberty to place its insurance business according to its own choice.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Since the Bill left this Chamber members will have had time to reconsider their views on these amendments. The effect of them is to shut out the State Insurance Office from

taking individual policies from local authorities and friendly societies. Some of the local authorities may want to come into the pool after seeing its successful launching and meanwhile may be attracted by the cheaper rates given by the State Insurance Office. In these times of high taxation it is only fair that local authorities should be able to take advantage of the cheaper rates which they get through the State organisations. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted upon.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Honorary Minister's remarks only strengthen my view that the Committee should insist on this amendment. I have seen little evidence of the benefits to which he has referred. If we extended our State trading concerns, where shall we be in the future? The rates of the State Insurance Office are no lower than they are anywhere else. We were told by the Honorary Minister that the profits of this scheme would be handed back to the local authorities, but there is nothing in the Bill to enable the manager of the State Insurance Office to do such a thing. I hope the Committee will stand firm. Many local authorities have asked for a pool, but others are not in favour of it nor of insuring with the State Insurance Office.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the local authorities will be allowed to make their own choice in this matter. They are not being compelled to take out policies with the State Insurance Office. It is proposed to allow them either to insure through the pool, continue their present arrangements, or individually go to the State Insurance Office. What argument is there against local authorities insuring with the State office? The Committee should give local authorities freedom of choice in this matter.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I am not concerned with what the road board conference did not do. I know the conference favoured a motion in regard to pool insurance, but nothing was said about this particular proposal.

Hon. L. CRAIG: We do not want to spoil the pool.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The pool will not be affected at all. Why should not local authorities have the right to do business with the State Insurance Office? At one time I was opposed to a Government insurance department, but now that the State Office has been formed I do not see why individual local

authorities should not make use of it if they wish to do so. If the State Insurance Office can give a better deal than private companies can do, they should have the right to go to it. I support the motion.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: Mr. Wood is entirely wrong in his statement. The Road Board Association set out first to bring about a scheme of pool insurance primarily with the idea of deriving some benefit from it. If we are going to allow individual authorities to insure with the State Insurance Office, that will possibly spoil the whole pooling scheme.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Road Board Association asked for a pooling scheme. That will take some years to build up. Many boards are suspicious of the scheme because they do not understand it. If they are lured away from it and can individually insure with the State Insurance Office, I am afraid the pool system will never be built up. The scheme cannot be a good one unless almost every road board in the State comes into it. I can see the possibility of many thousands of pounds per annum being saved as a result of a complete pooling scheme.

Hon. G. FRASER: It has been said that some boards will be suspicious about going into the pooling scheme. If that is so they will not go into it, and will do their insurance business in some other way.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Mr. Craig said that road boards would not go into the pooling scheme if they could get better terms elsewhere.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I did not say that. The hon. member has a habit of saying things like that.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Very well! I withdraw. If road boards wish to insure individually with the State Office, that will be their responsibility. The pooling scheme is a big experiment, and I do not think it will be a good one unless it is made compulsory. Let the local authorities have the option of where they do their insurance business.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps Mr. Craig will now repeat to Mr. Wood what he has just said.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Mr. Wood said I made a statement which I did not make, and I desired to correct him. He was, however, man enough to withdraw the statement.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: What did I say?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Farmers in these days are keen to prevent the waste of money both on their own account and on account of their local authority. They read the Parliamentary debates far more closely than do people in the metropolitan area. They have seen it stated that it costs £140,000 a year to run a private insurance office, and they have also seen it stated that the costs in the case of the State Insurance Office are only 11 per cent. compared with 46 per cent. in the case of private companies. They therefore see a possibility of effecting a big saving if they deal through the State Insurance Office. Those figures are authentic. The farmers know of this and that is why they have agitated for a pool. Some of them would prefer to see others start the pool and stand out until it was established. Meanwhile the local authority representing the farmers might wish to insure with the State office because of its ability to do the business cheaper than can the companies. A point that has been overlooked is the position of the friendly societies. It is stated that the first application to the State office was made in 1928 and I have been informed that had the societies been allowed to insure with the State office, they would have saved over £6,000 in premiums. More than one society will be necessary to form a pool, and therefore we shall be penalising a large society which might be prepared to enter a pool, but cannot do so because others are not willing to join. Why not give a large society a chance to insure its assets with the State office? To do so would be only fair and just.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Minister has proved the need for insisting on the amendment. Over a long period a small section has tried to bring about a pool. Now there is a chance of local authorities forming a pool under the State office. The Road Boards Conference approved of the idea, but what did the Government do? It did not give what the local authorities asked for, but took advantage of their request to put its own policy into operation. It is this policy which the Minister is fighting for; he is trying to extend the business of the office by taking advantage of local authorities who wished to help themselves. Any two such bodies may form a pool.

