

# Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 26th September, 1928.

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

## QUESTION—CITY OF PERTH SUPER-ANNUATION FUND BILL.

The PRESIDENT: With reference to the question on the Notice Paper, Mr. Lovekin intimated, when giving notice of it, that he recognised that it is contrary to Standing Order 87, which requires that a question should refer to a public matter before the House, of which the member asked has charge, when the member is not a Minister. I, however, have no objection to acceding to the hon. member's request to facilitate what I am assured is the convenience of members generally, and therefore I had the question placed on the Notice Paper for a day that I was informed would enable it to be in order. It is not in order now, and perhaps Mr. Lovekin will either withdraw it, or ask it on a later day when it may be in order.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: You have stated the case quite correctly, Mr. President; but I understand that Mr. Franklin has no objection to answering the question. Perhaps, in those circumstances, you will allow him to give the information, which may be useful to the House. I could, of course, put the question under the Standing Orders if the Bill were here; and I had anticipated that the Bill would be here by this time. However, it is not here, and therefore, as you say, I am outside the Standing Orders. I understand, however, that Mr. Franklin is willing to supply the information, and in those circumstances perhaps you, Sir, will allow me to ask the question by leave of the House.

The PRESIDENT: If the House has no objection to the question being asked, and

provided Mr. Franklin is willing to answer it, I have no objection to the question being asked.

Leave granted.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN asked Hon. J. F. Franklin: 1, Will he lay on the Table a statement showing—(a) the ages, (b) occupations, and (c) the salaries or wages of employees of the Municipality of Perth who will participate in the proposed superannuation scheme? 2, At what age is it proposed that the superannuation payments will commence? 3, What contributions will the employees make towards the fund? 4, To what extent will such contributions be supplemented by the Municipality?

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I shall have no objection to answering the question as soon as the reply has been prepared. I am obtaining the information now, and will lay it on the Table if the House desires that that should be done.

## MOTION—COLLIE POWER SCHEME.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [4.39]: I move—

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

My object in moving the motion is to secure, as far as possible, the opinion of Parliament on one of the most important questions before the people of Western Australia. If hon. members, after discussing the motion, think fit to carry it, I shall take the opportunity, provided the Leader of the House will expedite the matter during the session, to send the motion on to another place, in order that that place may have an opportunity of either approving or disapproving of it. Thus the Government would be given an opportunity to learn the wishes of Parliament and act in accordance therewith. I approach the question to-day with much greater confidence than ever before, because of many happenings in regard to electricity and coal supplies which I am sure are realised and recognised by every member of the Chamber. There is no doubt whatever in my mind, and I believe there is none in the minds of hon. members, that this is the electric age. All countries throughout the world are vying

with one another in order to secure power cheaply for lighting purposes and other purposes as well, so as to give the people of their respective States all the possibilities which may be derived from this wonderful source of energy. In the United States of America, in Canada, England, and the various continental countries one sees that the greatest attention is being given to this important question. In the countries I have named, and also in Denmark, Germany and Italy, more particularly, every endeavour is being made to furnish cheap domestic power. My idea is that, although we have an electric power station at East Perth which is a credit to Western Australia, it will be possible for me to prove before closing that that station is not what this country needs to-day. During the course of my remarks I shall endeavour to prove that contention, and I hope that if hon. members think differently, they will express their views, so that the Government may be explicitly informed of the feelings of the respective Houses of Parliament on this subject. In my opinion Western Australia is lagging behind in the matter of electric power, and I desire that at least one section of the Legislature, the section of which we are members, should express in no uncertain voice the feelings that animate it. I am sure hon. members will give to this question the attention that it so thoroughly deserves. I am aware that numerous members have given much greater study to the question than I have, and I look to those hon. members to speak not only of what they have read and heard, but of what some of them have actually seen in the United States and Canada. I have not seen those countries, nor the great electric works existing there. If the hon. members I refer to will give the House their views, I am sure those views will be instructive and elevating. In 1920 I had the honour of moving in this Chamber a resolution of practically the same character as the present motion, though not so far-reaching. On that occasion the Leader of the Council, Mr. Colebatch, now Sir Hal Colebatch, gave great attention to the subject. Several hon. members expressed their sympathy with the motion, and gave me their support. But the end of the session drew near and the matter could not be fully thrashed out—I hope that will not happen on this occasion—and the then Leader of the House said that the Govern-

ment of the day, the Mitchell Government, would give earnest and serious consideration to the question. Upon his assuring me of that, I withdrew the motion. Again in November of 1921, the following year, I moved a much more comprehensive motion, asking for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the East Perth power station and also to determine the best means of generating electricity in the State of Western Australia; further, my motion suggested that the Commission should be asked to fix the site most suitable for the purpose of a generating plant. That was a much more comprehensive motion than I had moved previously, and it had much greater success. Hon. members gave the matter close attention, and determined then that the time had arrived when something of this character should be done. However, nothing was done, because, unfortunately for me, the end of the session came and the question was debated here in the early hours of the morning. Those who had anything to say against the motion were there on that occasion; and on a vote taken in a thin House it was defeated. So I again lost the opportunity of being able to say that this House, at least, recognised its responsibility in regard to this great question. I had been working for many years in the matter, to the best of my ability; I could see, and now see more clearly than ever, the necessity for something of this sort. Thereupon I got into closer communication with Mr. Scaddan, Minister for Railways in the Mitchell Government. I had a written controversy with that gentleman. From him I received a letter stating that if I reconsidered the matter 10 years hence, it would be ample time. That was in 1921. I did not agree with Mr. Scaddan's views, and fought the matter out with him as far as I could by correspondence. I am sure that what was troubling Mr. Scaddan at the time, and also troubling the Superintendent of the Electricity Supply Department was the fact that they had excellent circulating water for the scheme in the present position, but that there was a possibility of their not being able to secure circulating water from the Collier River. Having a full knowledge of the position in regard to the river, I could see no possibility of failure in that direction. In 1923 the Mitchell Government, realising the position that was

obtaining, recognising the huge amount of energy that could be supplied, considered that the best thing was to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the question of a power station for the South-West. The personnel of the Commission appointed was Messrs. Taylor, Williamson, Reading, King, Clark, Lumb, and A. A. Wilson, M.L.A. I have here the report of that Commission, which was laid on the Table during last session. If hon. members have not seen it, they are welcome to peruse this copy of mine. One outcome of the Commission was that the bogey raised by Mr. Scaddan and Mr. Taylor was set aside for all time. The report states that in the Minninup Pool, some 30 or 40 feet in depth, there are ample supplies of water for any electrical scheme, even to supply not only the immediate district but the whole of the State.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You mean the South-West of the State.

Hon. J. EWING: No, I do not.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But when you use the term "the whole of the State," you must mean only the South-West, including, say, Perth and Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. EWING: I mean that the circulating water would be sufficient to supply not only a power station for the South-West scheme, but one capable of dealing with a State-wide scheme. The Commission, in the course of their investigations and work, decided that there was sufficient circulating water for a power house in Collie designed to supply current throughout Western Australia.

Hon. H. Seddon: Would that supply of water be sufficient during the summer?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, that has been ascertained. So also it has been determined that at a point five or six miles south of the Minninup Pool the river could be raised by 2ft. or 3ft., and so made to supply more circulating water than would be required for a scheme covering the whole of the State.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And they could cool the circulating water, as is done in other places.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, but the depth of the Minninup Pool is so great that the water would be sufficiently cool. So, as I say, that bogey has been entirely set aside. This report, of course, deals primarily with the suggested power scheme for the South-West. We know what happened to that. The report contains a distinct recommenda-

tion for the construction of that scheme, not for the whole of Western Australia, but for an important portion of the South-West. If that scheme were to be carried, it was necessary that certain people should join in it, and that the coal mines should take all their power from the scheme, while the municipalities of Bunbury and Collie should do likewise.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And the mines could charge what they liked for the coal used.

Hon. J. EWING: No, the price of the coal was fixed at 12s. 6d. per ton. However, although that scheme was recommended to the Government, it has not been carried out. It is to the credit of the Leader of the Government that, realising the value of power and desiring to do all he could to increase the productive power of the State, he gave his consent to the bringing down of the Bill. The Bill was brought in at a very late stage in the session. We had a considerable debate on it. The Bill was in a fair way to being defeated when a vital clause was deleted. However, the Minister stuck to his guns, and eventually succeeded in having the Bill carried.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But Collie and Bunbury did not go on with the scheme.

Hon. J. EWING: That is so. Mr. Lovekin does not believe in any pettifogging scheme. I agree with him in that, and I hope he will give me his support for the present comprehensive motion. Mr. Miles raised the question of impounding the water. That had a considerable bearing on this House, and Mr. Miles was successful in carrying his motion, eliminating that provision from the Bill. However, the Minister recommitted the Bill, and eventually it was carried. Although nothing has been done since, the Bill is still on the statute-book. It relates to the South-West scheme entirely and does not touch the great question I am raising to-day. The reason for that is apparent: an agreement satisfactory to the Government could not be reached by the collieries, and so the Premier has taken up the position that he will not grant to any one section of the community what he cannot grant to another. Therefore the thing has fallen to the ground. The erection of the East Perth power station is well remembered by members, and so it is not necessary for me to speak at any length in respect to it, except to show what the capitalisation of that scheme is, what it means to Western Australia, and what we shall be up against in

the near future unless something be done in respect of it. Mr. Taylor has managed the station exceedingly well, but I do not remember that he has ever recommended the Government to supersede that scheme by one that would be worthy of the State. As showing the wonderful increase in the consumption of electricity during the past few years, let me quote these figures: In 1919 there were 13,000,000 units consumed; in 1920 it was 18,000,000; in 1921 it was 22,000,000; in 1922 it was 27,000,000; in 1923 it was 31,000,000; in 1924 it was 39,000,000; in 1925 it was 44,000,000; in 1926 it was 50,000,000; in 1927 it was 54,000,000, and the latest report shows that during the year just closed it rose to 61,000,000 units. Over the period quoted, the average annual increase has been 4,000,000 units, while in 1928 the units generated totalled 70,269,000. So members will realise, as has been realised in other countries, what gigantic strides have been made in the use of electricity. We have here an instance that members can see for themselves, and I am satisfied they will appreciate what is being done and so will see what is necessary to give the people what they require in the way of electricity.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What is the maximum capacity of the plant?

Hon. J. EWING: About 36 kilowatts.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You say they sold 61,000,000 units last year. How much could they have produced?

Hon. J. EWING: By adding sufficient plant, they could produce enough for the whole of the State.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Yes, but they would want more plant.

