

up by the efforts of the industrial insurance agents to a very great extent.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: With the assistance of the company.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I do not agree with that statement.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Without the company there would be no agent.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: An agent for a bad company will make as much as the agent for a good company.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The figures published by one company showed an increase of 100 per cent. last year. Those contributing to a greater degree than anyone else towards that result are the insurance canvassers. There can be no question of the financial standing of these societies.

Hon. H. Stewart: But they deal with trust funds!

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The question of expense should not enter into it. It is one of fairness, and there should be no objection to this being dealt with by an impartial tribunal. I give notice of my intention to move a further amendment. We should endeavour to reach an agreement that will give satisfaction to each side.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I admit Mr. Kitson's sincerity in his remarks, but he has allowed his feelings to be influenced by sentiment. I voted against this definition last session, but since I have met the insurance canvassers I have moderated my views. I was at the conference that has been referred to and I am satisfied that there are some industrial insurance agents who should receive the consideration that would be possible if the amendment were agreed to. At the same time I am not prepared to go too far. At present these insurance agents cannot be said to be in such a bad way as suggested by Mr. Kitson. Otherwise they would not have remained in the employment of the society for so many years. While it is true that we were told some of the agents were earning £4 and £4 10s. a week, it has since been shown that they have received considerably more than the sums I have mentioned. Irrespective of that point, we found that the agents who were receiving excellent returns were just as dissatisfied as the others. I accept the communication signed by two insurance managers as an ex parte statement, but the fact remains that if these agents are so dissatisfied one wonders why they have continued in their positions. They seem to be doing very

well all round, although there may be exceptions. We should give the proposal set out in Mr. Lovekin's amendment a trial and if necessary, further amend it next session.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 26th November, 1925.*

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

### QUESTION—BORING, GOLDEN MILE.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has the Mines Department reserved a portion of the country at the north end of the Golden Mile for the purpose of tests by deep boring? 2, If so, what is the approximate date of commencement of the deep boring operations?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, So soon as arrangements can be finalised after the Loan Estimates have been passed.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Richardson, leave of absence for one week granted to the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) on the ground of ill-health.

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

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

That for the remainder of the session Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day on all sitting days.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL** (Northam) 4.36: I know that this is the motion we usually get just before the conclusion of the session. I hope the Premier will give members an opportunity of dealing with matters they desire to bring before the House. It is usual for the Premier to agree to give private members this opportunity, notwithstanding the passing of this motion. I am sure he will do that. During this session we have had very little private members' business, and for the most part even on Wednesdays, we have dealt with Government business. We are, therefore, not asking very much when we request that some consideration should be given to private members' business before the close of the session.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder—in reply) [4.38]: It is true we have had very little private members' business this session. That is the reason why this motion is brought down rather later than usual. I felt it was not necessary to move it before inasmuch as the major portion of private members' days has been devoted to Government business. There is practically no private members' business left, except one or two motions on the Notice Paper, but I will endeavour to afford members an opportunity for the consideration of such business that is on the Notice Paper, or that may come forward before the end of the session.

Question put and passed.

## BILL—RESERVES.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Lutey in the Chair, the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 7—Closure of a way through the land of Muresk Agricultural College:

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I stated last night that this clause would have further consideration, with a view to provision being made for people who desire to have access to other parts of the district if this road is closed. I move an amendment—

That in line six the words "passing of this Act, cease and determine" be struck out, and "publication in the 'Gazette' of a proclamation declaring the way closed" be inserted in lieu.

Hon. Sir **JAMES MITCHELL**: The road serves some farmers to the north of this block, who take their produce to the Muresk railway siding. If some other suitable access to the siding is given to them, I shall have no objection to the clause. If the college estate is to be accessible to the people living to the north, it will be necessary to provide some road for them. People will want to visit the college, and unless a road is provided it may mean that they will have to go 20 miles out of their way instead of three or four. I want the Minister to agree that an equally convenient way to that which it is proposed to close will be provided if we pass this clause. I do not wish to deny to the Minister the right to close the road so long as some other thoroughfare is given. We must have access to the college from the north.

The **MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: All the settlers who use this road have agreed to the closure, with, I think, one exception. The road it is desired to close would be most inconvenient for college purposes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That would not be sufficient reason for closing it.

The **MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**: It runs past the homestead and cuts up a field. I think there is another way by which the settlers can gain access to the Muresk or some other siding, but I will inquire into the matter on Saturday, when I go up there.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The information I have is that the purchase of the land includes some covered by an easement affecting a private right-of-way. Since then access has been provided. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition need fear that any injustice will be done.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I know the people, and at the Minister's request I went into this matter.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I think that proper access has been provided.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you provide equally convenient access, it will be all right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the majority of those concerned think it is sufficient, one man cannot over-ride their opinion. The intention is that proper access to the railway siding shall be provided. The trouble is that the road concerned has never been a public road, but a private one. The matter will be further investigated before the road is closed, and arrangements will be made so that proper access may be provided.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The people who purchased portions of the estate secured an easement in respect of the roads. That is part of the purchase. The Titles Office will not allow subdivisions to be made without adequate provision for roads. Here we are taking something from the people who have these easements. However, the Minister has said that no injustice will be done.

The Minister for Lands: We could make a road along the boundary.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister will do that I shall be content.

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

Clause 8—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

## **BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.51] in moving the second reading said: This is a one clause Bill, the object of which is to grant power to the Workers' Homes Board to increase the amount that may be advanced for the erection of homes. Under the Act the limit is fixed at £550. It is felt to-day that, having regard to the increased costs of material and labour as well as of everything appertaining to the erection of buildings, that sum is inadequate. The class of house that can be built for £550 to-day is not anything approaching the class that could be erected for a similar sum when the Act was passed.

Mr. Stubbs: Costs are 25 per cent. more to-day.

The PREMIER: I should say so. We propose to increase the maximum amount to £650, which will be inclusive of the cost of sewerage connections. At present those who have been granted the maximum amount of £550 under the old Act, have not been able to secure a further advance to cover the cost of sewerage connections that have had to be installed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I did not know that they could not get that advance.

The PREMIER: That was a separate matter. The Bill will get over the difficulty.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Will that apply to houses already erected, so that the owners can get advances for sewerage connections?

The PREMIER: Yes. Formerly the board had no authority to advance further sums for sewerage connections, but they will have that authority now. Many people desire to get something like a decent home for themselves, but a home of that description could not be erected to-day for £550. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**MR. STUBBS** (Wagin) [4.54]: I support the Bill, and desire to pay a tribute to the splendid work carried out by the Workers' Homes Board. The Act has been in existence for some years, and I am sure I am echoing the sentiments of every hon. member when I say that it has been administered in the way intended by the Government responsible for its introduction. This legislation has been the means of enabling a number of people to secure homes for themselves. There is this point, however, that during the last year or two, the operations of the board have been handicapped to a considerable extent because of the poverty of the Treasury. I hope that when the Treasurer introduces the Loan Estimates, we will find that he has made provision for increased funds that will enable the Workers' Homes Board to meet the requirements of a number of people in the country areas, whose applications for advances have been refused within the last 12 or 18 months. In the Wagin electorate there are several families who have found it difficult to secure a house. They do not possess the necessary capital to build homes for themselves, and have not been able to secure advances, because the Workers' Homes Board has been handicapped by the lack of capital. I agree with the Premier's contention that it is not possible to erect a home of any decent size

by the expenditure of £550, owing to the increase in the cost of timber, labour and everything connected with building operations. I am sure I am well within the mark in saying that the increased costs represent 25 per cent., if not 30 per cent., above those operating 10 years ago. I trust the House will readily agree to the second reading of the Bill.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL** (Northam) [4.58] It is regrettable that the amending legislation is necessary for the reasons that have been given. I think all will agree that the greatest trouble that confronts the workers to-day concerns house rents. By the amendment sought, it is admitted that homes cannot be built at anything like the amount specified in the Act.

The Minister for Railways: You did not give us much assistance with our Fair Rents Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There has never been a fair rents Bill, in the true sense of the term, before the House. The Bill the Minister refers to would not have done any good and would not have helped this position in the slightest degree. Even under the Bill now before us, the worker who borrows £650 for the erection of a home will have to pay 30s. a week. I have gone into this matter 40 times.

The Minister for Works: But where do you get those figures from?

The Minister for Railways: It means £650 at 5¾ per cent.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But there are many other charges. I know that an advance of £250 means payments of 11s. to the department. I have not got the whole scale before me, but I know that figure is correct. On top of that there have to be taken into consideration rates, renewals, repairs and so on.

The Minister for Works: You are quite 50 per cent. out in your calculation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The charges include interest, rebate on money, sinking fund, rates and taxes. On the basis of weekly payments of 11s. for a loan of £250, it means that the worker will have to pay what I suggest for his advance of £650. It is to be regretted that the amount has had to be increased. There are people in Perth who are paying £15 or £20 per annum per room.

Mr. STUBBS: I do not know how they can do it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And the payment will not be any less under the Bill. It is unfortunate that people have to pay such excessive amounts for such small accommodation. By the expenditure of £650 people will not get as much as for £400 on a pre-war basis, nothing like it. We want to assist the people. I remember that the Minister for Works was with me on a deputation when this question was brought up, and he agreed that if a man had to repay £550 in addition to interest, he had a sufficiently heavy burden. In the country we had to erect a large number of workers' homes.

Mr. Lindsay: It was a great boon to the country districts.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We passed an Act that gave us the right to put those homes on land owned by the Crown, to be sold as people applied for them. The strange thing is that while a man can live contentedly and happily in a £250 house at Wyalcatchem, when we shift the scene to Perth the worker wants a house that costs more than twice as much. If the limit were fixed at £850, many people would accept it. We had to ease off our building because the soldiers' homes were being erected at a cost that no worker could face.

Mr. Stubbs: That scheme was gravely mismanaged.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and it made it impossible for the State Department to get homes erected at anything like a reasonable cost. I do wish we could get homes for the people at a very much lower cost. When it comes to building homes for the workers, those who lay bricks and do other building work ought to do their best to help their comrades in search of homes by keeping down the cost. One way and another, this proposed new house will cost not less than 30s. a week, including interest, rates and taxes, and repayment of principal.

The Minister for Works: How will it come to 30s. per week.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am sorry that it is to cost so much. In addition to interest and rates and taxes and repayment of principal, there are repairs to be accounted for. The cost is very much more than appears on the surface. While I am not going to oppose the £650, I do not know that there are many men on £5 a week who can afford to pay the cost.

Mr. Sleeman: Some of them have to pay that much in rent now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, but not necessarily for 30 years. Of course the great thing with a decent man is to put something by. But what he has to take in shillings each week from his earnings is a grave consideration. In country districts other charges are much lower than they are in the city, and so in all a man can live more cheaply there. The Premier has said he would have £50,000, and that he would consider providing a further sum on the Loan Estimates. It is easy for us always to applaud an increase in an item like this. We have to remember that we want to serve the people who use this Act. It is not intended for people who can build homes for themselves by other means; it is really intended to supply homes for people of limited incomes. That is what we have endeavoured to do up to the present, and that is all we ought to do in the future. Fortunately the Workers' Homes Board manages very well, and up to date every house they have had anything to do with is satisfactorily occupied. I am not going to oppose the increase to £650; I merely wish to point out that in increasing the amount we are getting a little away from the original purpose. I hope that as far as possible the board will see to it that their clients get value for their money. Amongst the reasons for the increase in cost of building are some that can be avoided, some that are not always justified. But, of course, the unfortunate man who has applied for money with which to build a home for himself has no control over the expenditure. We want every man in the State to have a home of his own if possible. I hope the Federal Government will come to light with their £20,000,000 and give the Workers' Homes Board the job of advancing our share of it.

The Premier: I can see that twenty millions receding in the dim distance.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not so positive as it was.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister must not judge others by himself.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am judging by past experience.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What experience?

The Minister for Agriculture: We cannot discuss it here.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We can leave the Federal elections out of the dis-

cussion. If this 20 millions of Commonwealth money is to be expended for housing purposes, we need not spend our own money.