The Honorary Minister: What about the friendly societies?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Did they ask for a pool?

The Honorary Minister: They asked to be allowed to insure with the State office.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If the Honorary Minister says that the friendly societies asked to form a pool, it is news to me.

The Honorary Minister: They want to insure with the State office.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Under the Bill it was a matter not of what the local authorities want, but of what the Government wants. I am urging that we give the local authorities what they have asked for. If those who want a pool can make a success of it, the others will soon join in.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I am chairman of the Road Boards Association and know the history of this movement. The association had the one idea of bringing about pool insurance and knew nothing about friendly societies being included. I do not approve of other matters being introduced into the Bill. If a single board is permitted to insure with the State office, the whole scheme for a pool will be jeopardised. If the additional matters included in the Bill had been known, I feel sure that the association would not have approached the Government at all.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I supported the second reading, but after listening to the chairman of the association, I certainly cannot support the Minister on the amendment.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No one has attempted to answer my statement about friendly societies. Their assets are protected by the head lodge, and an order might have a couple of hundred branches. Therefore the pool scheme could not be adopted unless another society could be induced to join it. Friendly societies which represent the thrifty section of the community are facing financial difficulties through the social legislation now operating and should be encouraged to curtail expenses. If the amendment is not insisted on, any large order would be able to insure its assets, 75 per cent. of which might represent house property, with the State office. The figures demonstrate the remarkably low rate charged for fire insurance by the State office. Why not give the friendly societies a chance? Mr. Baxter has not attempted to answer that argument.

The CHAIRMAN: We have a Standing Order about irrelevancy and tedious repetition. I have heard all these arguments half a dozen times.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: If any friendly society considered it could effect a saving by joining a pool, it would be only too ready to do so.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The Minister knows that there is a Friendly Societies' Association.

The Honorary Minister: They have no power under that.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The association was formed to assist societies to carry on their business in the most economical and advantageous way. There would be nothing to prevent the association from arranging the formation of a pool. If all the advantages mentioned by the Honorary Minister are to be gained by insuring with the State office, they would soon form a pool. In the circumstances, I do not see much force in the Minister's argument.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: This matter was brought before two or three conferences of the association and there was a conference with the Minister for Works and officials of the State office, and not once was it suggested that other bodies might be brought in. We knew nothing about the friendly societies being included until the Bill was introduced. It seems unfair now to tell the road boards that, if they want this legislation, they must submit to the inclusion of other bodies.

Hon. G. FRASER: If friendly societies want to form a pool, they will not have to conform to any other conditions, and those who do not want a pool should be able to insure separately. It appears from the Minister's remarks that there is a large society which is not permitted to insure with the State office unless it forms one of a pool. The order referred to is the most progressive in the State, but so far other societies have not been induced to see eye to eye with the larger one. Because others are asleep and cannot see the advantages and will not join with this order, it is deprived of the benefits. I do not know which one desires the privilege, but evidently one does. Why hold back that one because the others cannot see the light of day?

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment insisted on.

No. 2. Clause 2—Delete the words "on or more" in line 8.

No. 3. Clause 2—Delete the words "local authority or" in lines 12 and 13.

No. 4. Clause 2—Delete the words "friendly society or" in line 14.

No. 5. Clause 2—Insert after the word "undertaken" in line 16, the word "only."

No. 6. Clause 2—Delete the words "local authorities separately or with friendly societies separately or with any number of local authorities or with any" in lines 17, 18 and 19, and substitute the words "a number of local authorities or a."

The CHAIRMAN: These amendments are consequential.

Amendments consequentially insisted on.

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

BILL—STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

In Committee

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 2 had been agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Interpretation:

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 13 and 14 of paragraph (a) of the definition of "Undertaking" the words "mines, open cuts" be struck out.

This definition provides that, among other things, the commission may acquire mines and open-cuts, which means that it is going to engage in the operation of coalmining. The commission is to be concerned with the generation of electricity and not by any stretch of imagination could it be argued that the acquiring of coalmines can be regarded as having anything to do with the actual generation of electricity; but this would be a very good way of acquiring and nationalising mines. In those circumstances I trust the Committee will stand firm and assist me to obtain the deletion of these words.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I oppose the amendment. These words cannot bear the construction placed on them by Mr. Seddon. The reference here to coal mines

open-cuts and so on relates to when they are used in conjunction with coal supplied for the generation of electricity. It will be noticed that the words appear in the interpretation of the word "undertaking." At Collie, there is the Collie power-house, which is supplied from a mine adjacent to it. That is the kind of thing the definition is intended to cover, and that is why the words appear in the interpretation of the word "undertaking." The interpretation is a lengthy one, and must be all-embracing to cover all the possibilities in regard to the undertakings with which the commission will be associated. For record purposes, I propose to read the definition—