Hon. J. EWING: I am trying to prove that it would not be economical to do it. An effort is being made in that direction. I am opposed to it, not because I represent Collie, but because I am speaking to-day solely in the interests of the people of Western Australia. Let me turn to the capitalisation of the East Perth power station. In the annual report for 1928 it stood at £922,355. Another unit has been added, which will increase the capitalisation by over £300,000. I am not quite clear as to what is meant by the paragraph dealing with this point, but at all events this new unit increases the capitalisation either by £300,000 or by £500,000. So even taking the lower figure, the capitalisation has been increased to £1,222,000. That being so, it is a serious position. I hope

to show how very serious it is. To the credit of the East Perth power station it can be said that whereas the cost per unit generated in 1927 was .95d., in 1928 it fell to .93d., an improvement of .02d. per unit. The average selling price in 1927 was 9.972d. per unit, whereas in the report before me it is shown to have been reduced to 9.66d., or an improvement of .006d. per unit. These figures have to be quoted in decimal points, and members will realise that one decimal point may have a very serious bearing on the whole question. As showing how high a price has been charged for some of this electricity, I may say the Perth Tramways pay 1.25d. per unit. The manager of the Perth Tramways is also manager of the Electricity Department. In a way he is robbing Peter to pay Paul. He is charging the Perth Tramways 1.25d. and letting certain other consumers have their electricity at .966d. We come now to a very interesting point, one that has been debated fully in this House from time to time and has been the subject of a controversy between the Mayor of Perth and others. I allude to the position of the Perth City Council. We all know the history of this matter. When the Bill brought in by Mr. Scaddan, the then Premier, was passed, the department entered into an agreement for 50 years to supply the City Council with electricity at .75d. per unit. In consequence a heavy loss to the department has taken place on account of the price charged the Perth City Council for electricity. I am not taking any exception to it. The Perth City Council made a wonderful deal. Subsequently the Fremantle Municipal Council entered into an agreement to take electricity at .85d., a little higher than the price charged the Perth City Council. And for bulk supplies, which is most necessary for cheap production when people are building up industries and improving the position of the State, they have to pay 1.04d. per unit. That is a very high price as hon. members will see when I am able to place before them the position as it exists in other countries.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Tell us what it costs to produce.

Hon. J. EWING: It costs .93d. per cent.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And it is sold to the City Council at .75d.

Hon. J. EWING: I am not arguing that the East Perth Power station is not doing

excellent work, but if it is compared with the power stations in other countries, it will be found that East Perth is producing electricity cheaply, though not as cheaply as it might do. The aim I have in view in bringing this matter forward is to show that it is possible to produce current much cheaper per unit, and that by bringing about a reduction, an enormous advantage will be gained by the community generally.

Hon. G. W. Miles: At what price do you reckon it can be produced at Collie?

Hon. J. EWING: I will tell the hon. member that later. The great trouble in connection with the East Perth power station is the freight on the coal that is brought from Collie. No less than £63,000 worth of coal per annum is being conveyed to the East Perth power house. Those figures represent a tonnage of 104,000 on which quantity freight has to be paid at the rate of 12s. per ton. The increase in the coal consumption in the last five years at East Perth has been 92,000 tons. If all that coal has to be carried from Collie to East Perth, the cost has to be debited against the working of the power station and consequently there cannot be any hope of a reduction in the cost of current. The production last year was 70,000,000 units and this meant .216d. per unit to carry the coal from Collie. As I have already said, the current was produced at .93d. and the loss on freights was .216d., so that the production would have been about .714d. per unit if freight on coal had not been charged up. Against that there must be put the cost of transmitting power from Collie to Perth and also other charges in the event of electricity being generated at Collie. All those I have worked out at .18 per unit for loss in transmission of the power to Perth.

Hon. H. Seddon: How do you arrive at those figures?

Hon. J. EWING: I have them here in my calculations. I do not pretend to be a technical man, but I have a fair amount of commonsense. If my figures are not exactly right I hope hon. members will forgive me. I have worked out the cost of production at Collie at .78d. per unit, which is enormous when one considers what might happen. The saving in pounds, shillings, and pence would be in the region of £45,000 after allowing for the carriage of coal, transmission, etc. When Mr. Taylor was

in England, he attended the electrical conference and incidentally it may be mentioned that he did very good work there for Western Australia. He went into the question of pulverised coal and returned convinced of its great value. Not only Mr. Taylor, but others as eminent as he is, realise the enormous advantages to be derived from the use of pulverised coal and the saving that is going to be effected. I would like to read what I saw in this morning's newspaper in regard to power fuel—

London, Sept. 24.—Lord Reading presided at the Third World Power Conference on fuel, which opened in the Imperial Institute to-day in the presence of 1,500 delegates, representing 48 countries.

Sir Robert Horne, in his presidential address, said that coal was the potential saviour of every country, whether it was bituminous, anthracite, or lignite, where it involved the production of electricity, gas or chemicals. It also constituted the basis of industry in Britain and the Dominions, with the exception of Canada, which had vast water power, but the other Dominions, like Britain were dependent on coal. He denied the possibility of oil superseding coal, and said that most important developments were proceeding in low temperature carbonisation, hydrogenation, and pulverisation which, separately or together, were destined to revolutionise the use of coal. Germany was leading the world in the utilisation of brown coal.

I am fortunate indeed in having been able to read this to hon. members, especially when we remember that the present is an age when everybody is endeavouring to replace coal fuel with oil. When hon. members think of the improvements that are possible in connection with the production of electricity by using pulverised coal, they must realise that the reductions to follow will be greater even than I have said, and I have the greatest hope that if the scheme I am now advocating is carried out, it will be possible to sell current at .5d. per unit, or less than 1½d. per unit throughout the State. I have figures to prove what has been done in other countries as the result of using pulverised coal and it will be the same in Western Australia. With the research work that is going on, I am convinced that in the not distant future it will be possible to reduce the cost to the consumer to a minimum. As electrical machinery is improved and as people realise the importance of using current, what is happening in other countries must also happen in Western Australia. Last session at

my instigation the Chief Secretary laid on the Table of the House the file dealing with the negotiations carried on by the Government with regard to the South-West power scheme. In that file Mr. Taylor declared that when the consumption of electricity had increased to 40,000,000 units per annum, the time would then have arrived for going further into the matter and seeing whether electricity could not be generated at the source of the coal supply. Also, before several committees of which I had the honour to be a member, Mr. Taylor said over and over again that the ultimate result of his researches showed that although he could supply current from East Perth and supply it well, what he had to consider as an officer of the Government was the question of producing cheaper current by erecting a power house elsewhere, not necessarily at Collie.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Mr. Taylor says in his report that the present power plant will reach its limit in December, 1929.

Hon. J. EWING: The position is that the limit of 40,000,000 units was reached in 1924, and that since that time there has been erected another unit at a cost of between £300,000 and £400,000. If hon. members will look up the report of the Commissioner of Railways, they will see what Mr. Taylor has recommended that the Government should do. If anything is to be done in the State, it should be done properly; yet we have an officer of the Government now expressing an opinion diametrically opposed to that which he gave before select committees, and also to be found on the files. The time has arrived when power should be generated further away. This is what he reports to the Commissioner of Railways—

The load is increasing at such a rate that early consideration should be given to further extensions to the power station, and I would recommend duplicating the last boiler plant extension and installing a 12,500 k.w. turbo-generator: the boilers to be in operation by December, 1929, and the turbo-generator in June, 1930. I have already submitted a detailed report with recommendations, and I again strongly urge that early action be taken.

That, to my mind, is appalling, coming as it does from the manager of the system, after the opinions he expressed before. An extension such as he proposes can only be carried out at an expenditure of half a million of money.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Did you not say that Mr. Taylor had given evidence in favour of generating power elsewhere?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, after reaching an output of 40,000,000 units. At the present time the output is 70,000,000 units, and in his report to the Government he asks for authority to carry out extensions at East Perth, not in a few years' time, but immediately. I have no fault to find with Mr. Taylor, who is an able man, but I cannot help saying that he is not studying the best interests of Western Australia when he makes a recommendation such as that I have just read. Such a recommendation is not a credit to him. Neither does it reflect credit on the Commissioner of Railways.

Hon. A. Lovekin: If the plant were at Collie, he would be using slack coal.

Hon. J. EWING: Of course,

Member: What would it cost?

Hon. J. EWING: Perhaps a million of money would be all that would be required at the present time. In connection with the extra capitalisation proposed by Mr. Taylor, I wish to point out that if his scheme is carried out the capitalisation of the East Perth power house will be in the region of one and three-quarter millions of money. It must be recognised that that scheme has been provided for the purposes of the metropolitan area and the surrounding districts. Mr. Taylor cannot transmit current elsewhere unless he gets the permission of the Government, and I do not think he could carry out successfully any scheme by which he would try to send power back to Collie. That means to say that the people in the metropolitan area are deriving from the existing scheme, benefits that are not available to other portions of the community. I am not raising that point as an objection to the people of Perth securing those benefits. I do not wish to make the City Council pay more for their electricity supplies. My object is to produce current, under the scheme I advocate, at such a rate that the City Council will pay less. The existing agreement between the Government and the City Council provides that the Council shall pay the cost price provided it is not greater than .75d. If the Government were to adopt the scheme I am outlining, they should be able to reduce the price of current to .5d. per unit. If that were done the City Council would save as a result of the change-over. The

fact remains, however, that at the present time the people of the metropolitan area and the surrounding districts are served by a scheme that provides them with benefits that are denied to people living in other parts of Western Australia. I make no apology for speaking at length on this question, because it is an important one. I desire to point out what has happened in other parts of the world, not necessarily in Canada, in England or on the Continent, but in Australia as well. In 1917, the Victorian Government were so much alarmed at the tremendous increase in the consumption of electricity, that they appointed an advisory committee to consider the position. Victoria is particularly without black coal deposits. The Wonthaggi mines have been in operation for some little time, turning out black coal, but they do not seem to be in the running at all. The black coal used in Victoria comes principally from New South Wales.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is mostly brown coal in Victoria.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. At any rate, the Victorian Government appointed a Commission to consider the question of brown coal supplies within the State, and that body went thoroughly into the question. Within eight to nine months they reported to the Government that the time had arrived when an Electricity Commission should be formed. The members of that body were so grateful as the result of their investigation that they made it clear that, in their opinion, the time had arrived when someone should be placed in a responsible position and given power to evolve a scheme for the utilisation of the brown coal supplies. The Government took the matter in hand at once, and appointed an Electricity Commissioner. They were exceedingly fortunate in their choice, for they secured the services of Sir John Monash, known not only as a war hero, but as one of the greatest civil engineers that we have in the Commonwealth. Sir John Monash went straight ahead and he recommended the Government to erect a power house at Yallourn, about five miles from Morwell. A start was made in 1920 when the Government provided £1,890 as a preliminary vote. The power house was built mainly owing to the energy and ability of Sir John Monash, who displayed great foresight in his activities. As the result electricity is transmitted from

Yallourn to Melbourne, a distance of 110 miles, the bulk of it being transmitted at 11,000 volts, while the maximum is stepped up to 132,000 volts. I do not know if hon. members have had an opportunity to peruse the eighth annual report of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. If they have not, I can assure them that they will find much to enlighten them contained in that document. It will enable them to see what is being done in Victoria, and that will give them some idea of what could be done in Western Australia.

Hon. A. Lovekin: In Victoria they were a long way out in their estimates.

Hon. J. EWING: I will admit that.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Yes, by 200 per cent.

Hon. J. EWING: The scheme has cost a tremendous amount of money.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How much?

Hon. J. EWING: I will deal with that point later on. Irrespective of what it has cost, the fact remains that all Governments that have been in power have unhesitatingly provided the funds necessary when requested to do so by Sir John Monash. In consequence of that, Victoria is obtaining wonderful results to-day.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They have done well.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How much money did the Victorian Government have to find?