The Premier: That was to be spread over 20 years. Still a million per annum would be very acceptable.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. I hope the Federal Government will allow the Workers' Homes Board to do the building, as they now do for the soldiers' homes scheme.

The Premier: They tried separate building, but have come back to us again. They are not consistent, for at the same time they take the construction of Federal buildings from the State Public Works Department and set up a separate public works department of their own.

Mr. Stubbs: It is a pity the Workers' Homes Board did not have the building of all the soldiers' homes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The board have done the work for years now, and done it well.

The Premier: Yes, after the Federal people had made a failure of it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope we shall do the work if the Federal Government advance money for homes. Fortunately married people are coming into the State with their families, and our young people are marrying, with the result that there is a great shortage of homes. In this House we have but one bachelor, which speaks very well for the House.

The Premier: We hope to get him off this season.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, it is time he settled down. I am not going to oppose the Bill, although I think it is a great pity we cannot provide homes at a lower cost for people working on a weekly wage. It must be a terrific tax to take £1 per week out of £4 10s.

The Premier: Many of them have to pay now a pretty high amount each week in rent, and that without the possibility of making the houses their own.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That has always been the point. That is why the Act was first introduced.

The Premier: Rents are very high today.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, because building costs are very high. I suppose building costs well over 30 per cent.

more than it did, and in consequence we have to increase this amount from £550 to £650. Even then our people will not get homes nearly as good as they got a few years ago at £550. If the first homes erected under the scheme had to be erected to-day they would cost over £750.

Mr. Stubbs: How can you alter it?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We cannot alter it; we can only regret it. When it comes to brick houses, the increase is higher than ever. Since we cannot get homes for the people for less money, the only thing to do is to increase the advance. Still it is loading a heavy debt on to the people. I hope the Premier will be able to provide an amount on the Loan Estimates to enable homes in the country to be erected.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [5.13]: I am not very much concerned about increasing the price in the city, and certainly it is not necessary in the country. In my electorate many workers' homes have been erected at a maximum cost of £250. One of the finest things that have occurred in Western Australia was the decision to advance money for the erection of workers' homes in country towns. I hope the time is coming when the Government will again advance money for that purpose. It has been my experience to find people working out in country towns with no houses in which to live. As a result a man goes out there to get the work, but has to leave his wife and family in the city, which is not good either for him, for them, or for the State. I hope the Government will see their way clear to again advance money for the building of workers' homes in country towns.

On motion by Mr. Hughes, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—GUN LICENSE ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.15] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill and is required solely to enable gun licenses to be issued outside of municipalities. Under the existing Act licenses are required only within a

municipality or within five miles of the boundaries of a municipality. The Act was passed in 1885. Many road boards have come into existence in recent years, and it is desired that they should have power to issue gun licenses similar to that possessed by municipalities. Some local bodies that were municipalities a few years ago have been turned into road boards, and with that operation the power to issue gun licenses has disappeared. This question originated in Broome, which once was a municipality and later became a road board. While Broome has a large white population, it also has a considerable number of coloured people, and it is said that practically all of them carry firearms. The local authority has no control whatever over them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are all in the town.

The PREMIER: The town is a road board. I am informed that all the people there carry firearms.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why not put through a proper measure to limit the sale and make people register. We tried to do that and the Bill was defeated.

The PREMIER: The coloured people in Broome carry firearms and are not required to take out a license. That is a very undesirable state of affairs.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: People carry revolvers about Perth and have no licenses.

The PREMIER: The Act provides that they must have a license, but we cannot detect everyone who breaks the law.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think the Act provides for that.

The PREMIER: I am sure it does.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The police could take action if they discovered any unlicensed person carrying firearms.

The PREMIER: Of course. No doubt people in Perth are carrying firearms without being licensed, but people are breaking every one of our laws and we cannot always detect the offenders. If they are detected, they are liable to be prosecuted.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think they are.

The PREMIER: In municipalities they are. The Act is quite clear on that point. Section 3 reads—

It shall not be lawful for any person to use or carry for use a gun within the boundaries of any municipality or within a distance of five miles beyond such boundaries elsewhere than in a dwelling-house or the curtilage there-

of, without having in force a license duly granted to him under this Act.

It is permissible for a person to have firearms in his dwelling-house

Mr. Davy: How else could we protect ourselves against cats?

The PREMIER: And intruders. Many road boards have come into existence during recent years.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: But road boards embrace the whole district, whereas municipalities embrace only portion of a district.

The PREMIER: Still, I do not see why a person who carries a gun should not have a license.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: You should encourage people in the outlying parts to have guns and should not tax them

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think you need insist upon a license if a man is away from a town.

The PREMIER: I do not see how that could be overcome.

Mr. Davy: Is there any part of Western Australia that is in neither a municipality nor a road board?

The PREMIER: I think not. If there is, it would be in the very remote parts of the State that are entirely uninhabited. Many of our towns growing in size and importance are within the boundaries of road boards, and there are equally good grounds for requiring a person to have a license to carry a gun there as in a municipality. Many towns within road districts are much larger than the towns that a few years ago were municipalities. Nearly all the gold-fields towns were municipalities, and each had a mayor, a town clerk and all the paraphernalia of a municipality.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Now, each road board is to have a president.

The PREMIER: South Perth was a municipality, but has recently been turned into a road board, and a person in South Perth might carry firearms without being required to have a license. On the other hand, in some towns even smaller than South Perth but within the boundaries of a municipality, a person would require to have a license.

The Minister for Lands: From South Perth it is only across the street to Victoria Park, and there a person is compelled to have a license.

The PREMIER: That is so. It is an anomaly that should be rectified.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Within the boundaries of a townsite, a license should be required.

The PREMIER: A man could do as much harm with a gun outside the boundaries of a townsite as within them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But he is not so likely to.

The PREMIER: I do not know where the line could be drawn. There are nearly as good grounds for permitting a man to carry a gun in one part of the State as in another, whether within townsite boundaries or outside. It is contended that farmers or men in the country who shoot kangaroos should not be compelled to take out a license

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: There are certain districts where you should rather encourage men to have guns in order to keep down pests.

The PREMIER: The cost of a license would not deter such men from having a gun

Mr. Mann: If there were six sons in a family, would it be possible to license the gun instead of the individuals?

The PREMIER: It is the individual we are concerned about, not the gun.

Mr. Angelo: What about the man with six guns?

The PREMIER: Under the proposal of the member for Perth, that man would require six licenses. Broome particularly has asked for this measure. It may be argued that an amendment of the Act would suffice to meet the wishes of the residents of Broome, without embracing the whole of the road boards of the State. The measure, however, will not impose hardship on the people in any part of the country, and it will not operate detrimentally, as the member for Beverley (Mr. C. P. Wansbrough) suggests. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH** (Beverley) [5.27]: Will the Premier give us some idea of the amount of the license fee. Is it set out in the Act?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, 5s.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: If I were assured that this was not a proposal to increase taxation, I would support the Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course it is.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: In the towns it is desirable to exercise more control over people who carry firearms. In my district there is a certain amount of

game, and a true sport would not object to paying a reasonable fee. There is another aspect, however, that I indicated by way of interjection. In many parts of the country we have various pests. If we encourage their destruction by the payment of bounties, etc., it does not look well to impose a tax upon people who are doing their best to destroy such pests. The gun is the most effective means to deal with them. It is the only safe method. When we use poison and adopt other means, we have to be careful that we do not inflict more harm upon our stock than upon the pests. Some years ago the Scaddan Government introduced a similar measure.

The Premier: No, the Mitchell Government introduced that Bill.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Anyhow, the supporters of the Government knocked it out. The licensing of guns should be limited to townsites. That, I think, will get over the difficulty. The Treasurer put up particularly the position at Broome, but the protected game areas in the country districts are mostly embraced in municipalities or central road boards. I suggest that the Premier accept an amendment limiting the operation of the Bill to town boundaries.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [5.31]: I support the remarks of the member for Beverley. The Bill, if passed, will create many complications. It is absurd that every man carrying a gun should be required to have a license, especially in country districts. People who want to use a gun should rather be encouraged to do so. Probably there will be four or five boys on a farm, and as they grow up the first thing the father does is to buy them a pea rifle. Then the children will be out all the time shooting rabbits and other pests. If this Bill passes, the children might be caught carrying the fire-arm without a license, and then they would be considered law breakers. To confine the operation of the measure to towns would be quite sufficient. In the towns, moreover, the measure could be enforced. I agree it is utterly wrong that fire-arms should be discharged in towns. However, on a farm hawks and crows and snakes come for the chickens, and if the husband is away the wife will get the gun and try to shoot the marauder. She should not be required to have a license for that purpose. Indeed, such a requirement would be absurd. I hope the House will not agree to the Bill.

MR. ANGELO (Gaseoyne) [5.33]: The Bill proposes to amend the Act of 1885. Sections 2 of that old Act reads—

It shall not be lawful for any person to use or to carry for use a gun within the boundaries of any municipality.

Some years ago a man was prosecuted for carrying a gun within five miles of a municipality, and his solicitor pleaded that although the man was carrying the gun within five miles of a municipality, he was not going to use it within five miles of the municipality. The magistrate dismissed the case. I point this out to the Premier. If there is anything in the contention put up by the solicitor or in the decision given by the magistrate, the Premier might have the matter rectified when the Bill is in Committee.

On motion by Mr. Millington, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.**

*Second Reading.*

### **THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon.**

W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [5.35] in moving the second reading said: This Bill merely proposes to alter the figures "1926" in the existing Act to "1927," thus extending the operation of the measure for another year. The Industries Assistance Board are taking no new clients with the exception of ex-soldiers. The number of clients on the books of the board at the 31st March, 1925, was 2,674, of whom 1,154 were ex-soldiers. New clients taken on during the year number 85, all being ex-soldiers. Clearances from the board obtained during the period from the 1st December, 1924, to the 1st October, 1925, total 194. The grand total of clearances granted by the board since its inception is 1,478.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have to continue operations in order to maintain the securities, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but we are not extending further except in the case of ex-soldiers. It is necessary to continue the work of the board for a little while longer in order to maintain securities and to complete the work in hand. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.



*In Committee, etc.*

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

## **BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Order read for the resumption of the debate on the second reading from the previous day.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—General amendments:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know why the Minister proposes to change the title of these local governing bodies from "road board" to "district council." Has there been any request for it by the boards themselves? They meet in conference frequently. Is it because of anything that has happened at a conference that this alteration is proposed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I find from the files that there have been frequent requests, extending over a number of years, for a change of name, and that quite a number of titles have been suggested, "county council" and "borough council" among them. To suggest that these bodies have no functions apart from roads seems to me wrong. I have adopted the title which is used in South Australia. "County council" and "borough" seem to me to have an old-world ring which is not suitable to Western Australia.

Mr. North: "Road board" is a name peculiar to Western Australia.

Mr. LINDSAY: I agree with the clause. "Road board" is a misnomer. In Victoria these local governing bodies are called "shire councils," and in New Zealand "county councils." A change of name has frequently been requested by the road boards.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 5:

Mr. DAVY: It seems to me that a mistake has been made in paragraph (e) of this clause. That paragraph proposes to amend

subparagraph (a) of paragraph 1 of the definition of "Owner" by inserting after "lessee" the words "or tenant of a lessor who is not responsible for rates imposed under this Act," and also by inserting after "lessee," in subparagraph (d), the word "tenant." I do not find the word "lessee" in subparagraph (a) of paragraph (1) of Section 5. It may be that the words are intended to be inserted after "Crown lessee," in subparagraph (b) of paragraph (1). What is the Minister's idea of the meaning of this amendment? My idea is that it is intended to apply to people who are tenants of houses owned, for instance, by the Commissioner of Railways or some body corporate of that kind.

Progress reported.

## **BILL—EIGHT HOURS.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 22nd October.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [5.45]: Although this Bill is an entirely separate one, it is fairly obvious that in effect, it is an amendment of the Arbitration Act. As I view it, it is designed to restrict the powers of the court in respect of a certain matter, namely, working hours. It is interesting to compare what the Minister proposes in the Bill with what was put before us last year. Last year he had in the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill a clause dealing with this question. The number of that clause was 59, and it consisted of some six lines, and set forth—

It shall be prescribed in every industrial agreement and industrial award that the ordinary working hours of workers shall not exceed 44 hours in any one week: provided that in the case of any industry where workers are employed in shifts, the working hours may average 44 per week over a period of three weeks.

