

ments. I have pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.20 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 15th August, 1946.

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

QUESTIONS.

COMPREHENSIVE WATER SCHEME.

As to Investigation by Commonwealth.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

1, Does he know whether it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government to send the investigating committee appointed, or to be appointed by it, to inquire into all aspects of the comprehensive water scheme to this State, to hear evidence from farmers and others within the area to be served by the scheme?

2, If he does not know, will he ascertain at the earliest moment whether it is so intended?

3, In the event of its not being intended to send the committee over here for the purpose stated, and in view of the increasing opposition amongst farmers to the present proposals applying to the southern scheme,

will he make representations to the Commonwealth Government to the effect that the committee be sent over here to hear evidence from those concerned with that scheme?

4, If the Commonwealth Government will not agree to its committee being sent over here to conduct such investigation, will he arrange for the local committee as announced in "The West Australian" of the 14th inst. to visit the area concerned in the southern scheme, and the drier excluded areas to the east and south-east of it for the purpose of hearing evidence as to the needs for the agricultural portion of the scheme?

5, If he is not agreeable to doing this, will he explain his reason for not doing so?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, Yes.

3, 4, 5, See answer to 2.

NORTH-WEST.

(a) As to Concessional Freights on Fruit.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for the North-West:

1, Is it the intention of the Government to revive the practice of conveying fruit at a concessional freight rate by rail and sea to residents of the northern portion of the State?

2, If the reply to the above question is "yes," will he outline particulars of proposed concession?

3, What is the approximate date upon which such practice will commence?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

1, Yes.

2, Arrangements have been made for a concessional flat rate of 5s. per case of fruit from grower to purchaser. Such charge will include rail and shipping freight, also wharfage and handling charges.

3, The concession will be available as soon as a schedule of regular sailing dates can be arranged and made public.

(b) As to Medical Officer for Port Hedland.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Health:

What action has been taken by the Public Health Department in connection with the appointment of a suitable medical officer for Port Hedland?

The MINISTER replied:

The vacant position of medical officer, Port Hedland, is being discussed with a doctor, and it is hoped that an appointment will be made within the next few days.

DOCK.

As to Albany v. Fremantle as Site.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works: Will the Government arrange for Mr. Tyde-man to inspect Albany and consider it as an alternative site for a dock to Fremantle?

2, If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1 and 2, This matter will receive consideration at a later date.

BILL—RAILWAY (HOPETOUN-RAVENSTHORPE) DISCONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. HILL (Albany) [4.35]: I support the Bill and consider that the Government is doing the only sensible thing. I am not going to say that the construction of this railway was a blunder, because it was built something over 40 years ago. In those days we had ships trading on our coast. The "Grace Darling," a small schooner under Captain Fred Douglas, the "Iris," another schooner under Captain William Douglas and the "Maitland" under Captain Bert Douglas, were among the ships trading along our south coast. They were all very small vessels, and today, like the three men that I have mentioned, have passed on. From time to time there are suggestions that Hopetoun should be developed as a port. I remember talking one day to Captain Bert Douglas, who knew the south coast probably better than any other man. He described Hopetoun, as a port, as absolutely impossible. I have a chart here and if members are inclined to doubt the word of Captain Douglas I suggest that they carefully study it.

The harbour at Hopetoun is a small area surrounded by reefs. The maximum depth is about 15 ft., and alongside the jetty, when it was there, there was a depth of only 10 ft. There are very few wheat ships today that draw less than 27 ft. I feel

that sooner or later the Ravensthorpe district will come into importance as a mineral field. Incidentally some of the original prospectors of that district were cousins of my mother; I refer to the Dallas brothers. I am of the opinion that when the development of the mineral resources of Ravensthorpe comes about it will be a far more economic proposition to construct a motor road to Esperance. From the point of view of Ravensthorpe as an agricultural centre there is no doubt it will be best, as the Minister suggested, to connect the area, if necessary, with the existing railway service and use the port of Albany. I might explain that all over the world the big ship is replacing the small ship, and there is a demand for a fewer number of ports. I am confident that the Government is doing the only thing possible in introducing this Bill to remove the railway.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [4.38]: I happen to represent the district that the member for Albany has just mentioned in connection with the Bill now before the Chamber. I have represented it for many years, and in season and out of season the vagaries of the weather have been against a most wonderful belt of country, which has not only mineral, but agricultural wealth, and is only a few miles from the ocean. For a long time many families, with hearts like lions, have battled in an endeavour to make good on the land in that area. Just when everything appeared to be bright in regard to the wheat season a dry spell came along with the result that instead of getting 10 or 12 bags of wheat to the acre they did not get even one bag. It is regrettable that the Bill has come before the House for the reason that the seasons have been against the settlers, and that in spite of the demand for copper and other metals during the war period and during the first world war, when there were about 500 men working at Ravensthorpe, the copper mines were compelled to close down.