Hon. J. EWING: I will come to that point. Not only in Melbourne is the electricity available from the power house at Yallourn, but it is transmitted to other parts of the State as well, to the north, south, east and west. Not only is the power transmitted to all parts of the State, but it is made available at a greatly reduced price. As such a scheme proceeds and the electricity is more and more extensively used for domestic, industrial and farming purposes, it naturally becomes cheaper. It was a revelation to me to learn what was being done with electricity on the farms, not only in Victoria, but in Denmark, and in other countries of the world. In these days farmers milk cows, plough land, and feed stock by means of electricity.

Hon. J. Nicholson: They will soon be doing away with horses and tractors as well.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: They will substitute electricity for milk soon!

Hon. J. EWING: I will admit that the capitalisation of the scheme in Victoria has been very heavy. Starting in 1920 with a preliminary vote of £1,980, at the end of eight years, which brings the consideration of the scheme up to the time of the issuing of the report to which I have already referred, the capital involved had increased to £9,586,181. Since then the figure has been increased to £11,000,000 and I believe that it is contemplated the expenditure will reach £13,000,000 very soon.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: The cost of the briquetting scheme is included in that estimate.

Hon. J. EWING: I do not intend to weary hon. members regarding all the phases of the scheme, including briquetting. We may participate in such production in years to come, but we have not approximated that stage yet. It is true, however, that the cost of the briquetting scheme is included in the figures I have mentioned. Incidentally I might mention that the briquetting scheme has proved entirely satisfactory.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: And it is the most profitable part of the operation.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Can you tell us what it costs to produce electricity there?

Hon. J. EWING: I have not had time to go into all the details. On page 9 of the Victorian Electricity Commission's report, hon. members will see that they have fixed a standard electricity supply tariff for the metropolitan area. Current is distributed in various parts of Melbourne and to other centres throughout the State on specified conditions. When I quote figures from the report, hon. members will realise that they can verify my statements by a perusal of the official documents. For domestic purposes the current is supplied 1½d. per unit, and there is a block rate for power and heating under which people are charged 2d. per kilowatt hour up to a consumption of 500 kilowatt hours; on supplies exceeding 4,500 kilowatt hours, the charge is 1¼d. per kilowatt hour; for 20,000 kilowatt hours, .9d. and for the balance, .8d. There is also provided a maximum demand rate. That applies when the great factories are using the current and manufacturers and others are using it in bulk at various points throughout the city. Under the maximum demand rate, which is optional where consumption exceeds 5,000 kilowatt hours per

month on the average, the charge is .3d. per unit.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The scheme you advocate, and the position in Melbourne can surely not be regarded as comparable.

Hon. J. EWING: No.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You will get nowhere by such a comparison.

Hon. J. EWING: I will admit that, but I am pointing out these facts to show that current has been supplied in Victoria at .3d. per unit.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is the coal at Morwell as good as our Collie coal?

Hon. J. EWING: Collie coal is much better. Then again, in Victoria they have the restricted hour rate, which is optional where the consumption takes place, as a rule, at night time. During the hours between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. the next day, the rate for big blocks of current is .5d. per kilowatt hour. In that instance, the rate is not quite as low as in the other I have quoted, but it serves to demonstrate what is being done in Victoria. As Mr. Lovekin interjected, we cannot compare the populations of Perth and Melbourne. At the same time we have great hopes that the population of Western Australia will increase by leaps and bounds in the very near future. If we were to make a start with the scheme I advocate we will build it up as our population grows.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is merely a statement of common law. If you provide the facilities, you will get the consumption.

Hon. J. EWING: That is so. There is much in the report of the Victorian Electricity Commission that is of great interest, but I have no intention of going through its contents in detail. I have merely touched upon some of the salient features that seem to me to have some bearing on the motion I have tabled. If hon. members look through that report and compare the value of Morwell coal (with that of Collie coal, they will discover a considerable advantage in favour of our local product. There is as much as 65 per cent. moisture in Morwell coal. I admit that in Victoria that coal is mined at a very low price. It is mined at from 2s. 6d. to 3s. per ton in an open cut; the mining there is not carried on as is necessary at Collie, where the coal lives down.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What does Collie coal cost to mine?



Hon. J. EWING: About 12s. 6d. a ton for small coal.

Hon. A. Lovekin: For mining at Collie!

Hon. J. EWING: No, I think it is 7s. 6d. a ton for the class of coal used at East Perth power station, which is third grade. I am not quite sure about the figures; the price is either 7s. 6d. or 12s. 6d. per ton.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is that the selling cost or the mining cost?

Hon. J. EWING: That is the selling price at the pit's side for this class of coal.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But is that what it costs the company to mine, or is that the price at which they sell to the Government?

Hon. J. EWING: That is the price at which they sell to the Government for this class of coal. I am not engaged in the supplying of coal just now and I do not know the exact figures. I believe the price charged is 7s. 6d. for small duff coal or 12s. 6d.; I am not sure which it is.

The PRESIDENT: The time for considering motions has ceased.

Resolved: That motions be continued.

Hon. J. EWING: I thank members for their courtesy in allowing me to proceed.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is it a fact that the Collie miners work only 35 hours a week?

Hon. J. EWING: They work about seven hours a day.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And only five days a week?

Hon. J. EWING: On pay day they do not work at all. However, I do not wish to discuss that matter; in fact, I prefer to keep clear of questions of that kind.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We have to pay for it.

Hon. J. EWING: I am placing before the country a scheme in which I thoroughly believe. If I did not represent Collie, and if I had no interest in Collie, I would still be found advocating this scheme. In Victoria the advantages accruing from the large capital expenditure and the wonderful energy put into the Yallourn scheme have proved a boon to that State. When the scheme was first suggested Sir John Monash and others associated with him were severely criticised by the Melbourne "Age" and other newspapers, as well as by prominent men, but to-day the Commission is receiving credit for having done a wonderful work for Victoria, and I hope that a similar work will be done for Western Australia by the Collier Government. I am

sorry that Mr. Stewart is not in his place because he has a lot of information about Tasmania. In that State, however, there is a hydro-electric scheme supplying electricity at a rate as low as that in any part of Australia and probably in the world. Although Tasmania is a small State, the authorities have not hesitated to spend the necessary money and give encouragement to the generation of cheap electrical power for industrial purposes.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is a "white coal" scheme.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: Tasmania does not have to fall back on coal.

Hon. J. EWING: That is so. In New South Wales there are several power stations and the authorities are contemplating the installation of a hydro-electric scheme operated by the waters of the Snowy River. If that scheme is installed I believe the price of electricity in that State will be very low indeed. In New Zealand and Queensland the authorities are alive to the position and are doing everything possible to give the people what I hope will be provided for our people, namely, the cheapest power possible. America has often been referred to as the home of electricity. Operations in that country are being carried further afield every day. In Canada the horsepower is being increased and wonders are being achieved. America has hydro-electric schemes as well as coal schemes for the supply of electrical current. Canada seems to be the only country of the world which relies solely on hydro-electric power for generating electricity. I wish to show clearly that the transmission of current over long distances at a high voltage is quite feasible. At one time it was supposed that it could not be done, but the voltage has been carried to 132,000, and I have been informed that power can now be transmitted over a distance of 300 or 400 miles.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is the limit?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know that it is. Further discoveries and greater power of concentration may lead to current being transmitted over much greater distances.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What is the percentage of loss in transmission?

Hon. J. EWING: For power transmitted over long distances the efficiency is 93 per cent. That means a loss of only 7 per cent.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is more than that at Winnipeg, where it is transmitted over about the same distance as Collie is from Perth.

Hon. J. EWING: There may be a greater loss over a shorter distance; I cannot say. In countries like Germany, France, Italy, Denmark and Switzerland, the development of electrical generation has progressed by leaps and bounds, and the closest attention has been given to the question of providing cheap power for farming operations, domestic purposes, and all kinds of industrial activities, thus adding to the economic wealth and prosperity of the people. I should like to see the wealth and prosperity of our people unequalled in any other part of the world. In England during the war grave trouble was experienced in the matter of getting adequate power supplies. All through England at that time the cry arose for power and yet more power generated by electricity. The whole of England was found to be so thoroughly disorganised in the matter of electrical supplies that the requisite power could not be obtained. Immediately Lloyd George—that wonderful man—took office he set to work to improve the supply, but he was not able to accomplish much owing to the economic waste consequent upon the numerous scattered plants. Since then a Commission named the Central Electricity Board has been appointed, to the work of which I should like to refer. It is mentioned in the cable messages in this morning's newspaper and I consider myself fortunate in having an opportunity to read this report to the House. It states—

In connection with the electricity scheme for South-East England, the Central Electricity Board has placed contracts, amounting to about £1,000,000 for the construction of 132,000 volt transmission lines in that area.

The Central Electricity Board was established under last year's Electricity Supply Act. The commissioners assumed that the output in Britain will double every eight years, and that at the end of 1941 about 450 units per head of the population will be consumed. The standard voltage for the grid transmission network which it is proposed to establish has been fixed at 132,000 volts, and the secondary transmission lines will operate at 32,000 volts.

The first scheme adopted by the board covered 5,000 square miles in Scotland, and included Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Dumbarton. The South-East England area, for which contracts for transmission lines have now been placed, includes London, and has a total area of 8,328 square miles, with a population of 11,500,000. It is proposed to reduce

the number of generating stations from 135 to 18, and by a system of overhead lines, to convey current at the pressure stated above.

That confirms all I have said about the enormous loss due to scattered and inefficient plants in England, and the efficiency that has been obtained by a Commission working probably on the lines of the Victorian Commission. To reduce the number of generating stations from 135 to 18 is certainly a great achievement. The report continues—

It is estimated that, when the scheme is in full working order, the average cost of electricity, which now varies greatly in different localities, will be reduced to 1½d. per unit.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Should not that be a farthing per unit?

Hon. J. EWING: I am not in a position to combat the cable message.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I think it is wrong.

Hon. J. EWING: So do I, but I had to quote the cable as it appeared in the newspaper. It seems to be wrong; it may be a printer's error. The object is to place the electrical supplies of England upon a sure and safe foundation, and that is to be done by concentration of plant and reduction of price for the power generated. If the same thing could be done here, we also should be in a better position. It is necessary for us to encourage industrial production and give opportunities and advantages to all sections of the people. To do that, a power house should be erected at a centre determined by the Government to be in the best interests of the State. Western Australia urgently requires the cheapest production of electrical power and I ask whether that can be secured by building up from year to year the present power station at East Perth. I can state confidently that the capitalisation of the East Perth power house, which is now well over £1,500,000, is no credit to any Government that has contributed to its development. I do not except any one Government. If the sixth unit recommended by Mr. Taylor is installed, it will not be a fair thing to the people of the State generally because the people of the metropolitan area, and no one else, will benefit from it. Probably the time will come when from the East Perth power house we shall transmit to Collie, the source of the fuel supply, the electrical power required by that town. Such a suggestion may appear laughable, but it is the logical outcome of the policy laid down by the

Government. The use of electricity is increasing tremendously and provision must be made to supply it, but if the present policy of increasing the capitalisation of the East Perth plant is pursued, it will be tantamount to driving another nail in the coffin of the Collie scheme.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you estimated the cost of the scheme at Collie?