The Bill now before us consists of three pages, those three pages having grown from the half a dozen lines I have quoted. At first sight it is somewhat of a surprise in view of the fact that last year we did our best to amend Clause 59. We made a number of suggestions as to how the clause should be amended. We advanced a number of arguments to show that it would not be practicable, and also tried to convince the Minister that as it stood it would be bad legislation. The Minister would not have

anything to do with any of our arguments; he was adamant, and was content to leave the clause as it stood. The fact of the matter is that we are realising now that the Minister is not nearly so obdurate a person as sometimes he would have us believe. We are realising that he can appreciate an argument just as well as the next man. At the same time we are bound to come to the conclusion that he does not like to admit he is wrong, or at any rate he does not like to admit it too quickly. Last year he apparently declined to listen to our criticism of Clause 59, but it has now become evident that he did listen, and the three pages dealing with the subject are the result of his listening. Last year the Minister told us that the Arbitration Bill was the outcome of the matured consideration and judgment of those who had many years of close association with the work of arbitration. One must presume that these six lines represented that matured consideration and judgment. I ask hon. members to consider just how matured was that judgment which last year produced six lines and which, a short year later, produces three pages.

The Minister for Works: This is a separate Bill; the other was part of another Bill.

Mr. DAVY: Clause 59 of six lines purported to deal with the subject of restricting the powers of the court where the court was dealing with the hours of work, and purported to be complete and entire in itself. My remarks are not intended to be hostile to the Minister, and I trust he will accept them in the spirit in which they are meant. It is, however, remarkable that the matured judgment which was compressed into six lines should have swollen into three pages.

The Minister for Works: The Bill deals with overtime as well as the 44 hours.

Mr. DAVY: I am not saying that overtime should not be dealt with, because the hours of labour and overtime are cognate subjects. At any rate, I would suggest leaving out the overtime clauses. My remarks are not offered in a spirit of carping criticism; I merely desire to urge members to realise that the fixing of the hours of work by Parliament is not the simple thing that the Minister would have us to believe it to be. If he has discovered that it is not so simple, I am hoping that perhaps before we finish debating the Bill he may take heed of what we have to say, and come to the conclusion that the proper place for the fixing of the hours of work is the Arbitration

Court, and that this House is not competent, nor can it expend the time in having evidence made available to enable it to fix the hours of work for the various occupations in Western Australia. Under the Minister's six-line clause of last year there were no exceptions whatever. The clause was to embrace all workers, including domestic servants, agricultural and pastoral workers, boiler makers, miners, and caretakers of buildings. One of our chief arguments last year was that it was absurd to refer to work done by a caretaker in the same breath as work done by a miner, and say that one should not do more than the other. We find now that the Minister has realised that there was something in what we said, for under the Bill there are a number of exceptions made. I notice too with some pleasure that to-day the Minister has placed on a separate Notice Paper for our consideration still further exceptions.

The Minister for Works: I am becoming surprised at my moderation.

Mr. DAVY: The Minister will say that he has found himself in the position where he has to agree to our suggestions or else lose the Bill altogether. Nevertheless it is worthy of consideration that instead of embracing everything, we now have a number of exceptions. Since he drafted the Bill, the Minister has come to the conclusion that the exceptions he mentioned were not wide enough, for we find that he proposes to submit an amendment to the effect that the Act shall not apply to workers in the agricultural or pastoral industry. I listened with a great deal of interest to the Minister's speech when he introduced the Bill, and I also read it carefully afterwards. A great deal of his speech I submit would have been of the utmost value if it had been delivered in the Arbitration Court. That is in fact where it should have been delivered. Here, I do not think anyone needs convincing as to what is recognised amongst all people who have read anything at all of industrial matters, that we do not necessarily reduce the volume of output by reducing the number of hours. There is a limit in working hours above which efficiency disappears, or rather starts to diminish, and after that the longer the hours that are worked, then the smaller the amount of production in comparison with the number of hours. But the line above which the

diminution starts must vary immensely with the particular kind of work being done, and to draw a line in each particular industry appeals to me as being an amazingly hard task. The Minister wants to draw the line for us. So far as I can see, he always wants to have his own way. He thinks he knows just where the line should be drawn, and he tells us where we are to accept the 44 hours. That 44 hours is the line above which efficiency starts to diminish. I know that the line exists somewhere and it is obvious to me that the line is different in every occupation. But I am not competent, and I have not the time to listen to the evidence that can be adduced on this question, to enable me to determine where the line should be drawn, and it appeals to me that in Western Australia where we have made a departure in legislation from the rest of the world—except perhaps Australia and New Zealand—by creating a sub-legislature to deal with matters which presumably we feel we are not competent to handle ourselves, we should leave this particular job to that sub-legislature. I will not say I am hopeful, but I suggest that the Minister would be consistent if he agreed with us in our contention that the Bill should be dropped and that the matter should be left to the Arbitration Court to decide. We found him exhibiting signs of great indignation two or three weeks ago because an hon. member of another place moved an amendment to his Arbitration Bill to enable the legislature to have control over the decisions of the Arbitration Court. As I understand it, the proposition was that when the Arbitration Court fixed the basic wage, the result should be laid on the Table of both Houses, just as is done in the case of by-laws, and that that result might be reviewed by either or both Houses of Parliament. The Minister waxed very indignant at that proposal and I must say that I entirely agree with his point of view. The majority of members I am sure will also agree with him that such an amendment was not in the best interests of industrial peace, nor was it in the best interests of the continuation and extension of the system of arbitration that any authority should have the right to interfere with or review a decision of the Arbitration Court. Perhaps the Minister can do so, but I cannot see how he can distinguish between

the problems facing the Arbitration Court when it has to fix wages, and when it has to fix hours. They are inextricably mixed up, and they are problems of an exactly similar nature. If the court is to be given a free hand to fix wages it must be given a free hand to fix hours. I cannot see the difference. Perhaps the Minister will be able to demonstrate that there is some inherent difference, and that what must not be done by Parliament in respect to wages must be done in respect to hours. I am not hopeful that he will be able to convince me that there is this difference. The Minister is fond of quoting that very distinguished Arbitration Judge, Mr. Justice Higgins, who referred to the Australian Timber Workers' Union case when the 44-hour week was first awarded in Australia. In his book "A new province for law and order" he gives a short sketch of how the court came to the conclusion that 44 hours was the proper working week for the timber workers. The last sentence of the paragraph in which he described this is—

It is impossible to set out here all the considerations which influenced the court.

It seems to me that this little sentence is a very good answer to the Minister, that this is the place where this problem should be solved.

The Minister for Works: He was not talking in Parliament.

Mr. DAVY: No. He is describing how impossible it was to set out all the considerations that influenced the court in coming to a conclusion on the 44-hour week, or that this was the right period for the Australian Timber Workers' Union to work. That in itself is satisfactory proof that this is not the place where we can perform a function which involves so many considerations that Mr. Justice Higgins finds it impossible to set them out in his book upon the subject.

The Minister for Works: On several occasions from the bench he called on Parliament to deal with the hours.

Mr. DAVY: I believe that is so. I think the Minister has said that Mr. Justice Higgins stated that he had waited for the Parliaments of Australia to speak. I can well understand why he said that. He found it an extremely difficult and onerous thing to decide. It involved an enormous amount of work and investigation, and he shirked

the job. He suggested that the job should be put on to the Parliaments of Australia because there the consideration could not be given to it, the evidence could not be called, the witnesses would not be available, and none of the material upon which the enormous number of considerations which influenced Mr. Justice Higgins in coming to that conclusion would be forthcoming. What there is in Parliament is a majority on one side or the other. That majority can put on the statute-book anything without any consideration if it so desires. This is perhaps a short cut towards good, and perhaps to ill. I do not propose to carry the argument any further. There are other aspects of the question which will be dealt with by other speakers. It would be absurd for me, in view of the attitude I have taken up, to suggest that a 44-hour week was not the proper period in which to work. I admit I am incompetent to judge as to how many hours ought to be worked in any particular industry.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Do you ever appear as an advocate?

Mr. DAVY: Frequently. I know what I consider is a pretty fair time to devote to my particular job. I know that when I have had eight hours of work in the day I am reluctant to do any more, though I frequently have to do it. I am not prepared to say that when a man engaged in mining has finished his eight hours, he has not done more than is good for him. I do not know what it is like to delve into the bowels of the earth and extract the somewhat reluctant ore from it. No doubt it is very strenuous work, and even 44 hours may be more than is good for the health and happiness of those who do it. When I consider the extraordinary difference between that kind of toil and a hundred and one other kinds of toil I can imagine there ought to be a wide distinction, and that what is reasonable comfort and does not detract from the length of life and the happiness of others, may be ruinous when applied to another lot of people. It is impossible for me to pretend to criticise the Minister in drawing this line. He may be competent to do it, but he is not Parliament. We are not obliged to take his word for it. He has had a lengthy experience in industrial matters, and is probably as competent as any individual in the House, or as the Arbitration

Court itself would be, to decide as to this line, but only after he had listened to both sides of the question, after having the same evidence available, the same possibilities of obtaining information, and the same material as the court would have and does have every time it is faced with the problem of fixing hours. I propose to make no comment whatever on the question whether the 44-hour week is right or wrong for this, that, or any other industry, but I do say that this House is not the place to decide upon it. There is one point in the Bill that strikes me as calling for some comment.

Mr. Mann: Would you accept the Minister's decision if he were president of the Arbitration Court?

Mr. DAVY: Certainly. If he were president, and he had the kind of security of tenure which we insist is the right one, if he were put there for life, and were independent and could not be shifted, I would accept his decision.

The Minister for Works: Are you trying to tempt me?

Mr. DAVY: There is one qualification that is essential, and that the Minister for Works does not possess, namely, a legal training.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He has a legal mind.

Mr. DAVY: There is a clause that appears to me to find no proper place in the Bill. That is one that confers on the court power to limit the amount of overtime worked for the purpose of distributing the work that is available in a calling so as to relieve unemployment. That is not a proper provision to appear in any legislation. It is wrong to put upon any Arbitration Court the function of considering such a question as relieving unemployment by curtailing the activities of those who are in employment. It is as unsound as it can be. A distinguished gentleman agrees with me. I refer to Mr. Justice Higgins who says in his book—

But the court refused to accept the argument for the union to the effect that hours should be lowered, because thereby more men would have to be employed; it treated relief from the bane of unemployment on such a ground as illusory.

On that point I am quite content to follow Mr. Justice Higgins.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL** (Northam) [6.10]: I hope the Minister will have benefited from the advice given by the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy). I know there is but little chance of moving the Minister.

The Minister for Works: I am surprised at my own moderation.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** The Minister has already determined to alter the Bill himself in some respects, and is wise in his determination. The whole matter, however, ought to be left to the court. It happens in this country where the callings vary so greatly, and where the financial conditions vary, that the court is best able to handle this matter. A man can work eight hours a day in any ordinary occupation. The present hours are satisfactory. Wages ought to be fixed on the basis of eight hours in most callings. There are some occupations where eight hours would be too many. That number of hours is not worked in mining, certainly not underground. Very considerably less than eight hours are worked underground.

The Minister for Works: It is a 44-hour week in the gold mining, eight hours a day and four on Saturday.