"Undertaking" means—

- (a) with respect to the Commission—an undertaking approved by the Governor for the erection, construction and provision of distribution works, electric works, generating stations, linking-up schemes, service apparatus, transmission works and of all other works, appliances and conveniences for the generation of electricity or other power (whether by the use of coal, water power or otherwise) and for the reception, storage, distribution, transmission, use, supply and sale of such electricity or other power, and includes all buildings, works, mines, open-cuts, quarries, water, land, machinery, plant, towers, lines, poles, cables and appliances used for or in connection with the undertaking. The term includes the undertaking of a supply authority when the same is purchased or acquired by the Commission under the provisions of this Act.

The words to which I would specially draw attention are those in lines 18 and 19—"used for or in connection with the undertaking." If the hon. member has his way, and the words are deleted, we shall probably be faced with the position that, so far as the Collie power scheme is concerned, the commission might take over the building and its equipment and could have nothing whatever to do with the mine which is associated with it and supplies the coal on which the power-house is worked.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The Chief Secretary said that alongside the power-station there is a mine from which the station derives its coal. That is so. There are also other mines at Collie from which it could obtain

its coal. It is obvious that under this proposal the commission would acquire a mine which would become a State mine, from which they would obtain State coal.

The Chief Secretary: To supply the power-house.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Exactly. That is the point to which I am objecting. We shall be establishing a State coal mine, and that is a principle to which I am opposed. I consider the best results would be obtained at Collie by calling for tenders for the supply of coal and allowing any person who could produce the coal to tender.

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

Ayes	.....	15
Noes	.....	6
Majority for		9

AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. W. J. Mann.
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. A. Diamitt.	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. F. K. Welsh
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. J. G. Hislop	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Fraser
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 1 and 2 of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (b) of the definition of "Undertaking" the words "mines, open cuts," be struck out.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8—Establishment of Commission:

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I propose to move an amendment that in line 1 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (3) the words "nominated by the Minister" be struck out. The purpose of the amendment is that the two persons representing the consumers should be elected, and not nominated by any Government that may be in power. It is suggested by my next amendment that the municipalities elect one such person and that the Road Board Association elect the other. The Government is anxious to have seven commissioners and, after all, the members of the Road Board Association and the municipal councils represent all the consumers.

Let us keep to the democratic principle of electing such commissioners.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Would I be in order, Mr. Chairman, in moving an amendment that paragraph (a) be deleted?

The Chief Secretary: You would have to move an amendment, prior to that, that there be five commissioners instead of seven.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause (2) the word "seven" be struck out and the word "five" inserted in lieu.

This Bill has been framed principally on the Victorian Act, but in Victoria the area over which the State Electricity Commission has jurisdiction is as big as the South-West, and has four or five times the population, yet there are only four commissioners in control there. I think five commissioners should be ample here, and that we should cut out the two consumers' representatives. It is desired that the workers should be represented, though I do not see why they should want representation on the commission. I think four commissioners would do.

The Chief Secretary. You are slipping now!

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not think so. I am cutting out the consumers, and the workers also.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I oppose this amendment. I think it is desirable that there should be two consumers' representatives on a commission of this description. A commission such as Mr. Miles suggests would tend to become too much a professional commission, and the consumers' viewpoint would not be put as it would by representatives elected for that purpose. I intend to support the amendment Mr. Parker has suggested.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: It is the intention of the Government to give the consumers representation and I think they should be represented on a scheme covering such an immense area as this. If those representatives are elected by the local governing bodies that will create satisfaction. I support Mr. Parker's suggestion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I naturally oppose the amendment. It is not a matter of the population of the country or the large area to be covered, but rather of principle. The Government believes that on commissions of this kind the consumers are entitled to representation in order that their repre-

sentatives may put forward to the professional members of the commission the viewpoint of the people whom the commission is expected to serve. It is easy to understand that if we had only one consumer representative there would be expressions of jealousy from certain sections in the country as against the metropolitan area, or vice versa, because the country and metropolitan communities are separate entities.