Hon. J. EWING: I have quoted the cost of the Yallourn scheme to date.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Would it not be better to get a report on the Collie scheme?

Hon. J. EWING: The Government seem to realise the need that something should be done. When the Premier returned from England he spoke enthusiastically of what was being done in other countries and of the wonderful efficiency obtained there, efficiency based upon exceedingly cheap supplies of electricity. What we need is a super power scheme at the source of supply. If the East Perth plant is extended, the haulage of the coal to Perth will represent an ever-present cost that must inevitably militate against the possibility of supplying current at cheap rates. The East Perth plant cannot be made to show the lowest possible production costs when it is necessary to haul the coal a distance of 125 miles from the source of supply. The outlay required to instal a central plant at Collie may appear to be large.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Cannot we get cheap money for this?

Hon. J. EWING: Under the Migration Agreement entered into by this Government provision is made for the use of part of the £34,000,000 of money for migration purposes, and for hydro-electric and other schemes.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Especially if we get our material from the Old Country.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How will that affect the tables that were produced on the occasion of the Financial Agreement Bill?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not think they will be affected.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Will it not mean increasing the amount that we borrow?

Hon. J. EWING: I think not. The Premier has already considered the position, but I do not know at what result he has arrived. I know he has given the matter serious attention. I do not think he has quite decided whether he can get this money or not. If he can do so, I feel sure there

will be no trouble in securing the two millions required for this scheme, at 1 per cent. for the first two years, and at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or 2 per cent. for the ensuing years. I wish to emphasise the advantages that would accrue to the State under this scheme. At present the advantages of an electricity scheme are being given only to one section of the community; they are denied to other sections. It is undemocratic to pick out one section of the community for a particular advantage. We are all supposed to be democratic and to consider the wants and desires of the whole community. People around Bunbury, Collie and the other districts affected should have the right to the cheap power that would be transmitted to them, just as another section of the community has that right under the other scheme.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And the people on the wheat belt and on the goldfields also.

Hon. J. EWING: I had overlooked the mining areas. If a circle were described from Collie with a radius of 250 miles, it would extend over a considerable portion of Western Australia. It would go a long way towards Geraldton, would cover everything to the south, extend far into the sea at Albany, and the only places left out would be Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and the great North-West.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Do you know what this would cost?

Hon. J. EWING: About two millions of money.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Does that include all the radiating centres you have referred to?

Hon. J. EWING: It does not cost much to transmit current.

Hon. J. Cornell: A couple of millions is neither here nor there.

Hon. J. EWING: If members think I am aiming too high in this matter, I trust they will say so when they come to speak upon the subject.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Have you considered making provision for the electrification of the spur lines leading off from the main lines?

Hon. J. EWING: Certainly.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A big saving might be effected there.

Hon. J. EWING: In cases where the gradients are as steep as one in forty, trains that are run by electricity can trans-

port a heavy load without trouble. I do not wish to burden my remarks by entering into too much detail. I believe the generation of electricity at Collie could be carried out cheaply, and would be disposed of cheaply, more especially if the current were used also for the electrification of the railways. The consumption in units would undoubtedly be enormous. The districts immediately surrounding Collie, where the current would be generated, would also derive great advantage from the scheme.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about the line running to the Bunbury racecourse?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. J. EWING: I thank members for listening to my remarks with so much patience. They may consider this a fetish of mine. I am sure my colleagues from the South-West will speak to the motion, as well as those who are deeply interested in the advancement and development of the State. If this motion is carried and sent to another place, I feel sure the Government will not oppose it. At all events, they will see what is being done by the Legislative Council, by men who see far ahead, and have an eye to the future possibilities of Western Australia. If the motion is carried, it will mean that members do see a long way ahead, and if we send it to another place, we shall find out who are the pessimists there, and who are opposed to the development of the country by the best means at our command, namely the cheap and economical generation of electric current.

On motion by Hon. Sir William Lathlain, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—RAILWAYS DISCONTINUANCE.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

## **BILL—WHALING.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North) [5.55]: This little Bill looks harmless enough, and appears to be necessary. It has for its object the regulation of the whaling industry, and incidentally the col-

lection of some fees and some money. The Honorary Minister, in introducing it, did not say a great deal about its merits or demerits, but rather confined himself to the habits of the fish. His remarks were exceedingly interesting. As I am not a whaling man I did not know as much about the industry as I do now. I find, however, that the Bill is far from being a harmless one. If a whaling industry did exist off the coast of Western Australia, this measure would do it a great deal of harm. If we carry it, undoubtedly it would mean closing up the industry. Unfortunately, at present the whaling industry exists in one company only. This is a struggling company. The undertaking has had its difficulties in the past, and it is having its difficulties now. If the Bill is carried, it will strangle this particular company as well as the industry.

Hon. A. Lovekin: If you regulate the industry, more companies will spring up.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: In order to make the matter clear, I wish to give a few details concerning the company which, as I say, is the whaling industry. I do this at the risk of a certain amount of repetition, for Mr. Miles put the case clearly last night. My only excuse for referring to the matter again is that I happened to be the chairman of directors of the original company. In consequence, I am conversant with the whole of the details concerning it. It may be of interest to members to hear some of the details. The North-West Whaling Company, which is the whaling industry intended to be covered by the Bill was formed in Perth entirely by local people and with local money. The project was so popular that all the shares were subscribed in two days without a single advertisement appearing in the newspapers. Unfortunately, sufficient money was not asked for at the time. It was one of the cases where the management was to a large extent composed of people who knew nothing about the business. Consequently this concern met the same fate that others met where those in control were not thoroughly acquainted with the matter on hand. The company was carried on with scant success. First of all it had to take up a position at Point Cloates, many miles away beyond Carnarvon, where no means of communication existed. A whaling centre was established there. The company also had to procure the necessary vessels, and

make all the preliminary arrangements, at a cost of a good deal of money. It was also necessary to gain a good deal of experience in order that the operations might be carried out successfully. The company did carry on for two years, but because the management was not all that it should have been, and because of the difficulty of obtaining a competent manager and a skilful gunner—in a case like this it is the whole secret of success—it encountered difficulties. At first the experts were not procurable; consequently the number of whales secured was small.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: I suppose you had no difficulty in getting a gunner.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Yes, we had. There was difficulty in getting a gunner to hit the whales. This side of the business, as well as the management, were not satisfactory. In addition a severe willy-willy which occurred on the coats wrecked one of the vessels. Under these adverse circumstances the company lost £24,000 in two years. The case seemed hopeless at the time, and it was decided to go into liquidation; but fortunately among the shareholders there were some progressive and liberal-minded men, who agreed to find sufficient funds for the purpose of sending a representative to Norway to see whether some other arrangement could not be made before the company went into liquidation. The result was that another small company in Norway, called the Norwegian Bay Whaling Company, agreed to work in with this company, agreed to take over for a certain time the license this company had obtained. The second company have been doing that with a fair amount of success. At first there were some difficulties, but latterly the company have been paying the original company a proportion of profits that helps to liquidate the £24,000 I have referred to. It is hoped that by the end of the year the amount may be entirely paid off, and then the original company will be in a position to work the business. Up to that time, however, not a single shareholder had received a penny in dividends. All this money was put in by people in Perth, and not a penny has been received back. Now the Government bring down this drastic Bill, containing clauses which, I believe, the Honorary Minister is prepared to make a little better, according to amendments which he has placed on the Notice Paper. However, my argument is

that the Bill is unnecessary at present, with only one company representing the whaling industry. The license under which the company now working operate is of such a strong, full and satisfactory nature as to render an Act unnecessary. I shall read to the House some conditions of the license, when hon. members will recognise that it practically embodies most of the things in the Bill, and at all events makes it unnecessary to hamper the industry with an Act. I may add that besides the license operated by the company, three other licenses are in existence, and that not one of them has been put in operation. Only the one company have started out to develop the business of whaling, and therefore any conditions made by the Legislature can apply only to this company. I have here the license, which was made between Sir Robert Furse McMillan, Lieutenant-Governor, and the North-West (Australia) Whaling Co., Ltd., on the 16th August, 1922. It says—

Whereas by the Fisheries Act, 1905-13, as amended by the Fisheries Act Amendment Act, 1921, it is provided as follows:—(1) The Governor may grant to any person, on such terms and conditions as to the Governor may seem fit, a license to the exclusion of all other persons to take, collect, and gather for any term not exceeding 14 years, from any portion of the coastal waters of the State and the foreshore or adjacent land above high water mark, being Crown lands within the meaning of the Land Act, 1898, any marine animal life or product of the sea not being any of the fish mentioned in the Second Schedule, or any amendment thereof. (2) Save as hereinafter provided, it shall be unlawful during the currency of any license granted under this section for any person, except the licensee, his servants or agents, or other persons acting with his authority to take, collect, or gather any marine animal life or product of the sea, for which such license shall have been granted, within the portion of the coastal waters, foreshore, or adjacent land above high water mark to which such license extends. Provided, nevertheless, that nothing herein shall prevent any person from taking, collecting, or gathering therein any such animal life or product for his personal use and consumption but not for barter or sale. Provided, also, that no license shall be granted under this section in respect of any length of foreshore exceeding 75 miles, until the expiration of 14 days after the draft of such license has been laid upon the Table of each House of Parliament. (3) The Governor may make regulations under and subject to which any license granted under this section shall be held . . . . And whereas the grantee has applied for a license in respect of the coastal waters described in the schedule hereto and delineated on the annexed map and therein coloured red: And whereas the length of the coastal waters

of the outlined area coloured red on the annexed map does not exceed 75 miles. Now this indenture witnesseth that in consideration of the rent hereinafter reserved and of the covenants by the grantee hereinafter contained, the grantor by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council hereby grants unto the grantee subject to the exclusion of all other persons, to fish for and take whales within the coastal waters described in the schedule hereto . . . for the term of three years from and including the first day of January, 1922, yielding and paying therefor in advance the annual rent of £50, the first payment having become due on the first day of January, 1922 . . . and the grantee covenants with the grantor as follows:—(1) To pay the same rent at the time and in manner aforesaid. (2) To observe and perform all regulations for the protection and preservation of whales and for any other purpose made by the Governor under the powers conferred by the said Act and in force for the time being. (3) Within six months from the commencement of this grant to establish upon an island within the said area or on the mainland on land lawfully acquired by the grantee under the provisions of the Land Act, 1898, or otherwise a factory or works for the treatment of whales, whale blubber, and the carcases of whales, and to provide all necessary plant and machinery for that purpose, the amount of capital to be expended thereon being not less than £10,000. (4) To bona fide, and to the satisfaction of the Colonial Secretary in office for the time being, commence the industry of whaling as aforesaid within six months from the commencement of this grant, and thereafter to the like satisfaction maintain and continue such industry as a going concern, and at all times during the said term or any extensions thereof to keep and maintain the factory, works, plant and machinery in effective condition.