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** We can well understand it for that industry. Some discrimination should be left with the court, which should have the right to fix the hours. I do not know that any of us can agree that eight hours is too long in most occupations. Many men do not think that is too much. I would rather rather pay increased wages than reduce the hours in many callings, where the eight hours is not more than a reasonable thing. It would be ideal if we could all work six hours a day, live in comfort, and meet our responsibilities and obligations. It would follow that if all were to work 44 hours, higher pay would be needed for the 44 hours than for the 48. I urged this when we discussed the matter some time ago. When the Minister first introduced the 44 hours in some of his departments other men applied to the court for a reduction in hours and an increase in pay. If all who serve in Government employ are to get the 44 hours, everything must go up. The Minister has quoted from Vernon, and I have had an opportunity of reading him too. I know that excessively long hours are bad, and produce poor results. One can readily understand in the days the member

for Collie (Mr. Wilson) speaks of, when men worked 12 hours, that the result was not what it should have been had they worked shorter hours. Even 10 hours was too long then in most callings. Bit by bit, however, we have come down to eight hours, which does appear to be a reasonable thing, and to produce satisfactory results in most callings. The Minister contends that even in occupations which are not over-strenuous the result of the 44-hour week will be the same as under the 48-hour. I do not agree with that, and hardly think the Minister can seriously contend it himself. He will find it will cost a lot more to live if people have to buy the result of 44 hours work from men who receive wages based on 48 hours.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** Before the tea adjournment I was endeavouring to show that if the workers' hours are limited to 44 per week, the men must pay more because everything must be dearer. When we were discussing the question some time ago I pointed out that if men, by working 48 hours a week, could turn out 12 pairs of boots, and, by working 44 hours a week, they could manufacture 11 pairs of boots, then the price would have to be increased for the 11 pairs to make up the equivalent of the price of 12 pairs of boots.

The Minister for Works: Then the authorities I quoted have had no effect upon your views?

**Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL:** Yes, but there are so many considerations to be taken into account. If men are working in a bad climate, where the standard of living is not so high as ours, the position might be different. The Minister, however, will admit that our standard of living is good and wages are fairly high, not very high anywhere, but fairly high everywhere. People can live under good conditions and although they live on plain food, that food is excellent and there is plenty of it. Our climate is such that anyone can work in comfort. It would be a very different thing if ours was a bad climate, wages low, and the standard of living not so high. I recognise that the working of long hours is not conducive to good results, for it impairs efficiency. We have recognised that for years past, and we fixed the hours for a working week at 48. The Minister will say

that that does not represent an eight-hours day. To go back to the old days, of which we have heard so much, the men worked longer hours and worked far more strenuously than they do now.

Mr. Heron: They did not turn out so much work.

The Minister for Works: And they did not work so strenuously.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They did not have the machinery that is available to-day. If industry had to be carried on as in those days, the position would be different.

The Minister for Works: They do the same amount of work now.

Mr. Heron: Double the work in some instances.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And they get double the pay, while the work they have to do is carried out more easily. If we think of the old days in the coal-mining industry, when the men had to work underground in the damp and in the most uncomfortable positions, when they had to cut the seam down almost to the level of the floor where they were working, we realise that it must have been dreadful. Now those operations are carried out by the aid of machinery. I can quite understand that work in a gold mine, before the days of the rock drill, must have been very tedious.

Mr. Heron: Alluvial gold mining is done just the same as in the olden days.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose they search for gold for themselves. The position is different in these days, and probably a great deal of the work is not so strenuous. I do not know that we can compare mining with any other industry. It cannot be expected that men shall work such long hours underground as those whose work is above ground, and therefore awards are made to meet the requirements of the various industries. I understand that the number of days worked in the coal-mining industry is not so many as those worked in other industries. Of course we want to make the living conditions of our people as fair and bright as possible. No one objects to that. Where men are working under very unpleasant conditions, or in a dangerous industry, it is another matter. We must discuss the position from the point of view of the conditions of the great majority of the workers, who are in a different position. The Minister has said that the miners work shorter hours than other workers. If we

agree to apply the 44-hour week to all workers, will the miners, bearing the Minister's statement in mind, ask to have their hours further decreased proportionately?

Mr. Lindsay: Of course they will.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We should endeavour to be reasonable in all our legislation. Notwithstanding all the authorities that can be quoted regarding the 44-hour week as against the 48-hour week, it resolves itself into a matter of opinion. No one has written on the question, having in view all the considerations that affect it. One can understand that men working in large bodies and under close supervision, engaged in operating great machinery, are in a different position from the great bulk of those working in this State, where the employer has very few men, where friendliness exists as between the employer and his men, where each understands the other, and where efforts are made to secure as pleasant working conditions as possible. Naturally, it would be impossible for the farmer who engages three or four men, not to live on friendly terms with them. They live a long way from other people and have to work in together. As a matter of fact, they do live on good terms, and while the hours appear to be long, in many ways considerable mutual help can be extended. I suppose the great trouble is that the sowing and harvesting seasons are so comparatively short that it means rush work. Young men want recreation and most farmers endeavour to make provision so that they can have it without getting any fixed time off each week. What we have to do is to see that men have work and that there is plenty of well-paid work for them in the country. We must see that their conditions are as favourable as possible, not only to the workers themselves but to their families. We want all people here to live in comfort and as far as we can, to avoid doing things that will reduce the standard of living and comfort that is now enjoyed. This evening we were discussing the cost of building homes for workers, and we agreed that the prices were higher than before the war. That position is due, to a certain extent, to the high tariff which operates against all of us, the workers included. That makes the position a little more difficult for him. He has to spend a little bit more than formerly in order to maintain his standard of living, and because of that he sees to it that he gets better wages. I should say that quite

80 per cent. of the work of house-building is done for working men. It is easy to see, therefore, that if we increase the cost of building, we increase the burden to be shouldered by the worker. The Minister has excluded from the operations of the Bill workers in the agricultural and pastoral industries. In doing that, I suppose he thinks he has done everything necessary. I can assure him that this legislation is not all for the advantage of the worker. I have spoken to a great many working men on this subject since the introduction of the Bill. I find that few of them object to the working hours. Some thought it might be possible to work the 48 hours and receive something extra for the additional four hours. Those who were in the Government service thought that something extra might be set aside for them so that when they were retired they would have something extra to draw. I do not know if that can be done, but I know that many workers realise that if all men work 44 hours a week, it will cost them a little more to live. The member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) put the case very clearly, and I hope the Minister will at least give some heed to what that hon. member said. No one objects to the court fixing wages and hours, but we do object to Parliament passing a Bill fixing a 44-hour week. The Minister has advocated in the Bill an alteration to which he has been pledged, and which he has advocated for a long time. He made it clear that this is a start, and that if the workers get the 44-hour week we shall be asked later on to concede a 40-hour week. If men can work shorter hours and earn sufficient to maintain their standard of living, well and good. If they can be induced to spend some of their extra hours in the enjoyment of wholesome sports, it will be a good thing, but it takes a long time to get people to do that. In this country where we have many hours of light during the summer months, the workers have considerable time on their hands after the work of the day is completed. However, in the country districts there is not very much for the workers to do. Take a man who is on road construction 30 or 40 miles from a railway; he works five days a week and rests on the sixth. He has nothing much to do except to sit down and talk and smoke. It seems to me that if we could be reasonable with those men, many of whom are married, we could let their odd hours of work accumulate until, at the end of, say,

three months they could go off to their homes and enjoy themselves for a spell. Take men working half way between Norralup and Pemberton. I should like to see some reasonable arrangement made under which they could work the full 48 hours with a view to subsequently taking time off for a visit to their homes. There is a great deal we could do to make life more comfortable for the workers, apart altogether from the reduction of hours. But the court has to be consulted, and the unions have to be consulted, and generally there are obstacles in the way that nobody bothers to get over.

The Minister for Works: If within reach of the city, the men work one long week and one short week.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I would be just as reasonable, indeed more so, to apply it to the men working at distance from the city. I hope the House will not agree to the Bill. In the end men can only be paid what they earn. While we may say they shall work 44 hours and be paid for 48 hours, that will not always be possible. I think the 48-hour week is a fair thing. It is for the Minister to see that the workers' conditions of work are fair, that his standard of living is good and his wages reasonable. There are always men out of work these days, and it is to some extent the result of certain legislation we have passed, legislation fondly intended to benefit the worker. The men in Government employment, except those holding fixed positions, have very uncertain occupations. A job ends, and three or four weeks elapse before another job started. We should serve the worker in the way that is best for him. I do not think the reduction of hours is either going to help him or going to be appreciated by him. Not many workers want the 44-hour week, but of course it has been the policy of the unions to secure that reduced week. Members who wish to see the 44-hour week established should realise that it is for the court to determine, after argument. The court may be relied upon to do a reasonable thing in relation to all industries. I will vote against the Bill because I believe it to be not in the interests of the workers, which is all that we should consider. We ought to have enough courage to do what we think best for him. The Minister will not allow us to amend the Bill, but our duty is to protest against it.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [7.53]: Although members of the Opposition so far show themselves hostile to the Bill, I do not want it to go out that I am opposed to it because under existing conditions 44 hours cannot be considered a satisfactory number of hours to be worked per week. I take quite another stand in my opposition to the Bill. The Federal Government have notified the electors that they are prepared to hand over the question of a 44-hour week to a commission of Arbitration Judges who shall make a recommendation for the whole of Australia. It is highly desirable that whatever uniformity of hours is agreed to, it should be agreed to on behalf of the whole of the Commonwealth, not of the State only. It is not necessary to stress the fact that it would be very dangerous for one State to have a 44-hour week, while another had a 48-hour week; for the State with the longer hours could easily flood its neighbours with its manufactures. If a dictator could be appointed, nearly all the needs of the community could be produced in a 24-hour or a 30-hour week. We are very largely governed, not by Parliament, but by convention and fashion, and that appears to me to be the crux of the whole trouble. On reflection one realises how much stronger are the influences of convention and fashion than are the laws of the country. Our customs and habits are so strongly enforced upon us that in many instances far more time is wasted in industry than need be. If we could appoint a dictator who would force us to alter our lives it would have tremendous economic consequences. Take shopkeepers and storekeepers. It is the custom to keep stores open from 9 a.m. till 6 p.m. Some years ago Friday evening shopping was in vogue. That was stopped, yet nobody suffered in consequence. One has only to look around in any store in Perth to see that practically all the work of the day is done in about two hours. On the farms tremendously long hours are worked. If we were able to appoint a dictator, it would be possible to reduce the hours in city stores and decrease the number of hours worked on the farm. This may appear ridiculous to our farmer members, but from the point of view of the ideal government of the country it is by no means ridiculous. Owing to the tremendous forces of convention and fashion it is impossible at present to reduce hours of work, although I can picture

a community where nearly all the needs of the day would be met by saving waste in many different avenues, and working only four or five hours a day. As things are, there is no limit to the number of manufactures that can be turned out, but there is a very strict limit to the quantity of food produced. That is shown all over the world. I will support the Leader of the Opposition.

**MR. LINDSAY** (Toodyay) [8.0]: This measure is called a Bill for an Act to regulate the hours of work in certain industries. It is also referred to as the Eight Hours Bill. One could call it quite a lot of other names, but perhaps I should not be allowed to express all that I think of it. It appears to me to be a measure to limit the number of hours in certain industries to 44 per week. After listening to the speeches of members on this side of the House, I feel afraid to say anything, because most of them seemed to support it with faint praise. I intend to oppose the Bill. My attitude is clear. I believe the measure is uncalled for. We have had an Arbitration Court for years, whose job it is to decide the wages and working conditions for various industries. This measure seeks practically to take the power away from the Arbitration Court, because it tells the court that no one engaged in the industries specified shall work more than 44 hours a week. At present there are many awards of the court which provide for 44 hours a week, and there are others which provide for 48 hours. I believe some even provide for more than 48.

**Mr. Panton:** And some provide for fewer.

**MR. LINDSAY:** When a plaint is lodged in the court and the hours are reduced from 48 to 44 per week, we may take it that the court has found some reason why the men in that particular industry should work the fewer hours. If we provide that the industries now working 48 hours must work not more than 44 hours, an injustice will be done to the men now working 44 hours, and they will want their working week reduced to 40 hours. I have heard quite a lot of arguments from members on the Government side designed to prove that a reduction in the hours of work would not result in a reduction of output. I have a few quotations from the report of Judge Beeby, President of the New South Wales Arbitration Court, who was appointed by the New South Wales Government to inquire into this matter. He



certainly did not say that a reduction of hours would not lead to a reduction of output. Replying to questions Nos. 6, 7, and 1, he said—

Competition exists between this State and the State of Victoria, and to a more limited extent the State of South Australia, in the sale of manufactured products of industries within this group. The increased cost of production will place this State at a disadvantage unless the forty-four hour week applies generally to the Commonwealth. The extent of this adoption is not serious, but it is sufficient to illustrate the danger of granting fundamental industrial concessions except through some tribunal which considers industries from a national instead of a State point of view. . . . I have very little doubt that in such establishments as Hoskins and the Broken Hill Company the net result of a legalised forty-four hour week will be the payment of overtime, and not the conferring of more leisure on the workmen. . . . The sudden application of the forty-four hour week to the iron trades group of industries will result in an increase in the cost of living.