We have already heard enough on the South-West Power Scheme to indicate that the people of the South-West have a definite outlook on an electricity scheme, as have the people of the metropolitan area on the provision of additional electric power for that area. Unless we have consumer representation on this commission I am afraid we will not give all the satisfaction we desire. The question of whether those representatives should be elected by some body or appointed by the Government is a matter to be dealt with on a later amendment. The fact that there are only four members on the Victorian Commission is no reason why we should have only four members here. Although the Victorian Commission covers an area of much denser population than is to be dealt with in this area, I do not think that in Victoria there is the diversity of interests that exist here.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The consumers' representatives could over-ride the experts.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We are providing a Government representative, who will be the Under Treasurer, and three technical men, and if the Government appoints the two consumer representatives it will make selection from men who can be expected to bring to that commission qualification which may not be obtained from elected representatives. I think the consumers should be represented and that both the country and the metropolitan interests should be represented as well.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move a amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (8) the words "nominated by the Minister" be struck out.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We now come to the question of whether those representatives should be elected or nominated by the Government. Nomination by the Minister really means nomination by the

Government. I draw attention to the great importance of this commission and the responsibility that the Government must accept for it. Members frequently say that the Government or the Minister must take responsibility, and I think this is a case where it should be a Ministerial responsibility. I think we can not afford to allow this commission to be constituted of individuals elected by bodies that are taking no responsibility for the success or failure of the scheme. The Government would select consumer representatives according to their qualifications. There would be a wide range of selection, but that would not be so if those representatives were persons nominated or elected by municipal authorities or road boards. The commission might be saddled with individuals who would be of little if any use to it or of assistance in connection with the work to be performed. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment; and in saying that, I do not desire to cast any reflection on the executive committee of, either the Local Government Association of Western Australia or of the Road Board Association.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask Mr. Parker if he has considered the effect of his amendment, should it be carried, on Sub-clause (5) which deals with the method of filling vacancies.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If my amendment is carried, consequential alterations will have to be made.

The CHAIRMAN: That to which I am drawing your attention would not be consequential.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Obviously the amendment would necessitate further alterations, and I will deal with them subsequently, if necessary.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Proceedings of Commission:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 8 of paragraph (d) of Sub-clause (3) the words "to take" be struck out and the words "or to act in" inserted in lieu.

This is merely an alteration in phraseology.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (a) of Sub-clause (4) the following proviso be added:—

"Provided that any question which the chairman certifies in writing to be one dealing with matter which is wholly or mainly of a technical character shall be decided by the votes of or a majority of the votes of the commissioners appointed under Section 8, Subclause (3), paragraph (d) present at the meeting and sitting alone."

Many questions of a highly technical nature must go before the commission, and only those who understand the issues should be entitled to vote on them. Perhaps one of the technical men may be very keen on something that his technical colleagues are not in favour of but the former may have supporters among the lay-members who are not fully conversant with the scientific aspects but might accept the arguments of the commissioner and by their votes decide a technical point. Really technical matters should be decided only by the commissioners fully qualified to deal with them and the lay-members could easily fulfil duties in other respects. With the suggested constitution of the commission one technical member and the laymen could easily over-rule the remaining experts on a technical issue.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This amendment represents a new departure.

Hon. G. Fraser: And could be very dangerous.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The chairman might happen to be one of the technical members of the commission and he could declare everything dealt with by that body to be technical or mainly technical. I do not suggest that anything so foolish would be done, but that could be the effect of the amendment. Those who will be appointed to the commission will be responsible people and why should we assume that they would not be capable of dealing properly with matters to be determined? We ourselves should be the last people in the world to stress such a point! The members of the commission will have to shoulder a heavy responsibility and we should not take from the non-technical members any portion of that responsibility. Commissioners when dealing with a purely technical matter will have sufficient commonsense to realise that

it should be dealt with mainly by the technical members, and we should not attempt to divide the responsibility of the members of the commission.

Hon. G. FRASER: The presence of non-technical men on the commission will be a definite safeguard. The technical members may disagree and the lay-members will be able to decide the matter at issue.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: For the very reason that Mr. Fraser has stressed, I desire the amendment to find its place in the Bill. There is no more dangerous person than the layman with a little knowledge.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	7
Majority for ..				2

AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. E. H. Gray	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 22nd November, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

WHEAT TRANSPORT DELAYS.

As to Maintaining Supplies for Milling.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Transport:

1, Is he aware that flour mills are working only two instead of three shifts owing to insufficient supplies of wheat?

2, Is he aware that the railways are unable to haul, or in any case are not hauling sufficient wheat to keep the mills fully occupied?

3, Is it a fact that road transport is at present keeping mills going, but this will cease on the 22nd November unless an extension is granted?

4, Is he aware that the British Government has offered to take 500,000 tons of flour at a price equivalent to 9s. 8½d. per bushel of wheat?

5, Will he take steps to have the present road transport contract extended; and rearrange existing railway facilities in order to assist in the urgent production of flour for export, so that advantage can be taken