That is a strong condition. Here is another good one—

(5) To capitalise the industry to a total amount of not less than £25,000. (6) To carry out the treatment of the whales and the whole preparation of the products therefrom within the said State. (7) That no Asiatic and no aboriginal native of Africa or the Islands of the Pacific shall be employed by the grantee. (8) The grantee shall not without the consent in writing of the Colonial Secretary transfer, assign or sublet this license or any right conferred on him hereby.

There is a condition providing that if the rent is not paid, the license will be forfeited. Then there is the following condition—

Provided that the grantor may for any cause which he may deem sufficient, but in his absolute discretion, by any subsequent notice in the "Government Gazette" cancel any notice of forfeiture and reinstate the grantee as of his former estate and on any terms and conditions as regards the grantee or anything

lawfully done or suffered since the forfeiture as to the grantor may seem fit.

The Government made some further conditions. On the 17th October, 1924, the Colonial Secretary's Office wrote as follows to Mr. Will Davies, on behalf of the North-West (Australia) Whaling Company:—

Referring to your interviews of the 6th and 16th instant, respectively, with the Hon. the Minister regarding the issue of a whaling license at the expiration of the existing one in the name of the North-West (Australia) Whaling Company (in liquidation), I have to inform you that, after full consideration, the Government is prepared to grant such a license for a term of five years, provided the following clauses be inserted in the license as agreed upon, viz.:—(a) That no wage less than the minimum wage payable under any arbitration court award (Federal or State), or any industrial award applicable to Government employees in the district within which the license is operative, or the nearest district thereto within which Government employees are engaged shall be paid to employees employed in pursuance of the license, within any portion of the area covered by the license which is subject to the laws of the State of Western Australia. (b) That similar conditions shall be observed in connection with employees employed upon any vessel used in connection with the business of the licensees, and such other conditions stipulated by the said industrial awards, unless otherwise agreed to by the industrial union or unions whose members are employed, shall apply.

Those two conditions show that the interests of the workers in each case have been protected.

(c) Should there be any dispute as to wages and conditions of employment, such dispute shall be submitted to the Registrar of the Court of Arbitration, whose decision shall be final and binding on the parties.

I have read out those conditions to show how stringent is the license. As there is only the one company in the business, what is the object of passing a Bill?

Hon. J. Nicholson: You think the license would be quite sufficient without the Bill?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I do. Let me quote Clause 4 of the Bill, under which nobody would attempt to carry on business—

Every application for a license under this Act shall be made during the currency of the calendar year in which the license is to have effect or in the month of December preceding that year, and every such license which shall be granted shall have effect for and during that year, or the unexpired portion thereof, and no longer.

In the name of goodness, who would put in £40,000 or £50,000 under such conditions? To show how inconsistent that clause is with the license, it is only necessary to mention that under the license the Government require the expenditure of £10,000, and a further £30,000, whilst the period is to be only one year.

The Honorary Minister: Have you read the amendment which appears on the Notice Paper?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I quite appreciate that the Honorary Minister is trying to meet the case, but the clause and the license could never go together.

The Honorary Minister: Why criticise the clause in view of the fact that the amendment on the Notice Paper gives you everything you want?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I am trying to criticise it so that I may persuade the Honorary Minister, with his usual good nature and sympathetic disposition, to withdraw the Bill. If he refuses I shall ask hon. members to assist me in postponing the measure for a while. Now I come to Clause 8—

The carcase of every whale taken or killed in the territorial waters of the State, or brought into such waters after having been taken or killed outside such waters, is hereby charged with payment to the Crown of royalty at the prescribed rate . . . . .

Is not that an export duty? Who ever heard of an export duty on a primary product? We shall have an export duty on wheat next, and on flour and wool. Even as the business has been carried on, £1,500 income tax was paid last year. The royalty will represent at least another £1,000 per annum. If the Bill passes, therefore, the unfortunate shareholders are not likely to get a penny. Clause 10 is taken exception to in respect of paragraphs (c) and (d) of Subclause 1, and particularly paragraph (c), which provides for the making of—

Such rules as the Governor may think necessary or proper to be observed in and for the conduct and control of whaling and whaling business in all respects, or for keeping any vessels, boats, or premises used in connection with whaling or whaling business in a sanitary and cleanly condition.

Anybody who knows anything whatever about whaling will know that any inspector who goes up there, and whose nose is not an insentient exrescence, will not consider a whaling boat a clean boat in any circum-

stances. A whaling boat cannot be clean. It is like a shearing shed or a slaughter yard. People who are not used to such places consider that they stink. On the whaling boats specially skilled workers are required, and, as a consequence, while the Bill is solicitous for the welfare of our own countrymen, the boats employ nearly all foreigners, who will have the benefit of the insanitary conditions on them. I hope hon. members will assist me in getting the Bill postponed. I intend to vote against the second reading.

(On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.)

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

## BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [7.30]: I can see no serious objection to the Bill, although I believe there is very great urgency for reforestation throughout the State. I notice that in the past £5,000 has been allocated for sandalwood reforestation and has not all been spent. I am not aware whether the Government have made an effort to spend it all, or whether the amount that has been spent was sufficient for departmental purposes. The Premier in another place mentioned that there was an unexpended balance of £7,127. I am not clear as to whether it is proposed to keep that as a balance for future expenditure. The Chief Secretary says it is so proposed. I am pleased to hear that, because I believe there is very great work in reforestation awaiting us. In the South-West the process of reforestation is going along rather slowly, but at any rate, good work is being done. I have seen the work on the tuart area at Ludlow, on the areas at Collie, and also on the Dwellingup area. I understand there are at present about 750,000 acres embraced in the working plans of the Forests Department. That area represents but a small proportion of the country that will have to be taken in hand sooner or later. I hope the Government will extend the work as far as possible. I regret that the forestry college at Ludlow has been closed, if not officially at all events against students. I understand there is a reply to this, namely, that the

forestry students are now sent to Canberra, where they can obtain a status not attainable in the school here. If that be so, there is not very much to be said against it, but I hope the fact that those students are being sent out of the State to be educated in forestry will not disadvantage the State; for I believe that in Western Australia, more than in any other State of the Commonwealth, there is work for trained foresters. For that reason I urge the Government to extend their reforestation work as far as possible. There is a wider scope for reforestation here than in any other State. We have the tuart areas I have mentioned. They are very valuable areas, although very small, comprising only 6,000 acres. Tuart is a very valuable timber, and in the past it has not been conserved as it should have been. In consequence there is a shortage of that timber, and I understand the department have had to reserve areas of white gum somewhere in the Bolgart district in an attempt to meet the demand for tuart, white gum being next in value. I can speak with some knowledge of the success that has attended the Forest Department's efforts in that area. Years ago it was contended that it was practically impossible to bring about artificial reforestation. But the department, by scientific means, has solved the problem, and I believe they are now getting practically 100 per cent. of germination, and that the growth is little short of remarkable. That is a feature with which we may well be gratified, because the natural reforestation in that country is periodical and occurs only after big fires, when the seed germinates in the ash-beds. I am pleased the Government are extending their work of experimenting with pines. In the early days a very grave mistake was made, again at Ludlow, in planting *pinus insignis* on coastal country without having previously attempted to prove whether the country was suitable. The result was that after a number of years the whole of that pine had to be cut. It is now being utilised for fruit cases, but the yield is very small. Had this question been tackled scientifically and in the light of the experience of other countries before the experiment was made, the State would have been saved a great deal of money. However, that country has been replanted with *pinus pinaster*, and from the growth made I feel that this variety has solved the question. I hope the Government will not rest

on the one area thus planted. There are throughout the South-West many similar areas of sand-plain country that would respond to *pinus pinaster*, country that needs no clearing and has only to be turned up in order that the seed may be planted.

Hon. G. Fraser: What about using that £5,000 allocated to the Forests Department?

Hon. W. J. MANN: You need not worry about that. The Government have made a fine profit out of the royalty.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Yes, £5 per ton.

Hon. W. J. MANN: There are, in the South-West, hewers paying as much as 40s. royalty per load, whereas a few years ago the Government were glad to get two shillings. Also there has been quite a decent revenue derived from royalty on timber cut on the group settlement areas. I believe most of that money has gone into Consolidated Revenue. In my view, rather than put such money into Consolidated Revenue, it would be a wise policy to utilise it for reforestation. I will support the Bill.

HON. J. R. BROWN (North-East) [7.40]: I will oppose the Bill, for I think the £5,000 should be kept in the forest fund. It may not be wanted to-day, but on the other hand it may be wanted to-morrow. The sandalwood industry has been a great boon to prospectors. The prospector of to-day, when his money is exhausted, has to plunge into that industry. Sometimes the regulations imposed make it hard for him to get his quota.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is very hard for some of them to get an order at all.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: Yes. Many of them do not succeed in getting orders. Just the same, strings are pulled and people who have never been in the sandalwood industry manage to get orders.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Those strings were pulled before the last general election.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: Never mind the last general election. Mr. Nicholson, last night, read a long report on sandalwood. That report was not true when it spoke of there being two classes of sandalwood. There is only one class of sandalwood. When grown down south, it becomes coarse and runs into big timber, but the oil is not in it. The best sandalwood grows on the goldfields.



Hon. J. Cornell: Where the best men come from.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Is not the best quality found in the North-West?

Hon. J. R. BROWN: Mr. Seddon said that in different districts sandalwood takes longer or shorter periods for its growth. He said that in some places it required 20 years, while on the goldfields the period required was 100 years. Some 20 years ago I myself was out after sandalwood. I had to cull bush that had been culled half a dozen times. Even so, I could make wages out of it, although I was getting only £4 10s. a ton for the wood, and had to pay £1 per ton for the hire of a horse and cart. While engaged in the industry I learned that sandalwood varies in its growth. I have come across sandalwood 7ft high, although it was only a sapling. It had not taken more than eight years to grow. I knew that because it was growing in a costeen about 18 inches deep, and I knew from the history of the place that it could not have more than eight years since that costeen was dug. Mr. Seddon also said that sandalwood was a parasite. It is nothing of the sort, and whoever says so does not know anything about it. The best sandalwood to be obtained is got on rocky ridges where there is nothing else growing. When the Bill was introduced we heard that the Government had spent so much money—they could not have spent much because it is not long since the £5,000 was allocated to the Forests Department. We may, however, want the £5,000 in the near future. If some of that money were spent scientifically, we might discover some way of forcing the growth of sandalwood, because we find sticks which, because of their girth were overlooked by cutters, had grown before the return of those cutters, a period that might not be considered to have been very long. What causes the development of some of the trees at a greater rate than others I am not prepared to say. There may, however, be some method of fertilising those trees to promote rapid growth. I know an unlawful way which might not meet with general approval, and that would be to kill about 1,000 Chinamen and bury them in the sandalwood country. I feel certain that the sandalwood trees then would grow as rapidly as mushrooms. Anyhow, I consider that the money should be retained because