The Minister for Works: And he reported in favour of 44 hours.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am quoting his exact words.

The Minister for Works: I am giving you his finding.

Mr. LINDSAY: He was asked to reply to certain questions, and I have quoted his replies to Nos. 6, 7, and 1.

The Minister for Lands: Are you quoting the whole of the questions?

Mr. LINDSAY: No.

The Minister for Works: It was on his recommendation that the New South Wales Government passed its 44 hours Bill.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have another statement made by the Deputy-President of the Federal Arbitration Court, and reported in the "Sun" of the 8th September, 1925, as follows:—

"I can quite understand that a man working 48 hours a week is a better asset than a man working 100 hours a week," remarked the deputy-president in the Federal Arbitration Court this afternoon. "There must be a limit though," the deputy-president went on. "Hours of labour cannot be reduced to an absurdity. It cannot be suggested that a man working fifteen hours a week would produce more than a man working thirty hours a week." The judge said that it was obvious that if the leather trade were worked on a forty-four hour basis, more men would have to be put on. Only yesterday, he said, Lord Burnham pointed out that our great duty was to attempt to educate the Eastern races up to the idea of the one day rest in seven. Mr.

Denham (for the employees): "If we are to bring more men into the industry, the only thing I can see is that the men will have to be satisfied with less money." Deputy-president: "I do not think you will get the same work done for the same money."

The Australian Labour Party have decided that the 44-hour week should apply to Australia. We have read in the Press that Mr. Theodore, when Premier of Queensland, fought against the introduction of the 44-hour week at that time.

Mr. Panton: He did nothing of the sort.

Mr. LINDSAY: He said it would not be fair to bring it into operation in Queensland unless it was also adopted in the other States of the Commonwealth. The Premier of New South Wales has endeavoured to get the other States of Australia to agree to the adoption of a 44-hour week, and I believe that all agreed except Victoria.

The Minister for Works: We were not consulted.

Mr. Latham: He knew you would agree without being consulted.

Mr. LINDSAY: According to the information I have, the Premier of New South Wales tried to arrange a conference of the Premiers of the various States, in order to get the 44-hour week adopted.

The Minister for Works: You had your information from the Press, but we as a Government had no knowledge of it.

Mr. LINDSAY: My information was obtained from the New South Wales "Hansard."

The Minister for Works: It was not taken from Mr. Lang, because he did not apply to us.

Mr. LINDSAY: Mr. Lang did not deny the statement, although he had an opportunity in the House to do so. The idea of a 44-hour week is not new to the mother State. A 44-hour week was in operation there some time ago. I think it was early in 1922 that the Act was repealed by a Nationalist Government. Although we have been told that the adoption of the shorter working week would not lead to a reduction in the number of men employed, in New South Wales it did.

The Minister for Works: There was a greater output in those years.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am alluding to the number of men employed. In 1920-21 4,268 more men were employed in New South Wales than in Victorian factories; in 1921-22 the difference was 4,000 in favour of New

South Wales, but in 1922-23 after the adoption of the 44-hour week, the number of men employed in New South Wales was 359 fewer than in Victoria. In 1923-24, after the repeal of the Act, the number employed in factories in New South Wales was 3,512 greater than in Victoria.

Mr. Panton: That is a good argument in favour of the 44-hour week. With fewer men they obtained a greater output.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am alluding, not to the output, but to the number of men employed in factories. The value of things produced is the price obtained for them. We might get 5s. per bushel for wheat and we might get only 3s., and so a big difference would result in the total value of production. The value of output depends upon the market at the time, or upon the effect of the tariff upon industry. My figures indicate the employment provided by industries.

The Minister for Works: The market would affect Victoria as well as other States.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have not the slightest objection to any member refuting the figures I have quoted if he can do so, but I object to anyone questioning their accuracy. If members wish to challenge the figures, it is for them to show where they are wrong. If all the manufacturing industries of Australia were put on a 44-hour week, there need be no reduction of employment, provided a sufficiently high tariff were imposed to make up for the difference in the cost of production. According to the New South Wales Hansard, those who bitterly opposed the bill were of opinion that provided the tariff was increased to give manufacturers more money for their goods so that they could sell them to the people of Australia at a higher price, they were quite agreeable to the introduction of the 44 hour week. There are certain industries that would have to bear the increased cost, and they are the industries that export their products to the markets of the world. The people represented by members on the Government side will not be the ones to pay for it; the people I represent—the agriculturists—will have to bear the burden of any increased cost of production. In my time I have worked just as hard as any other member of this House, and has not done me any harm. Yet some people would have us believe that hard work is harmful. The people I represent, who have to export their wheat, wool, fruit and other produce to the markets of the world, would

be the ones who would have to pay the increased cost of production. Over 94 per cent. of the exports from Australia are primary products, and a little over 5 per cent. represent manufactured articles. We cannot manufacture articles for export owing to the high cost of production in Australia. We are continually importing more and more manufactured goods. In the last four years we have nearly doubled our importations of steel goods. If we were a self-contained country and could build up our population so that the whole of our production were consumed in Australia, we would get a greater price for our products and would not be affected, but while we have to export our products to the markets of the world, only the people I represent would pay for it.

Mr. Panton: That is why wheat is exported at £12 10s. a ton and we are paying £15 a ton here.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have a report of a statement by the Minister for Agriculture in New South Wales, Mr. Dunn, made just prior to the latest election there. I must admit that the Minister for Works has rather taken the wind out of my sails by tabling his amendments. However, Mr. Dunn was reported in the "Daily Telegraph" of the 21st August last as follows:—

Nobody suggests such a thing as forty-four hours in a farming district; no award of even forty-eight hours has even been made for rural labour. It was necessary to work sixty and seventy hours a week in harvest time.

Then he proceeded to talk about calling a conference. There it was never contemplated to bring the agriculturists under the 44-hour week. I can quite understand Mr. Dunn's point of view and I quite agree with him. If there is to be any increase in the cost of production, the agriculturist would have to work longer hours in order to pay for it. The Minister for Works smiles. If he can tell me who else would pay for it, I shall be pleased.

The Minister for Works: I know who has done all the paying up to date. We cannot ride in motor cars.

Mr. LINDSAY: I was not enabled to ride in a motor car by working 44 hours a week.

The Minister for Works: I have worked longer hours than ever you did.

Mr. LINDSAY: Then the Minister should be in as good a position to-day as I am. The Minister talks about work. No man has been successful on the land in Western Australia

unless he has worked a great deal more than 44 hours a week. If I have anything to-day, it is because I worked like a slave and lived like a nigger.

The Minister for Works: I have worked longer hours than you and I have not a motor car.

Mr. LINDSAY: I have worked long hours and have capitalised my energy and exercised thrift. What I made, I put back into my land.

The Minister for Works: You got other men to work long hours for you. That is how you did it.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Minister makes an assertion which he cannot prove.

The Minister for Works: An assertion which I know to be right.

Mr. LINDSAY: He does not know it to be right. I ask that the remark be withdrawn. The Minister says that I made my money by working men long hours, and that he knows the statement to be right.

The Minister for Works: I said the hon. member had got men to work long hours. I did not say that was how he had made his money.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the member for Toodyay insist on a withdrawal?

The Minister for Works: I withdraw.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am sorry the Minister has not included the agricultural industry within the scope of the Bill. If the rest of the people are entitled to work only 44 hours, so are the agriculturists. I speak from practical experience. The 44 hours system would mean that there would be so much less wealth produced and so much less wealth to go round in Australia as a whole. Then either the standard of living would have to be reduced or there would be fewer people employed, and we would have emigration instead of immigration. My opinion is that some members opposite do not agree with the Bill. I have here a cutting from the New South Wales "Hansard" giving an extract from a speech by Mr. Gosling—

Unless we introduce the forty-four hours Bill this session, the Labour Party will be brought into ridicule. The fight during the last elections was on the shorter working week. We stand here pledged to introduce it, and I am one of those who believe that unless the forty-four hour week is introduced this session it will wreck the Labour Party. I would

go further—and I am thinking of what I am saying—and say, even if you can prove to me that the forty-four hour week is economically unsound, the pledge we made on the platform must still be honoured. It was made without the slightest qualification, and there was no dissimulation.

That is the policy of the Labour Party. The man tells the people of Australia that no matter how unsound economically the 44-hour week may be, he would still introduce it. If we could put a ring fence around Australia, the 44-hours would be all right. Now I will give a quotation from the other side, to show the trend of the debate. Mr. Scott Fell said—

If the forty-four hour week is introduced, a higher tariff will be necessary. That is the only way of getting over the difficulty. If you introduce forty-four hours in this State, it should be followed by a heavy increase in the tariff, though I question very much whether the Federal Parliament would pass it.

Then, on this side, there is Mr. Anderson, who is reported as saying—

I would willingly support the forty-four hour week if all the other States came into line, because we could then protect ourselves against competition from the outside world. Inside the Commonwealth there can be no tariff, and our industries will be placed at a most unfair disadvantage.

Mr. Davy: If we attempted to protect ourselves against all competition from the outside world, we would be living on grasshoppers.

Mr. LINDSAY: If we kept out all imports, the cost of production would be continually rising, because manufacturers within Australia would raise their prices. We have to send a large quantity of products out of Australia every year to pay interest on our loans. Very little of our export comes back in money: what is not used to pay interest is used to pay for imports. If we stop imports we shall not need to export so much, but we shall still have to export in order to pay our interest. The primary producers having to buy in the dearest market, will still have to sell their products in competition with the world. Is it not time to call a halt in such a policy, having regard to our huge undeveloped territory? The people who propose to go out pioneering in the backblocks should be made aware of the position, should be told plainly that they will not be able to make a living. To convey an idea of the exports of Western Australia

I will quote the figures for the years 1920 to 1923—

Year.	Agricultural.	Pastoral.	Dairy, Poultry, and Bee Farming.	Forestry and Fisheries.
	£	£	£	£
1920 ...	8,732,984	4,379,849	1,032,507	1,850,270
1921 ...	6,926,532	3,886,199	1,132,257	1,937,153
1922 ...	6,435,948	5,117,314	1,174,351	2,119,968
1923 ...	7,537,964	6,275,049	1,241,422	2,256,237

  

Year.	Mining.	Manufacturing.	Total.
	£	£	£
1920 ...	3,259,411	3,721,639	22,976,660
1921 ...	2,880,169	3,698,923	20,461,233
1922 ...	2,801,628	4,103,526	21,813,233
1923 ...	2,657,950	4,720,637	24,689,259

Every one of the primary industries must suffer by any increase of the Tariff. Thus the producers of the £20,000,000 out of the £24,000,000 will suffer, and not the producers of the £4,000,000. The burden on us will be heavy. We import many manufactured articles from the Eastern States, and the increased cost of them will be passed on to the primary producer. I realise that it is waste of time to deal with the matter further. Nothing that I say will influence a vote in this House.

Mr. Davy: You are informing the public, though.

Mr. LINDSAY: I will not stand up in Parliament like that New South Wales Labour member and say I am going to support a principle though I know it to be economically unsound. I will not stand up here and say a 44-hour week is right unless I am able to prove it. I have attempted to make my case in a short way, and I hope the effect will be at least to encourage other members to give a bit of a kick.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.26]: This noble effort of the Minister for Works to open up the wide spaces of Australia is certainly deserving of the commendation of the House. When he sets out to limit the hours to be worked in the agricultural calling, we must credit him with being actuated by worthy motives. However, his methods prove a lamentable ignorance of farming conditions. The Minister laughs.

The Minister for Works: Talk of ignorance coming from that source!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Throughout the country districts the people are laughing at the Minister. When the Bill was introduced, one of the first questions I had put to me in my electorate was, "Who is responsible for the Bill?" I replied that the Minister for Works was responsible. Then I was asked, "Is he responsible for the dam fool clause to fix our hours at eight hours a day? Does he understand farming conditions? Does he realise that in harvest time there are days when we cannot start our harvester until perhaps 11 or 12 o'clock, or even not until after lunch, and that on other days atmospheric conditions enable us to start work very early in the morning and keep on until late at night? Is he aware that this is the season when we must work even 24 hours a day, if necessary, for fear the clerk of the weather should send along a storm that will spoil all our efforts of 12 months? We must get our crops in as quickly as ever we can." I realise that in some callings, particularly specialised callings where a man becomes expert in a certain set of motions and goes through them innumerable times in the course of a working day, there is a certain point beyond which his energies cannot be exercised to the fullest extent, and that after a certain period the quality of his work must fall off. The application of this Bill reminds me of a debate I heard in St. James's Hall, London, between H. M. Hyndman, the socialist, and Charles Bradlaugh, on the question of the 8-hours day.

Mr. Wilson: What age were you then?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Not very old. I heard the debate.

Mr. Wilson: How old were you?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Perhaps 17 or 18 years of age. Mr. Bradlaugh was against the application of the 8-hour day to all trades. He gave, as an extreme case, that of a young lady working in a fancy goods shop and simply handing out a few light articles. Her work, he urged, could not be compared with that of a man in a laborious occupation. Charles Bradlaugh took another extreme case—that of a man working in a quicksilver mine, where only a very limited number of hours, I think two or three, could be worked out of the 24 with any degree of safety. I believe the Minister for Works has some land in the country. The other day I was asked if the

Minister was going on to that land, because, if he was, his 44-hours racket would not operate there very long or he would have to get off the land.

Mr. Marshall: You are putting up a really good case.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am flattered to hear such a remark from a know-all gentleman like the hon. member. In regard to this particular clause, I should like to repeat what was said to me by a farmer who is well known to the Minister for Works. This farmer said that if the 44-hours provision were brought into operation, it would be absolutely impossible for him to carry on operations. He would have to resort to keeping sheep only, and reduce the number of his employees by half.

The Minister for Works interjected.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is no use the Minister for Works interjecting because I know what I am talking about. If the Minister thinks that he is going to increase employment by reducing hours, he is very much mistaken. I have been told that I am flogging a dead horse. I shall flog it still further, and will give it a final kick in the hope of defeating the proposal of the Minister for Works. I do not wish the Minister to be in any doubt as to where I stand. I mention this because I thought he might be in doubt. The member for Toodyay has quoted certain figures which will give members opposite something to think about. Having expressed my own views, I have nothing further to add.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.34]: I believe in eight hours, but it is my intention to vote against the Minister's proposal, for the reason that I think it is dangerous. It is dangerous in this respect, that it is proposed to take away from the Arbitration Court certain of its powers. Only the other day the Minister for Works became very annoyed with a member of another place because that member had succeeded in carrying an amendment to the Arbitration Bill that the award of the court should be laid on the Table of both Houses of Parliament in the manner that is done with regulations. There may be a distinction, but there is little difference in what was there proposed and what is suggested should be done by the Bill we are now discussing. I am pleased to know, at any rate, that if the Bill should become law, the proposal will be spread over

5½ days. For many years past I have been an advocate of eight hours, and I believe that that period is quite long enough for a working day. If the Minister's proposal should be made universal, I want to know whether he has taken into consideration how our industries will stand in comparison with those in the Eastern States where 44 hours are not in vogue. The Minister should know well enough that, owing to our isolation and our scarcity of population, we are at a great disadvantage as it is. What will be our position if we introduce 44 hours and our competitors in the Eastern States continue to work 48 hours? Our production will be lessened and the workers will not gain any benefit. The Minister is aware that we depend largely upon primary production. I am glad to see that the Minister proposes to amend the Bill to exclude certain workers engaged in primary production, and therefore, unlike Mr. Griffiths, I will not flog a dead horse. It is sufficient for me to say that it is not in the best interests of Western Australia that Parliament should step in and declare that it will lay down a mandate to the Arbitration Court that it must provide for a 44-hour week. What would be the position if, after the next general election, we, in the event of our being on the other side of the House, introduced legislation and declared to the workers in different industries that they would have to return to the 48-hour week, no matter what the Arbitration Court award might be.

The Minister for Works: So long as you say that on the hustings, it will be all right.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Members opposite did not say on the platform that they were going to upset awards of the Arbitration Court in this manner. The proposal was not made much of in the policy speech that was delivered during the last election period. The matter was only mentioned when questions were asked of candidates.

The Minister for Works: It was stated distinctly in the Premier's policy speech.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The matter was not referred to by everyone on the hustings.

Mr. Panton: It was a plank of the platform when you were elected a Labourite.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Have hon. members opposite always endeavoured to carry into effect planks of their platform? The member for Menzies (Mr. Panton) was at one time a member of another place, and one of the first planks in the Labour Party's plat-

form at that time was the abolition of that Chamber. Was a motion ever carried in this House in favour of the abolition of the Legislative Council? I say that the passing of the Bill we are now considering will have the effect of creating chaos in industry. And if, after the next general election, the party on this side of the House should again be returned to power, and we declare to the workers that they must go back to 48 hours or 52 hours per week, what will be the result? There will be industrial unrest throughout the country. Once we interfere with an award of the Arbitration Court, we show that we are not sincere. On the hustings members opposite declared that they believed in arbitration and not in direct action. Yet now they propose to interfere with awards of the court. Before the House agrees to the Bill, I trust members will consider the question thoroughly. If the Bill is passed, it will come back to us as a two-edged sword and we shall all be sorry.

**MR. BROWN** (Pingelly) [8.40]: I compliment the Minister on the amendments he proposes to introduce in Committee and because of those amendments I do not intend to flog a dead horse. I wish to speak in a general way about the 44-hours policy. I do not know—of course it is only my humble opinion—that we are at the present time in a position to introduce 44 hours. Take our trading concerns. Most of them are conducted by the Government, who are interested in the welfare of the people. At the same time, we are in competition with private concerns. We had a little discussion the other evening about the Implement Works, which are manufacturing machinery that has to be sold in competition with implements made by factories in the Eastern States, and if it is found that with the increased cost of production it will be impossible to compete with the Eastern States firms, a lot of harm must result. It will be impossible for the country to continue to support a losing proposition. Take the railways. They are up against competition from motor vehicles. On the railways 44 hours have been introduced, and that reduction of the working time will mean less work all round. An engine can only run at a certain speed, and it can only travel a certain distance in a specified number of hours. This must mean a reduction of work and that reduction must lead to an increase in the

freights. Another aspect of the question is the working of overtime. During the busy periods of the year engine-drivers, having completed their 44 hours, must of necessity leave a good deal of work undone. There is congestion on the railways and overtime must be worked. Having finished their 44 hours, the employees start on overtime, and that is where the shoe will pinch.

**Mr. Sleeman**: You looked at it differently when you were in the shearers' strike.

**Mr. BROWN**: I am looking at the position as one who has a stake in the country and who has made his home here. I want to see prosperity brought about, but if we introduce legislation that will decrease the hours of labour and increase the cost of production, prosperity will not follow. How will it be possible for us to compete with the Eastern States? We know, of course, that certain industries will pass on the cost. In connection with the construction of a house, a contractor takes into consideration the cost of material and the cost of labour, and submits a tender accordingly. The man who is having the house built will have the added cost passed on to him, and he will have to pay. The contractor will not lose anything. Say a man is engaged in running a small industry, and employs 10 men in the factory. How is he going to pass on the increased costs and compete with bigger establishments? He will not be in the position to do so, and he will be forced to close down. That is not desirable. If it is going to be universal throughout Australia, we must make the best of it, and cut our coat according to our cloth. If it is not made universal, a little State like ours must suffer. The Minister has omitted reference to domestic servants. I notice this is to be left to the discretion of the court. There is no harm in that. If evidence can be produced to show that domestic servants are working too hard, and it is left to the court to determine how many hours they should work, I see nothing wrong in that. Domestic servants do their work differently from men. Most of the work is done early in the morning or late at night. They are washing up the dishes while the men are sitting down to smoke. They also work two or three hours, and then seem to have two or three hours off.

**Mr. Lutey**: It is perpetual motion.

**Mr. BROWN**: Some of our tramway employees work too long. I have often travelled on the tram and seen two men in con-

trol of it, and two hours later have travelled on the same tram and seen two others. When, however, I have again travelled on that tram, the first two men have come back. It seems that they have two hours on and two hours off all through the 24 hours. They are not given the rest they should get. It would be better that they should work a certain number of hours, and have the rest of the day off.

Mr. Panton: That is why they want the 44 hours.

Mr. BROWN: If this will make the conditions for those men a little better, it will do a certain amount of good. I doubt if we can stand the 44-hour principle in this State. At harvest time a farmer must take his crop off as quickly as possible, because of possible fires and thunderstorms. He may go out with his team at seven in the morning, and by noon he will have worked five hours. If he does only his eight hours, he will be finished by the middle of the afternoon. It is impossible for a farmer to get two shifts of farm hands. He is obliged to get his crop off as quickly as possible.

The Minister for Works: That was never suggested.

Mr. BROWN: I am glad to hear this will not apply. It is a good thing the employees are going to work the 5½ days. Some would like to work out the week in five days. Probably they would be looking for another job on the sixth day. Any able-bodied man ought to be able to work 48 hours. Probably on piecework a man would work 12 hours. There is a lot of difference between day work and piecework, for the man on piecework is being paid for what he does. Even in this House we work more than eight hours, if the Government think we are not getting along fast enough. We have worked for 12 hours instead of eight.

Mr. North: In that case, the longer the hours the less the production.

Mr. Davy: The question is, what is work?

Mr. BROWN: Sometimes it is a case of the more we talk the less we do. If we can better the conditions of the working classes, and the country and the industries will stand it, I should like to see it done. I question whether Western Australia can stand up against her competitors under the 44-hour principle. I do not think many people are grumbling against the present conditions. Our trading concerns are already up against

it. We have to pass on the cost. If the consumers cannot pay for a commodity when the cost has been passed on, they will have to look for a cheaper market. Unfortunately we have nothing to do with the Tariff. That is under the control of the Commonwealth Government. That Government might reduce the Tariff, and then we would be up against it straight away. We must take into consideration the conditions we are working under.

Mr. Marshall: If we increased the number of our workers would we be any better off?

Mr. BROWN: I do not know if we could put on any greater number of men. I have read the evidence taken before the Prices Commission. This shows that bootmakers are out of work. It is impossible to get work in our factories.

Mr. Panton: You wear your boots for too long a time.

Mr. BROWN: I do not know whether they are imported from the other States or not.

Mr. Panton: They are made too well in this State. They last too long.

Mr. Davy: They complain that the private man has taken to mending his own boots.

Mr. BROWN: Necessity has compelled private individuals to sole and heel their own boots and those of their children. It costs about 6s. 6d. to sole and heel a pair of boots. I used to pay 7s. 6d. for a new pair of boots at one time, and now I have to pay 6s. 6d. to get them repaired. It is said that even this does not pay. The boot people also claim that it does not pay to mend ladies' pumps. The men have only to do a little sewing, but they say they are working at a loss. I cannot understand it. We have boot factories and tanneries here and other concerns that are trying to get a footing. We do not want to restrict this enterprise, but to assist it to flourish. The Government should see that this is done. If our enterprises flourish, the Government will be assisted indirectly by reason of our having a more prosperous country. Anything I can do for the betterment of the worker I am ready to do. If we can make the lot of the working classes more contented so that they may have their own homes and become prosperous, it will all be to the advantage of the State, but I do not know that the 44 hours would be beneficial to Western Australia.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan [8.55]: I regret the introduction of this Bill. It is wrong in principle. It is not so much a question whether the hours shall be 44 or 40, or 52 or 60. It is a question that should properly be decided by the Arbitration Court. Any attempt to limit the powers of the court in this direction would be unwise.