this is an industry that stood to the prospector all through the piece, and if he is now deprived of a certain revenue it will go hard against him. At one time it was possible to pull the wood and bring it in without fee or license, merely the payment of a royalty of 5s. a ton. Mr. Mann was off the track and did not know what he was talking about when he referred to the £7,500 as having been reserved for the reforestation of sandalwood. It was not so reserved. That is all I have to say and I shall support the second reading.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [7.49]: I intend to oppose the Bill. It has been introduced each year for a period of 12 months only and, so far as I can remember, when the forests Act was passed in 1918 it was understood that the money derived by way of royalty, or at least three-fifths of it would go into a trust fund. In 1923 the revenue received from royalty on sandalwood was £16,500; in 1924 it was £44,271, in 1925 it was £52,511, in 1926 it was £52,013, in 1927 it was £46,074, and in 1928 it was £53,488. The total received was £204,080, three-fifths of which amount should have found its way into the general reforestation fund. The amounts paid into the sandalwood trust fund in those years were:—1925, £5,009; 1926, £5,100; 1927, £4,900; and in 1928, £5,009, making a total of over £20,000. Of that sum the Government have in hand £7,000. Here we have another instance of legislating for one end of the State only. Sandalwood grows in other parts of the State and there has been no reforestation in the northern areas. From Gascoyne and around Shark Bay many years ago big consignments of sandalwood were exported, and further north as well, even as far as Kimberley, but no attempt has ever been made to carry on reforestation there. This work should be conducted all over the State where sandalwood will grow, but apart from that, if the three-fifths is not required for reforestation of sandalwood, it will eventually be required for the reforestation of jarrah, karri and other timbers in the southern parts of the State. That was the intention of Parliament when the Act was passed, and so far as I can remember, when the sandalwood regulations were brought in, the then Opposition opposed them tooth and nail. Now that that Opposition are in power, they are

taking this money into revenue to swell their annual receipts, instead of using it legitimately. The Minister may say in reply that the Government have already in their fund £115,000. They may have that now, but the money will be required if the work is to be carried out as it should be done. Had the original intention of Parliament been followed, there would have been another £102,482 in that fund. I intend to oppose the Bill and I hope the House will reject it.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [7.53]: I intend to support the Bill. It is a fact that something over £20,000 from royalties has been paid into a fund for the regeneration of sandalwood, and it is also a fact that about £12,000 only has been spent in that direction, leaving a balance of £7,100 in the fund. It is admitted that the regeneration of sandalwood is purely an experiment, and the Conservator of Forests in his report has explained the position very fully. He has pointed out that the experiments carried out so far have reached the stage where it is advisable that no more money should be spent until such time as the results of those experiments are known. The position is that we have at the present time an accumulated balance of over £7,000, which is equivalent to the average expenditure for two years, and if the Bill is not passed, it will mean that that balance will increase; in other words, the £5,000 will be lying idle instead of being used in some other direction. The Bill does not say that the experiments in connection with the regeneration of sandalwood are going to cease; it simply says that for one year the sum of £5,000, which would ordinarily go into the fund, shall be paid into Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the other three-fifths of the other total?

**THE HONORARY MINISTER**: That does not affect the position in the slightest.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Of course it does.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER**: If the Bill is not passed, it will simply mean that the £5,000 will be paid into the fund for the regeneration of sandalwood and will remain there unused. I am acting simply on the report of the Conservator of Forests who says in effect that until such time as the experiments with regard to the regen-

eration of sandalwood have been proved, he does not think it necessary or advisable to spend any more money in that direction. I take it that those experiments should be carried out all over the State at the one time, but the Conservator is the best judge of that kind of thing. He is recognised throughout the world as being pre-eminent in his profession, although a very young man. From Press reports I have read, the delegates to the Empire Forestry Conference, which is sitting in different parts of the Commonwealth at the present time, have a very high opinion of this officer, and in view of that fact I do not see any reason why we should not be prepared to accept his advice and allow the Government to utilise the £5,000 for this year only.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [7.57]: The object sought by the Bill will not prove to be as simple in practice as it looks on paper. It is immaterial to me, and I suppose immaterial to any member of this House, whether or not the Bill becomes law, in that it will not affect this House at all.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It will be better for the public and the electorates

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not think the hon. member has read the Bill, or he would not have made that remark. The Bill is an attempt to make enrolment easier and voting easier. Digressing for a moment, permit me to say that I have always opposed compulsory enrolment, and I shall always oppose compulsory voting, because we have arrived at a stage in our political history when enrolment is quite easy and voting is also easy, so easy, in fact, that the people do not take the interest to-day in politics that our forbears did. It is necessary in a sense to be probably a little tedious in endeavouring to give my viewpoint, and I hope in doing so that I shall not be transgressing the Standing Orders if I say that hon. members of another place did not give the Bill the consideration it deserved while others did not

realise the exact manner in which it would affect them. The Bill proposes that there shall be one Federal and State enrolment card, and that there shall be a joint roll used in both Federal and State elections. The objection to-day is that the elector has to fill in three claim cards—Federal, Assembly and Council. It is certain that if the joint roll proposition becomes law, 80,000 people in Western Australia will still be liable to fill in two claim cards—Council and Assembly-Federal combined. It is said that from the joint claim cards, the joint rolls will be compiled. It is also asserted that the joint rolls will be so marked as to indicate the people qualified to vote for State and Federal elections, for the Commonwealth elections only, or for the Assembly elections only. To my way of thinking, that arrangement will lead to complications that will in all probability be found not easy of solution. It is said that this can happen, and it has not been contradicted: A person enrolled on the joint roll as an elector for the Commonwealth will, in some instances, not be able to vote at an Assembly election in connection with which that roll is used, or vice versa, and he will have to fill in another claim card.

Hon. G. Fraser: That does not represent an alteration on present conditions.

Hon J. CORNELL: But is it an improvement? In my opinion, it will lead to confusion. To-day an elector if eligible for the Legislative Council enrolment knows that he has to fill in three claim cards, and when he is not so eligible, that he has to fill in two claim cards.

Hon. G. Fraser. But do they know that?

Hon J. CORNELL: My electors know it; the hon. member's electors may not be so advanced! Two of the claim cards must be filled in compulsorily, whilst the other is not compulsory. If we pass the Bill—I do not care whether it is passed or rejected—I believe it will create confusion in the minds of the electors, who will think that by filling in one claim card they will be enrolled on both rolls, whereas, in fact, they may be enrolled on one roll only. From that standpoint alone there will be a duplication of claim cards, just as is necessary to-day with the Federal and State rolls compiled separately. I do not think that is a commendable feature in connection with this arrangement. It has been urged that be-

cause Victoria and South Australia have adopted this scheme, it should be a good thing for Western Australia too. Without desiring to reflect upon those who are of that opinion, I think those who give expression to such a view have not really considered the position or else, to use a vulgarism, they are merely repeating a parrot-cry. I think I shall be able to convince hon. members as to the real situation before I have concluded my remarks. Let us consider the position of Victoria first. It has merely a fraction of the area of Western Australia. There are 20 Federal electoral divisions in Victoria, whereas Western Australia has only five Federal divisions. Despite that, Western Australia has about 20 times the area of Victoria. Less than two years ago, Victoria had a proper redistribution of seats effected on a population basis. Western Australia has not had a redistribution of seats for 17 years.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: We are given to understand that we will have one this session.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Perhaps!

Hon. J. CORNELL: In Victoria, the Legislative Assembly is comprised of 65 members. There are 20 Federal divisions in that small State, and on a rough-and-ready basis, it will be found that if we cut up 65 seats amongst the 20 Federal electoral divisions, it will work out at a little more than three Assembly seats per Federal division. In Western Australia we can take the extremes to indicate the disparity of the existing population basis. Menzies has 280 electors, and Canning over 18,000 electors. We can apply that position generally to electorates throughout the State when we make a comparison on the population basis. On the other hand, that cannot apply to the position in Victoria, where the redistribution of seats was effected quite recently. I have already mentioned that in Victoria 65 seats had to be cut up amongst 20 Federal divisions. In Western Australia we have 50 seats in the Legislative Assembly to be divided amongst five Federal electoral divisions. The Kalgoorlie division is the largest electorate in the world, and it contains 21 Assembly electorates and 24 Federal subdivisions. In those Federal subdivisions there are five for which rolls will be issued but for which there are no corresponding Legislative Assembly seats. On the other side of the picture, we

find that in the State electorates there are two in respect of where there are no corresponding Federal subdivisions. Hon. members will find that we have in this State, on the present population basis, 21 Assembly seats included in one Federal electoral division. Later on I will show how they overlap, and where additional confusion is almost bound to arise. In this State we have, apart from the Kalgoorlie division, four other Federal electoral divisions. If we take the rest of the State, including the congested areas of Perth and Fremantle, we find we have 29 Assembly electorates that have to be divided amongst the four remaining Federal electoral divisions, or more than seven State electorates to each Federal division. That represents twice as many State electorates to be crammed into each Federal division here as was necessary in Victoria. That means to say that whereas three seats had to go to each Federal division in Victoria, here, apart from the Kalgoorlie division, seven seats have to go to each Federal division. Hon. members will recognise from this comparison, the difficulty that will confront Western Australia if we adopt the argument that because Victoria has adopted this scheme, it must be a good thing for Western Australia, and must work quite as easily here. I have no hesitation in saying that that assumption is based on totally wrong premises. Then again it has been urged that because South Australia has adopted these proposals, Western Australia will find it advantageous too. Western Australia has three times the area of South Australia. In the latter State, the House of Assembly comprises 40 members and there are seven Federal electoral divisions in the State. Dividing their 40 Assembly seats among the Federal divisions there, we find that in South Australia nearly six State seats will have to go to each Federal division, as against seven Assembly seats in Western Australia to each of four Federal divisions, and 21 Assembly seats to the Kalgoorlie Federal division. There is this to be said regarding South Australia's acceptance of the proposal that that State has no single electorates. The South Australian electorates are run on the basis of four, three and two representatives. If hon. members take the Federal division of Adelaide, they will find that it practically covers the boundaries of the State electoral district which returns four members. In those circum-

stances, hon. members will realise at once that it would be easier to adopt the proposal where an electorate is run on that basis, than if the division had to be made where four single electorates were affected. Let us turn to the State that has had the latest redistribution of seats, and where we could reasonably and logically assume that the proportion of electors in the various electorates has been brought somewhat nearer the mark on a population basis. New South Wales has not adopted the joint rolls proposal, although it might be more fittingly adopted there than in this State. New South Wales is not one-quarter the area of this State. There are 90 seats in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, and there are 28 Federal electoral divisions. That gives just a fraction over three State electorates to each Federal division, practically the same as the proportion in Victoria. We do not find New South Wales rushing into this scheme, although they have turned from proportional voting to single electorates within the last two years. Why has not New South Wales adopted this scheme, if it is such an excellent proposition, as some people would have us believe? I will venture to assert that New South Wales has probably given the project more reasonable consideration than it has received in this State, and New South Wales has not seen fit to adopt it. I suggest that has not been done, because this proposition will not work out as easily as some people consider. We are told that if this arrangement becomes law, Federal rolls will be issued as heretofore. That is to say, 50 subdivisional rolls will be issued by the Federal Electoral Department and they will be combined into divisional volumes. The subdivisions of each division will be contained in the one volume. That will be the Federal roll. We are told that roll is to be marked to indicate Federal electors qualified to vote at State elections. It would not be too bad if we were given a definite assurance that we would not have more rolls than we have State electorates. That is to say, the 50 subdivisional rolls would be the only ones issued, there would be no further State rolls, and the subdivisional rolls would correspond with the State rolls. But we are told on the authority of the Chief Electoral Officer, whom I consider to be one of our best public servants, that in order to make the proposal workable, it would be necessary to have 65 State rolls.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The Minister admitted that last session.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am pleased that this arrangement will not apply to the South Province. One roll is enough for you, Mr. President, and for me to look after without having another one or two rolls foisted on us. I am not arguing merely from the aspect of Council members; I am trying to point out the confusion that is likely to arise in the Assembly electorates. I question whether there is one of the Federal subdivisions that corresponds with a State electorate either geographically, numerically, or in name.