**Mr. Sleeman:** You agree with the principle but think the court should apply it.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** The Labour Party worked hard to establish arbitration, but this Bill strikes at the root of the principle of arbitration. One of these principles is being assailed by this Bill.

**Mr. Sleeman:** Have not judges of arbitration courts said differently from that?

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I know that so far as many industries are concerned, this is no innovation. In some industries less than 44 hours are worked, and as few as 40 and 42.

**Mr. Panton:** What is worked in the printing trade?

**Mr. SAMPSON:** From the health point of view it is possible such hours are desirable, but that is a matter that should be left to the court after the hearing of evidence concerning the conditions applicable to the particular industry. I am glad to know that the 44 hours are to be worked in five and a-half days. I doubt if the Minister expects the Bill to become law. If so, he must acknowledge that he is possessed of a good deal of optimism.

**Mr. Davy:** It is only propaganda by legislation.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. SAMPSON:** There are in certain callings circumstances which preclude the working of long hours except at the risk of health. Here again the same argument obtains. It is a question for the Arbitration Court to decide. In many industries much outside work is done. Work is often easier when done out of doors. The air is purer, and there is not the same call upon the physique. I am glad to see the Minister's amendments on the Notice Paper, which will materially affect the Bill. The fact that these amendments have been tabled indicates a tardy acknowledgment of the difficulties with which those who are engaged in primary production have to contend. At present there are many awards in existence. Where an award exists providing for a week of 48 hours or some other period

I shall be glad to know what effect the passing of this Bill will have. Perhaps the Minister will explain that when replying. In such cases the passing of a Bill limiting hours of employment will produce remarkable results. Unquestionably the cost of living must be increased if the Bill be agreed to. The quantity of work done or of goods produced must be reduced because of the fewer hours worked. It is claimed that it is possible to produce in 44 hours the same as in 48 hours or more. Not many people, however, are found to agree with that contention. Machinery enters into the question of production in many instances and the speed of the machine determines the output. In America where, in all probability, the wages are the highest in the world, the output is the criterion by which the wages are determined. Personally I would prefer to be on piece work rather than on time.

**Mr. Hughes:** Your income would suffer if you were put on piece work.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I do not know that. The hon. member cannot complain about his piece work rate. I question whether the hon. member would not suffer more because of the quality of it for that counts also.

**Mr. Hughes:** Your income comes from the quality of the work of your employees.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** Everyone realises that it is not the function of Parliament to consider this question at all. It would be a bad thing if such a question were left to the legislature. It would possibly lead to one party offering fewer hours for the purpose of influencing public opinion, and the final result would be that in an effort to hold its own in production and industry generally, Western Australia would be placed in a difficult position, unable to compete with other producing nations, and the people would therefore be unable to enjoy the degree of comfort they now possess. The fact that in special instances the hours of employment may be considerably less than in others is already acknowledged and provided for. But it is not the function of Parliament to deal with that. If it were desirable to mention any special class of worker, reference might be made to the nurses whose hours are so scandalously long. So far as I am aware, there is no intention to introduce legislation to shorten those hours. But if an amount is placed



on the Estimates to compensate in that regard, none will be found more willing to support it than I shall be. As the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) pointed out, unless the hours are universal, Western Australia will suffer in the world's market.

Mr. Marshall: We are a long way behind many other countries now.

Mr. SAMPSON: It will be hopeless for us to attempt to compete. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) has made an assertion, but has advanced no proof. I hesitate to accept his statement.

Mr. Marshall: I can furnish you with the proof, but not with the intelligence to understand it.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is desirable that we shall conform to the best conditions operating in other parts of the world, always remembering that only in accordance with the fertility of the soil and the wealth to be won from the country can we improve those conditions. This, however, is not a question for Parliament to determine, but for the Arbitration Court, the duties of which, I trust, we will not usurp.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.7]: Everyone will admit that a few decades ago the lot of the working man was not what it should have been. With the advancement of education and other considerations, the position of the worker has been greatly improved and to-day it is considerably better than it was 20 or 30 years ago. The Minister for Works has been indeed a doughty champion for the betterment of the conditions of the workers of Western Australia. The work he has done for them has been laudable, but the Minister should realise that there is such a thing as the inevitability of gradualness. Everything must develop gradually. The question therefore arises as to whether he is not rushing matters a little too much by introducing the Bill.

Mr. Marshall: You must confess that we are rushing behind many others.

Mr. Davy: Yes, rushing in where angels fear to tread.

Mr. ANGELO: We are asked to limit the hours to be worked in industries with the exception of one or two that the Minister has exempted. Can all the other industries be carried on in competition with those in other parts of the world?

Mr. Davy: Even those exemptions were an afterthought.

Mr. ANGELO: The Minister has admitted that he was wrong in his first proposal and that difficulties arise regarding some industries. In some cases the work is more laborious than in others, in some more nerve-racking and more exacting. He stated that under certain conditions, certain industries could not be carried on with a 44-hour week. That fact is indicated by his proposal to amend his own Bill. However, that is a step in the right direction and I think he will have to admit that in all industries the same conditions should not and cannot apply. In another Bill he has proposed that the determination of the basic wage, which is one of the two important questions to be dealt with, shall be left to the Arbitration Court. Why not leave the question of hours to the court as well? If the basic wage is good enough to be left to the Arbitration Court, surely the fixing of hours should also be left to that tribunal. I hope that the Minister will realise, in his laudable desire to continue to improve the conditions of the working class, that he has gone a little too far in asking more than the State can afford.

MR. PANTON (Menzies) [9.10]: The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) suggested that I claimed it was no use talking, but he should have gone on to say that I added it was no use trying to convince him. It was not my intention to speak on the Bill because I realised the futility of trying to convert members on the Opposition side of the House to our way of thinking. One or two points have been raised to which I would like to reply. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) and the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) seemed to feature the fact that it was for the Arbitration Court and not for Parliament to decide the question of hours. If I know anything about the Arbitration Court and the operations of the Arbitration Act, I know that it is not the business of the court to deal with matters others than those referred to it. I have had a long experience in connection with arbitration matters, and I have heard various presidents state from the bench that the question of hours should be determined by the legislature.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Yes, time after time.

Mr. PANTON: As a matter of fact, the workers' representative on the Arbitration Court bench has told them that it is useless to go to the Arbitration Court for a lesser number of hours than 48. He has told them that if they desire to get less than 48 hours they must get it from the legislature. The workers realise that. They have listened to their Arbitration Court representative and as a result, at the last election they sent into power a party pledged to the 44-hour week. That is why this measure is before the House. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) waxed enthusiastic about the Labour Party bringing down such a Bill. I can remember the time when the same hon. member stood as a Labour candidate and one can imagine how eloquently he favoured a 44-hour week when he was among the timber workers.

Mr. Davy: Why has the court turned down the application for a reduction of the 48-hour week?

Mr. PANTON: It is difficult to say. The fact remains that the court has turned down such applications, although I claim unhesitatingly that the case put before the State court in support of a reduced working week was such that would have found favour elsewhere.

Mr. Davy: Do you suggest there was something wrong with the court?

Mr. PANTON: I am prepared to say that the presidents of the Arbitration Court honestly believed it to be the function of the Government to say what hours should be worked.

Mr. Davy: Then why does the court fix any hours at all?

Mr. PANTON: Because it is the function of the court to decide the matters referred to the court. Under our existing system the workers apply to the court for less than 48 hours and the employers apply to the court for 48 hours or more. Therefore the question is submitted to the court and it is for the court to determine the issue. If Parliament determines that 44 hours shall constitute the working week for various industries, that question will not be submitted to the court. The position is the same as when a number of unionists sit around a table with the employers and they decide that the 44-hour week shall apply to their industry, as was done in connection with the building trades. They decide on a 44-hour week but are unable to come to any decision as to wages. That question is then

submitted to the court. The court does not say that because it is dealing with the wages that it must deal with the hours also. That question has been settled by the representatives of the parties. So, too, will it be in respect of the Bill; the court will still settle all matters submitted to it for settlement. It is mere camouflage to say that the Bill is undermining the functions of the court. It might just as well be said that every conference to settle an argument is usurping the functions of the court. The court is there only to settle matters placed before it. If this question of hours be settled by the Legislature, the Arbitration Court will not be called upon to touch that question.

Mr. Davy: Why not wipe out the Arbitration Court?

Mr. PANTON: Because I am an advocate of arbitration for the settlement of industrial disputes. This question of hours is not new. In 1922 the Factories and Shops Bill was brought down by the present Leader of the Opposition. In that measure the 44-hour week was provided for women workers. Hearing some members, one would think that if this Bill before us were to become law it would seriously affect the industries of the State. In point of truth, there are not many employees still working 48 hours; by far the great majority of them are working 44 hours. Just here I want to pay a tribute to the employers who come under the Factories and Shops Act. When that Act went through, the shopkeepers did not wait for the new agreement to be issued under it, but put their women workers on the 44-hour week straightway. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) and the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) both said that for the more laborious avocations perhaps the 44-hour week would be sufficient. Had they given any consideration to the point, they would have seen that in actual practice the lighter the work the fewer the hours, while the heavier the work the longer the hours, and the poorer the pay. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) declared that the 44-hour week would have a prejudicial effect on interstate competition. But recently I have read a lot on interstate competition, and I find that it is not affected by the number of hours worked. What it is affected by is the over-production in the Eastern States and the consequent necessity for export from those States. That is one important factor. Another is that the people of this State pre-

fer the imported article if they can get it at a lower price than the locally made article.

Mr. Sampson: Why should we not be able to produce at the same price as the Eastern States?

Mr. PANTON: Because most of our factories, being young, are still struggling for want of capital, whereas the factories in the Eastern States, being well established, have more plant and more capital than our factories.

Mr. Sampson: And you say that the best way to compete with them is to reduce hours?

Mr. PANTON: No. I say that we should instil a little more patriotism into our people, and get them to demand the local goods. There would then be no reason why we should not have the 44-hour week. Some members may find it hard to believe that our factories are subjected to unfair competition by the factories of the Eastern States. Only recently it has come under my notice that a boot manufacturer at Subiaco produced children's boots at a lower price than the imported article. Within a few days after he did that, 3,000 pairs of children's boots were landed in this State from Victoria, and put into the city shops at a reduction of 2s. 6d. per pair. That is what is ruining industry in this State, the fact that big businesses in the Eastern States are allowed to dump goods in Western Australia. The Labour Party was elected on the principle of the 44-hour week, the principle the Party stands for.

Mr. Lindsay: Right or wrong.

Mr. PANTON: Yes, right or wrong. At conference after conference the workers have adopted the 44-hour week and declared for a Government that would establish it.

Mr. Davy: Without qualification.

Mr. PANTON: Yes, without qualification if they can. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) put up the hypothetical case that in the event of the Opposition being returned to power at the next election and reintroducing the 48-hour week, it would cause a considerable amount of industrial unrest. I believe the hon. member is quite right. However, if members of the Opposition are prepared to go on the hustings at the next election and advocate a return to the 48-hour week, and if the workers are foolish enough to elect them, then the Government will be fully entitled to repeal

the 44-hour week and re-establish a week of 48 hours.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They did that once in New South Wales.

Mr. PANTON: Yes, and they will do it here if they get the chance. I do not see why they should create such a disturbance to-night about our introducing what we stand for.

Mr. Davy: We would leave it to the court.

Mr. PANTON: No, you would leave it to the Legislative Council, where it would be safer than with the court. The function of the court is to settle matters submitted to it for settlement. Many cases in which the question of hours is already settled go to the court, and the court in such cases does not touch the question of hours. So, too, if the Bill passes, the court will no longer interfere with the question of hours.

#### THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon.

A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [27]: During recent weeks certain people have taken unto themselves the role of school teacher towards me, and have administered several rebukes and letters of advice, and have pictured me as one who will not allow it's to be dotted or it's to be crossed. I have been told that once I make up my mind, whether it is right or wrong, there is no such thing as a compromise with me, and that so long as I remain in that frame of mind, whether it is right or wrong, there is progress can only be achieved by compromise. Now I find that when I bring down a Bill in which, as the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) puts it, I have devoted 21½ pages to a principle to which in a Bill last year I devoted only six lines—because I do that it is a weakening in me, showing that I am departing from a stand previously taken by me. Then when, realising that I have not a chance of getting all I want as was set out in the original Bill, I endeavour to meet those who consider it would mean hardship if I tried to go the whole hog, and I set out exemptions for the agricultural and pastoral industries, I am told it is an admission that the principle I stood out for is wrong. That indicates to me that any politician who attempts to secure reconciliation between the two opposing sides in politics is setting himself an impossible task.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: He will be misrepresented, no matter what he says or does.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It proves conclusively that there is dividing us a gulf impossible of bridging. The more one tries to meet one's political opponents, the more one is accused of being weak in his very fundamentals. All the talk about being so uncompromising and stubborn in the views one holds does not count for anything. It is really a matter of playing at the party political game. The first point taken by the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) and the Leader of the Opposition was that by doing this we would be usurping the functions of the court, and that I was illogical in asking Parliament to fix minimum hours, while declining to allow Parliament to fix the minimum wage. I cannot agree with that. Practically every president of an industrial tribunal throughout this continent has called upon Parliament to give a decision as to the basis on which working hours should be fixed. The very authority quoted by the member for West Perth has repeatedly asked Parliament to speak, and Parliament has remained silent. It has been put to me personally on the floor of our Arbitration Court on more than one occasion. I have been told, "Your right course is to go to Parliament. We look to Parliament to do that. We consider it is Parliament's function. Instead of the court funking its job, this Parliament will be funking its job if it refuses to deal with the matter. It has been asked to do it long enough and has declined to face the problem. In the fixing of a basic wage, I have set out the basis upon which the wage should be fixed. That is what the court asked for. The court did not ask Parliament to name the rate. It asked Parliament to say what it thought should be taken as the basis. Mr. Justice Higgins, in the work quoted by the member for West Perth, states there, as he has repeatedly stated in his public utterances, that Parliament should lay down the basis. He said, "If I am at fault in fixing it on the Harvester judgment, I ask Parliament to give me a lead as to the basis on which I should fix the basic wage."

Mr. Davy: There always has been a basis.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There has never been a basis on what a court could build. There was a faked statement about the average requirements of an average family living in an average civilised community.

Mr. Davy: All you have done is to stick in something about a five-roomed house.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have suggested as a basis a family of five in a five-roomed house, with clothes, food and requirements for that family. I have set that basis for a family's requirements just as this Bill has set a basis for the hours. As to interfering with the court, I have shown that the court has called upon Parliament to deal with this question. It is passing strange that the very men who accuse us of interfering with the functions of the court, and who object to the court exercising full discretion, are the very individuals who fought us here and who fight us in the country against making our arbitration laws effective. They now plead that we should trust the court. But when we wish to clothe the court with full power in order that it may have free play in all matters, and in order to remove the obstacles to approaching the court, the same forces oppose us inside and outside of Parliament. We have good reason to doubt the sincerity of those people. It is not merely a matter of referring the question to the court; it is a matter of having the courage to stand up and say what we think should be done. I deprecate the attitude adopted, particularly by members who claim to represent the agriculturists of the State, who persistently try to get the agriculturists to believe that their deadly enemies are the workers, and that they are carrying the workers on their backs. If that sort of stuff goes down and the opposite stand is taken by the industrial workers, and they are led to believe that their enemies are the agriculturists, it will be a poor lookout for the agriculturists.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Don't worry about that!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will be a bad thing for Western Australia if tactics of that kind are adopted.

Mr. Lindsay: Who said that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said the attitude of members on the crossbenches and of the Country Party as a whole, particularly outside this House, and the speech of the member for Toodyay to-night, indicate that they are leading the agriculturists to believe that the workers are their enemies, and that if they get the 44-hour week, the agriculturists will have to pay for it. Need I remind the House or the country for how much the agriculturists have to thank the industrial workers of the world? Need I recall the time when the farmers had to till their soil with a hoe, or when they had only

wooden ploughs drawn by oxen, and compare that with the advantages of all the complicated machinery they have to-day, when with one man they can do what 10, 20 or 30 men were required to do not so very long ago? The industrial worker has provided many inventions and all the benefit has gone to the man on the land. And yet, when the industrial worker asks for a little of the profit arising from his inventive genius, he is told that the very men who benefit from his inventions have to pay for it. I have listened in my time to a few discussions embodying crude economics, but never have I listened to anything more crude than the remarks of the member for Toodyay to-night. He should get his head a little below the surface, and should not run away with the idea that men who have made a life study of the position are likely to be influenced by the stuff he has uttered here.

Mr. Lindsay: If you did not have protection, it would not be possible.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Amongst the agriculturists throughout Australia, there is a wave of discussion on protection. I do not wish to enter upon the subject of fiscalism at this stage, or I might be led to say something about the remarks of the hon. member on that score.

Mr. Lutey: Mr. Bruce will make it all right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. All we are concerned to do is to keep faith with the people. The Labour Party went to the country pledged to a 44-hour week and stated that if returned they would institute it. We have no objection to members opposite going to the country and advocating a 60- or 80-hour week. So long as the people endorse it, they are entitled to put it into force. We have our mandate from the people to give effect to the platform on which we fought the election. So far as our administrative capacity goes, we have done that. By Christmas practically every industrial worker employed by the Government will be on the 44-hour week. Outside of that we can do nothing without this measure.

The Minister for Lands: And not a farmer has been neglected by the Government, though he is neglected by his representatives.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I thought I gave enough illustrations to justify the Bill, not on the authority of Labour men, but on the authority of professional

men appointed by the Imperial Government and by the American Government, of Supreme Court judges and scientists, not men brought up as we have been to fight for a crust. I quoted men who have grown up outside our atmosphere and who have produced documentary evidence based on tests to show that the contention that reduced hours lead to reduced output and increased cost of living is fundamentally wrong. After having given the evidence, however, no attempt has been made by any member to challenge it.

Mr. Lindsay: I quoted two from the other side.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member quoted speeches made by party politicians.

Mr. Lindsay: I quoted two judges.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member took extracts from a report of Judge Beeby, but his report recommended to the New South Wales Parliament the 44-hour week for all industries in that State. On his report the Parliament passed the 44-hour Act, and yet the member for Toodyay contends that he quoted authorities to show that the 44-hour week was unsound.

The Minister for Lands: He quoted only part of the report.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If one picks out certain sections and discards the context of a report, he can prove anything. I laid bare my authorities, men appointed by the Imperial Government when the Empire was at death grips with the enemy, when the whole life of the nation depended upon increased output, and when the authorities were at their wits' ends to know how to increase it. Experts were appointed to investigate the question. One man suggested that people should work longer hours. That suggestion proved valueless. I quoted the results of scientific investigations and those results have not been challenged.

Mr. Davy: But they did not recommend a 44-hour week.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They recommended 44 hours. I do not say that all industries should work 44 hours. I have made provision for certain exemptions, and I have no doubt there will be a number of men working fewer than 44 hours a week, just as there are at present, such as the

linotype operators and men engaged on similar unhealthy work. The Bill will permit the court to make exemptions. For the agricultural industry is provided not an eight-hour day but an 88-hour fortnight.

Mr. Lindsay: What is the difference? That is a 44-hour week.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The difference is that a man might work 12 hours in one day.

Mr. Lindsay: And have a spell the next day.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; if the weather was favourable, he might work 12 hours on one day and none on the following day.

Mr. Davy: Your original proposition was 44 hours a week.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: It was not.

Mr. Davy: Last year it was.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Certain conditions were set out on that occasion, and the hon. member knows that he dealt with only one clause, just as the member for Toodyay quoted one clause of Judge Beeby's report. The member for West Perth takes one provision of the Bill, discarding all the other provisions. In my opinion, the time is overripe for extending some consideration to the men who have accomplished, by their brains and skill and knowledge, inventions which during recent years have increased production fivefold and tenfold, and even a hundredfold, thus bringing about enormous diminution in the cost of production. It is not right that those men should continue to work the same hours as they were working before the inventions were introduced. It is indeed high time that they should have some of the benefit resulting from those inventions. Assuredly they should not be classed as enemies of our primary producers, and there is not the slightest ground for contending that the primary producers will have to pay for the reduction of hours. No falser economic doctrine has ever been preached: it could only originate from one who is utterly ignorant of economics. The men to whom this Bill refers work longer hours to-day, taking the three hundred odd working days of the year, than the average farmer works. In fact, they work both harder and longer than the average farmer. I repeat, it is more than high time that some relief should be given to those men.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	23
Noes	..	..	11

Majority for .. 12

AYES.	
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Clivedale	Mr. Millington
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munro
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Heron	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Troy
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mann
Mr. Barnard	Mr. North
Mr. Brown	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davy	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Denton	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Lindsay	(Teller.)

PAIRS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Mr. James Mitchell	Miss Holman
Mr. J. M. Smith	Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Lalham	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Maley	Mr. Withers

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Lutey in the Chair: the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Working hours and overtime:

Mr. DAVY: In this clause the Minister departs from his general principle. In introducing the Bill he used quotations from a judgment of Mr. Justice Higgins in the endeavour to show that the workers have been buying their Saturday half-holiday by working some portion of an hour extra on the other five days of the week. I presume that a 48-hours week was intended to be a genuine eight hours per day for six days per week. Then the worker, presumably because he wanted to do so, began to swap a little more work on the five days in order to get the Saturday half-holiday. Nobody grudges a person the Saturday half-holiday, but the Minister proposes to allow the worker to buy the Saturday morning as well

with a bit more to be worked on the other five days of the week. The Minister rather apologised for that proposal, and admitted that it was a bad thing. However, he has done it. In the comparatively near future the same process will probably be repeated: the worker having agreed to work  $8\frac{3}{4}$  hours on the five days of the week, it will become recognised that no work at all shall be done on Saturday; and then a similar plea will be put up, "How long is the worker to buy his Saturday morning half-holiday by working longer on five days a week?" By that time we shall have a few who will already have started to buy a Friday half-holiday by working longer on the other four days?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is progress.

Mr. DAVY: If the community's added productive power resulting from better methods and improved machinery is to be taken out in lessened hours, we are certainly not getting the full benefit of that added power.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Has not that been the history of the world up to date?

Mr. DAVY: If it has, it is wrong.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Has not modern machinery more than compensated for the loss through reduction of hours?

Mr. DAVY: Perhaps it has.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why not anticipate that in the future?

Mr. DAVY: The added benefit from improved machinery has been dissipated by a variety of methods. It has been partly dissipated by doing less work, and partly by all sorts of luxuries which were not enjoyed before.

The Minister for Lands: I do not agree with you as to less work. There is less hard work.

Mr. DAVY: In former times the seventh day of the week was regarded as the day of rest. It has long been the practice, however, for the majority of people not to work on Saturday afternoon. Formerly people used to walk to work; to-day they ride on trams and trains, and a number of men, instead of producing with the added efficiency of machinery, have gone on to running trams and trains, and also picture palaces and horse-racing establishments, and a thousand things of that sort. We would have been on sounder ground if the Minister had been consistent enough to say, "This

44-hour week shall consist of five days of eight hours and of four hours on Saturday morning."

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Then we would be penalising certain industries.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be struck out:—"Provided that for workers in the agricultural industry, the time to be worked within any period of a fortnight shall not exceed 88 hours, in lieu of the provision for other workers of 44 hours in a period of six consecutive days." The amendment is moved with the idea of excluding the pastoral and agricultural industries altogether from the Bill.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in the third proviso the following be struck out:—"mustercrs and drovers of stock, workers on farms engaged in feeding or attending to stock."

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That the following subclause be added:—"This Act does not apply to workers in the agricultural or pastoral industries."

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

Title:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in the Title the words "the payment for" be struck out.

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

Bill reported with amendments, including an amendment to the Title.

*House adjourned at 10 p.m.*