Hon. G. Fraser: Does not North-East Fremantle?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member can speak for that; I do not intend to roam all over the State. I am endeavouring to point out how the proposal is likely to affect Kalgoorlie and the South Province.

Hon. G. Fraser: You said you did not know of one, and I told you of one.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Does North-East Fremantle as a whole square with the Federal district?

Hon. G. Fraser: The boundaries are the same for North-East Fremantle, State and Federal.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Among the State districts there is Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, but in the Federal subdivisions there are Brown Hill and Ivanhoe. Though they join, the State boundaries of the merged districts are not co-terminous with those of the two Federal subdivisions.

Hon. G. Fraser: They are in North-East Fremantle.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am pleased to hear there is one. There are subdivisions that do not even square in name with the State electorates. If members cast their minds back they will recollect that the Federal subdivisions take their names from the State electorates that were recognised prior to the passing of the State redistribution Act 17 years ago. That is where the difference in names occurs. It is admitted that in order to give tangible effect to this proposal, 65 rolls will be required for the State electorates. I have before me the whole of the subdivisions of Kalgoorlie and the total enrolments on the Federal roll for each subdivision. I find among the Federal subdivisions Broome, Derby, Ivanhoe, Onslow and Dundas that

do not exist to-day as State electorates. On the other hand, there are the State electorates of Moore and Coolgardie that do not exist as Federal subdivisions. The Yilgarn electorate, which is one of the electorates in the South Province, extends to Kurrawang. It embraces practically the whole of Coolgardie, together with some of Dundas and some of Kanowna. At the southern end the division of Forrest goes into Yilgarn while Ravensthorpe is included in the Katanning subdivision, and Newdegate is included in the Williams subdivision. Yilgarn, for Federal purposes, embraces part of Avon and does not come into the Yilgarn State electorate. The Minister knows there is no such electorate as Moore for Federal purposes, but there is a State electorate of Moore as well as State electorates of Irwin and Greenough. The figures for Greenough will convince the Minister that that district must comprise a big portion of Moore. On the Federal roll for Greenough there are 2,850 electors and there are not nearly so many in the State electorate. For Irwin there are 4,800 on the Federal roll, which accounts also for Moore. When we follow the district of Moore south, we find it comes out near Wanneroo, and it is questionable whether the Federal subdivision of Moore will not merge into Fremantle. In order to make this proposal operative, I venture to say that in the Yilgarn State electorate it will be necessary to have four rolls, the main Yilgarn roll and three subdivisional rolls in order that the electorates in the Katanning subdivision shall be severally set out as being in the Yilgarn subdivision. Others in the Williams subdivision in Newdegate and Avon will have to have rolls. I have not gone into the question to ascertain whether York does not come into the Yilgarn electorate. So in an electorate like Yilgarn we shall require four rolls for an election, whereas only one is required to-day. I shall not weary the House by mentioning the district in which I reside—West Subiaco—which is in Fremantle and joins Perth, or Bakkatta where greater complications will arise. Here is another anomaly: Menzies is a small State electorate having on the roll only 287 electors, whereas on the Federal roll for Menzies there are 357 electors. We can assume that there will be more names on the Federal subdivision than on the Menzies State roll

and consequently there will have to be a corresponding roll for Leonora or Mount Margaret in order that electors may know where they are entitled to vote. It is said that under this proposal the State electoral officer will have nothing to do with the Assembly enrolments, which will be carried out by the Federal department. The State electoral officer, however, will remain and will have to function as heretofore for the Council rolls. He will still require his staff and his electoral agents, and will do the work as it has been done in the past. That means we shall be taking away 60 per cent. of his work and handing it to another institution. The State officer will have nothing to do with the enrolments but will come into the picture only when there is a State election. There cannot be two bosses, and so he will have to take the Assembly rolls that in the opinion of the Commonwealth electoral officer are correct.

Hon. F. H. Harris: Provision is made for two.

Hon. J. CORNELL: We cannot have the major contradicting the colonel. There can be only one colonel and that will be the Commonwealth officer, who will say that the rolls are right and must be accepted. There must be one subordinate and he will be the State electoral officer. The State officer will have to maintain his staff and will still require his office in order that the Legislative Council roll may be kept up to date. The recent allotment of the 400 blocks of land makes each holder eligible for enrolment for the Legislative Council, so there is another field of enrolment for the State electoral officer to cover. As the settlers become established, townships will spring up and businesses will grow, and so the work of the Chief Electoral officer and the roll of the Legislative Council will grow. The State department has been criticised for the condition of the Legislative Council roll. I have had a good deal to do with the roll and I say we have to be thankful for what the State department has done with the limited amount of money at its disposal. If there are thousands of people off the Legislative Council rolls, it is their fault, and not that of the Chief Electoral Officer or his staff. He has an efficient and reliable staff, just as the Commonwealth Electoral Office has. What I want to know from the Minister is what is going to be the monetary gain to Western Aus-

tralia by asking the State Electoral Department to give up its enrolling facilities, so far as the Legislative Assembly is concerned, to the Federal instrument. It will mean that probably a lesser staff will be required by the Chief Electoral Officer, but it is certain that a greater staff will be required by the Commonwealth enrolling instrument. Are the Commonwealth authorities going to do this extra work for nothing, or is the State expected to pay for the extra work? I venture to say the Commonwealth are not prepared to do it.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They have indicated it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If they do the work for nothing, they either have not enough work for the men they now have, or they are greater philanthropists than I thought they were. We have to put the monetary gain against the likely loss of efficiency. I think I have shown we are likely to lose efficiency by the change. I am not going to argue in favour of the monetary gain if by the change efficiency is lost. What actual benefit would be derived from this arrangement? It is said the first person to benefit by it will be the elector, in that he will have to put in only one card instead of two. To-day he is compelled by law to put in a card both for the State and Commonwealth. We know how our forbears had to work to get their votes. Now we are going to relieve the alleged overworked elector from the obligation of filling in more than one card. If he is not prepared to fill in the two cards as before, he ought to be disqualified for life as an elector. If he has not the energy to fill in a card for both rolls, he probably has not sufficient intelligence to exercise a vote. Many people would not vote if they were not forced by the Commonwealth to go to the poll. Will the arrangement make for greater expedition on polling day, when we contest a State election? We have it on the word of the Chief Electoral Officer that 65 State rolls will be required, in place of 50 now. I fail to see that we shall secure any greater efficiency or greater expedition in manipulating 65 rolls, with four or five in some electorates, where we had only to manipulate 50 before. There are also many anomalies. As the law stands, no person can become enrolled for either the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly un-

less he claims 14 days prior to the issue of the writ. The arrangement provides, to conform with the Federal law, that he can become enrolled up to 6 p.m. on the day of the issue of the writ. The same law will prevail for the Legislative Council elector as prevailed before. He will have to lodge his claim 14 days prior to the issue of the writ, but the Assembly elector may claim up to 6 o'clock on the day of the issue of the writ. That was as the Bill was originally drafted. I resent the imposition upon the Legislative Council elector as against the clemency extended to the Legislative Assembly elector. As an afterthought, another place inserted Clause 22a. The Bill says that the electoral instrument is forced to put every person's name on the roll for Legislative Assembly electorates, on lodging a claim card up to 6 p.m. on the day of the issue of the writ. Clause 22a says that when they are on the roll the Chief Electoral Officer, or the Divisional Returning Officer in the case of the Commonwealth, shall then take all the rolls and all the cards, and compare them, and every man who has lodged a claim 14 days prior to the issue of the writ, or up to 6 o'clock on the day of the issue of the writ, will be marked off on the Legislative Assembly roll, that is, the joint roll, as a person who is not qualified to vote. What could be more ridiculous? What complications will arise? Assume that all this paraphernalia and machinery be carried out. We may have a supplementary roll in which 400 claim cards are concerned. That is possible in any metropolitan centre. These may be lodged 13 clear days prior to the issue of the writ. All those names have to be starred. None of those people can vote. That will not give expedition at the polls. A man may be told he is on the roll, but that the authorities have put a star opposite his name, and that he cannot vote. A man may be starred to-day under the objection provision, but can vote on making a declaration that he is entitled to do so.

Hon. H. Seddon: There will be a lot of fun at the polling booth.

Hon. J. CORNELL: We will assume that 13 days prior to the issue of the writ 400 claim cards are lodged.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is not likely.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They may start a new road in the district.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I wish I could say that for the South Province. When I went up for election in 1924, 600 cards were put in an hour before the time allowed. When you, Mr. President, went up for election 500 claim cards were put in an hour before the time.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That does not happen in our Province.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It happened to me. There was an object in this. The law provided for 14 days in which to object to the names, but in this case the cards were not put in piecemeal, and we could not peruse the roll day by day and thus make objections. The cards were all put in once.

The Honorary Minister: Who was responsible?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The other side was always responsible. All is fair in love and war. Our side did not try to get in anything "crook." We had due consideration for the people compiling the roll. I am not attacking the other side. It was all in, and they kept within the law.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They complied with the Act.

The Honorary Minister: Do you remember the Central Province incident?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I was more concerned about my own province, but I remember the Yilgarn incident at the last election. Seventeen men went to the court and the man who witnessed their claim cards also, admitted that they had claimed enrolment in error, and were not entitled to go on the roll. The warden ruled that the registrar, having placed them on the roll, must star them. He did not strike them off the roll.

Hon. E. H. Harris: He sidestepped the position.

Hon. J. CORNELL: He kept within the law. The starring of those names means that none could vote at any polling booth within Yilgarn unless a declaration was made that a person was entitled to be on the roll, and to vote.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And they wisely refrained from doing so.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Nine of them made the declaration, but they have not yet been prosecuted. I took an interest in that election. I know that some of those men voted at the Southern Cross poll. Probably had I been in their place I would have done the

same and taken the risk. I would have looked around to see whether any one was likely to take action, and, if I thought the way was clear, I would have taken a chance.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would not be setting the electors a good example if you did.

Hon. J. CORNELL: These men did not require to be set such an example. Let us assume that 500 cards were put in a day after the expiry of the 14 days prior to the issue of the writ. All these names would be starred. One month after the declaration of the poll, the elected candidate may die. A by-election will then have to be held. The law provides that anyone else applying within that 14 days cannot go on the roll. What mark will be put against the 400 persons who were starred at the previous election to indicate that they could vote at by-elections? Is it intended to get out a new roll?

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Let them do what is done with brandy—put three stars against their names.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have had a lot of experience in this matter, and I know what can happen. As a parrot-cry or a phrase, the joint rolls may appear an excellent thing, but the arrangements will not work out in practice owing to the many defects of the scheme. Now as to powers of objection. There is one way of objecting in the case of the Assembly, and another way of objecting in the case of the Council. There again is an invidious distinction. However, I shall dismiss that by saying that a bigger price is put on objecting to a Legislative Assembly elector than on objecting to a Legislative Council elector—5s. in the first case and 2s. 6d. in the second. In that respect we are more liberal than the Assembly.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It puts us at a big discount, 50 per cent.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is claimed that if the arrangement is agreed to, the Bill will not become operative until after 1932. Then why the hurry? If the Federal Government had decided to bring down a Redistribution of Seats Bill, as they could do under the Constitution, I am afraid it would be goodbye to my old friend Texas Green. However, it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. The Federal Parliament has decided not to make a redistribution for the coming election. There is bound to be a

redistribution, however, for the election thereafter, and a Commonwealth census is due in 1931. When the Commonwealth census is completed and the Federal Parliament makes its redistribution, if in the meantime we have a redistribution it will be found that the Commonwealth basis of fixing divisional figures, so many up and so many down, will not square with the basis of fixing the quota so far as the State is concerned. Thus we shall have all the old anomalies, perhaps a little more intensified, and less elastic, than to-day. What necessity is there for passing the Bill if it is not to operate till 1932? It has been said that Commonwealth elections will take place this year and a Commonwealth census in 1931, and that the Bill is not to operate until 1932, but it has not been said that we shall have an election of our Legislative Assembly in 1930. Whether we like it or not, there also will be a Legislative Council election in 1930. I do not like it, because I may have to go out. It was thought once before that I was gone for good, but like all nuisances I cropped up again. Last year's Bill was given mature consideration on second reading, and a good scarifying in Committee; and I think the consensus of opinion in the House, even including the Minister to a slight extent, was that the Bill, although it looked well on paper, represented a machine that would not work well in practice.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is premature.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I hope I am not asking too much of the Minister when I invite him to endeavour to clear up some of the aspects to which attention has been drawn by Mr. Harris and myself. I assure the Minister that I am not opposed to joint rolls. I would be strongly in favour of them if Western Australia could have, as Tasmania has, group electorates. In Tasmania five State electorates are grouped and coincide with the Federal divisions. Tasmania elects an Assembly of 30 members from five electorates, each returning six members. Now I am about to put forward a simple expedient, and I am convinced that that simple expedient has more to commend it and less to disqualify it than any part of the Bill. The simple expedient is this: Let us accept, as we ought to accept, the Commonwealth claim card as *prima facie* evidence of the right to be enrolled for the Legislative Assembly.



Hon. J. Nicholson: So long as he shows that he has been resident here for the necessary time.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If a person has resided long enough in the Commonwealth to become qualified as a Commonwealth elector, it is an insult to our intelligence to suggest that he should live longer in a State in order to be qualified there. The Commonwealth law says that trade, commerce and intercourse shall be free amongst the States. Western Australia could have the same residential qualification as the Commonwealth. Let us make the qualifications uniform and declare that a man entitled to Commonwealth enrolment is *prima facie* also entitled to State enrolment. Then let us enter into an arrangement with the Commonwealth Electoral Department to supply the State Electoral Department with duplicates of all claim cards. The machinery could remain the same. That is a simple expedient much easier of consummation than the Bill, and with much more to commend it than the cumbersome machinery which the measure proposes. A duplicate of the Commonwealth claim card would be furnished to the State Electoral Officer, whose position would be what it is to-day. He would see that the duplicate card conformed to our law. If it did, the applicant's name would be placed on the State roll; if it did not, the name would not be enrolled. I have discussed this simple expedient with a good few men who have taken risks in election matters, and they say the only objection that could be raised to it is the duplicate card made out by the Commonwealth. But if we are prepared to trust the Commonwealth to compile a joint electoral roll, we ought to be prepared to trust the Commonwealth to make a duplicate of every claim card lodged. The proposal is not costly, and I believe it would be infinitely better for all concerned. I do not care whether I vote for or against the second reading of the Bill. That is how I feel with regard to it. From my actual experience of elections during many years, and not only in this State but throughout the Commonwealth, I am endeavouring to give hon. members warning of what I consider to be the many pitfalls and traps that lie dormant in this piece of legislation.

Hon. G. W. Miles: From what you say, you ought to vote against the Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I would be inclined even to vote for the Bill, to support the measure as it stands, if only that would

bring home to its supporters the conviction that they are liable to find themselves hoist with their own petard, simply for want of forethought. I support the second reading.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

## BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT— CONTINUANCE.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [8.57] in moving the second reading said: This is a measure to provide for the continuance of the Industries Assistance Act for a further period of one year. A similar Bill has been before the House on so many occasions that hon. members will be familiar with the reasons which have made necessary the continuance, from year to year, of the board's activities. The desirability of closing down the board's operations, however, has not been lost sight of by the Government. No new accounts except with discharged soldier settlers, are being opened; and the board's policy is wherever practicable, to put the settler on his own resources, by placing him under the Agricultural Bank, with the object of ensuring that he will pay off the amount he owes by means of an instalment mortgage. As will be seen from the relative numbers of active and of funded accounts, highly satisfactory progress has been made in this direction; but the position has not reached a stage when a general policy of discontinuance of assistance could be put into operation by the present or any other Government without serious disorganisation of the board's finances. In addition, there would be considerable hardship imposed on a fairly large number of settlers, who would under such conditions find it very difficult indeed to get credit from outside institutions. I have here a short statement dealing with the activities of the board, which should be of interest to members. The number of fully and partly assisted settlers on the board's books now stands at 837, of whom 587 are discharged soldiers. Of the 898 other debtors who are not receiving further assistance, 496 have had their debts fixed on instalment mortgage, the amount of debt thus funded being £506,761 15s. 11d. Taking the position as it stood at the close of the board's financial

year ended 31st March, the total amount owing by sundry borrowers, £1,666,925 0s. 8d. shows a reduction on the previous year's figures of £213,360 15s. 3d., made up of bad debts written off £64,264 18s. 9d., debts cancelled £12,566 15s. 5d. and general net improvement £136,529 1s. 5d. Advances made to borrowers during the financial year totalled £713,197 7s. 3d. The amount received from crops and produce of the 1927-28 season was £706,231 14s. 8d., but it is expected to collect a further amount of £65,660 1s. 2d. from equities in the wheat pool and other produce, thereby bringing the total harvest receipts up to £771,891 15s. 10d. The aggregate amount of debt to be carried forward from 31st March, after applying the value of pool equities, etc. was estimated to be £1,405,820 0s. 8d. The board's liabilities to the General Loan Fund stood on March 31st, at £2,310,898 13s. 4d. The loss of capital to the same date amounted to £551,649 6s. 8d., of which £25,244 6s. 10d. represented loss on purchase and sale of commodities in the initial year of the board's existence; £130,333 12s. 5d. excess costs of administration and interest paid, over earnings: £344,547 11s. 4d. bad debts written off, and £51,523 16s. 1d. debts cancelled. Included in these figures is £37,131 8s. 6d. losses incurred with soldier settlers. Although losses have been considerable, they have been offset by very distinct benefits, and on two important occasions the board has tendered invaluable assistance to the State. Following the crop failure in 1914, it was the means of enabling a very large number of settlers, faced with complete stoppage of credit, to remain in occupation of their holdings, and again, upon the termination of the war, the establishment of upwards of 1,700 discharged soldiers on wheat farms was made possible with the board's assistance. Many of the most notable instances of success have been achieved by soldier settlers under the agency of the board. The total amount advanced by the board since its inception is £12,086,603 12s. 11d., of which £1,985,789 1s. 11d. represented payments made to other Government departments. The total receipt from crops during the same period was £11,655,344 representing a wheat production of 43,875,267 bushels. During the past year 105 settlers have obtained their clearances, making a total to date of 1,895.

For the ensuing harvest, 14,990 tons of super. have been supplied to crop 405,950 acres of land, and with the prospects of a payable harvest, a further improvement, both from a cash and security value standpoint, in the board's position could be looked for. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. A. LOVEKIN** (Metropolitan) [9.5]: I see no reason why the Bill should be opposed, although it comes before us every year. What appeals to me is that the Government are winding up the board gradually. It would be wrong to attempt to push matters. So long as the settlers are being relieved from the board and put into other avenues of assistance, and so long as there is a reduction every year, we should be satisfied to continue passing the Bill until such time as there is a final winding up of the board. I will support the second reading.

**HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.6]: I also will support the Bill. During a recent visit to New South Wales I met Sir Robert Gibson, the chairman of the Commonwealth Bank, and in a long discussion regarding the prospects of Western Australia I endeavoured to induce him to come over here. Eventually he came over, and was given a great deal of information. I had with me one of our yearbooks, and I was conversant with the fact that, under the operations of the board up to that time, nearly ten millions of money had been advanced, and considerably over eight millions had been repaid. When I drew the attention of Sir Robert to this wonderful repayment, he was astounded. We all realise the splendid work done by the board in 1914, and the great assistance it has been to the settlers in the post-war period. We are all hopeful that the time may soon arrive when prosperity will attend the efforts of those men, and they will get off the board, even if then compelled to come under the operations of the Agricultural Bank. Those of us who are engaged in business in a large way will remember the serious position in 1914 and the enormous assistance the operations of the board have been to the State. Successive Governments are to be congratulated on the splendid results in the repayment of so large an amount of money. I only hope

the same success will continue to attend the efforts of the board until eventually it is dissolved.

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—DRIED FRUITS ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the previous day.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of principal Act.  
Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 9.13 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 26th September, 1928.*

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

## QUESTION—PEAK HILL DISTRICT.

*Geological Survey.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Mines: Can he give the House any information as to when the geological survey of the Peak Hill district, promised to the people of Peak Hill some six years ago, will be commenced?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The geological survey of Peak Hill has been noted for early attention. It is not possible at this juncture to say when it will be commenced, for the reason that the whole of the field staff, which is a very small one, is at present fully occupied on other important work. The staff consists of two field officers in addition to the Government Geologist. The latter is at present on his way to Kimberley in connection with oil boring and the remaining two are at Kalgoorlie assisting Dr. Stillwell. The Peak Hill work will, however, be put in hand as soon as possible.

## QUESTION—WATERSIDE WORKERS' STRIKE.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that twelve steamers are lying idle anchored outside Fremantle harbour? 2, What steps do the Government propose to take to enable those steamers to discharge their cargo? 3, Is he aware, according to Press reports, that a band of men who refuse to abide by the industrial laws of Australia (in other words "pickets") are parading the Fremantle wharves with a view to preventing from working men who are desirous of obeying those laws? 4, What steps do the Government propose to take to ensure protection to law-abiding citizens?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The discharge of ships' cargo is not a function of the Government. 3, No. 4, I am not aware that law-abiding citizens are being molested.

## QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR, UP-RIVER EXTENSION.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Works: 1, What is the approximate distance between Blackwall Reach and the present Fremantle harbour? 2, What is the average depth of water over the whole distance? 3, What is the average width? 4, What would be the approximate cost of