Enormous mineral wealth has yet to be mined in that district and successful operations in that respect could be carried out if the demand for copper and other minerals should ever arise. Certainly the minerals are there in abundance. Should ever that happen the district will come into its own. It is regrettable that the Bill has to be

introduced, but no opposition can reasonably be voiced against it. A number of families have been farming in the district, but, like those engaged in mining, they have found the cost of production so great and the distance from a railway such that a continuance of operations became impossible. So far as my memory goes, the harbour at Hopetoun has been gradually silting up and, in fact, no captain would think of taking his ship there for fear of wrecking it. Unfortunately a combination of adverse circumstances has resulted in the district being in the doldrums for a number of years. I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

**BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT
AMENDMENT.**

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small but rather important Bill, which deals with two distinct matters. In the first place it seeks to amend Section 126 of the Transfer of Land Act, which makes provision for mortgage money to be paid into the Treasury in full in the case of a mortgagee being out of the State. Should the amount not be paid in full and if there is a balance owing, the Act does not make provision for the balance to be paid in on behalf of the mortgagee should he be out of the State. This appears to have been an oversight and the Bill seeks to overcome the difficulty by providing that, should there be a balance owing and the mortgagee be away from the State, the mortgagor can pay the balance into the Treasury at the request of the mortgagee. The Act does not benefit anyone apart from the mortgagor.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is this irrespective of the date fixed in the mortgage for repayment?

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No. This applies only when the mortgage falls

due; not before. The reason for this amendment is that we have had quite a number of cases where a balance has remained and as the Act contains no provision enabling the mortgagor to pay in the balance on behalf of the mortgagee, the mortgagor has had to continue paying interest on the mortgage. This provision will enable the mortgage to be discharged and the registered proprietor of the property can then make use of it as he may desire.

The second amendment deals with the position that arises where a mortgage has been paid in full and, through ignorance or inadvertence, the mortgagor has not secured the discharge of the mortgage. Only recently we have had three applications from lawyers asking us to make provision for such cases. I wish members to understand that I am dealing with a mortgage which has been completely repaid, but which the mortgagor, through ignorance or inadvertence, has not had discharged. No provision is made in the Act for the Chief Justice to discharge such a mortgage. The Bill provides that the Commissioner of Titles may have the mortgage discharged if he is satisfied that it has been paid in full and that it was not discharged because of ignorance or inadvertence on the part of the mortgagor. Many such cases happened on the Goldfields, to the embarrassment of the owner of the land. The Bill is self-explanatory and the amendments are essential in order to make the principal Act more efficient and more helpful to mortgagors. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [4.53]: After hearing the Minister's explanation of the measure, which apparently is designed to remedy a defect discovered in the principal Act, I can find no objection to the matter being expedited as much as possible. If the facts are as the Minister has stated them to be—and I have no reason to judge them to be otherwise—I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 126.

Mr. WITHERS: I have no objection to the clause, but I would ask the Minister, in view of the fact that the Act is out of print, whether he will have it reprinted, with the amendment, for the benefit of members.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I will undertake to do so.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I asked the Minister, when he was moving the second reading, whether provision had been made that the principal should be paid only in accordance with the terms of the mortgage, that is, on the date fixed by the mortgage. That does not appear to be quite clear. I refer the Minister to the proposed new Subsection (2), fourth line. After the words "have been paid" in that line the words "in accordance with the terms of the mortgage" should be inserted. The matter is of importance to trust estates, as a condition of the mortgage is that the mortgagor will not repay the principal before the due date.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I see no objection to the suggested amendment, but I will quote a minute by the Commissioner of Titles on the point. He says—

Section 123, as the Act is at present constituted, enables a mortgagor, if the mortgage is out of the State, and the time for payment has arrived....

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [4.58] in moving the second reading said: This is a small but important Bill, owing to the shortage of doctors. In 1940 the member for Pingelly moved an important and effective amendment to the principal Act. It has worked well and has been of considerable help not only to the department but to the people of the State. The present Bill makes provision for one man only and he is an alien who has served with the Commonwealth Emergency Medical Service. His service has been on the same basis as that of doctors who practised in regional areas. This amendment gives consideration to the time he acted as a doctor on behalf of the Commonwealth with the

Commonwealth emergency medical service under the National Security Regulation. Those regulations have been discontinued and consequently the measure under which the doctor was working has been discontinued.

Mr. Mann: Was there only one doctor?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. He was a doctor at Nannup and his services were sought far and wide. He has been sent to a regional area at Derby and is now acting as a doctor there.

Mr. Mann: What is his name?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is Dr. Hertz. Through this Bill we seek to take into consideration the services he renders to this State through the emergency medical services, and to count the period he spent in that capacity as part of his time spent as a regional doctor. Regional doctors desiring to qualify as medical practitioners have to serve for seven years or more. If this Bill be passed, this particular doctor after he has served for four years as a regional doctor, will be entitled to be registered in Western Australia as a medical practitioner.

Mr. Mann: Was he at Wooroloo?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am not sure of that. The amendment seeks to enable this man to become a registered doctor, in the same way as if he had been acting as a regional doctor from the time he started work. I cannot see anything that can be objected to. The people of Derby are anxious for him to stay there and the member for Kimberley is very anxious for him to remain, because he is of particularly good calibre and is very competent. The B.M.A. has agreed to the proposal and so has the Medical Board. I hope members thoroughly understand the position and that, in the interests of the health of the community, they will agree to the Bill and so allow this man to count the three years in which he acted as a medical man under Commonwealth jurisdiction to be taken into consideration as part of his time as a regional doctor so that, when he has served for seven years, he will have the same privilege as those who have served their whole period as regional doctors in this State. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. N. Keenan, debate adjourned.

BILL—FEEDING STUFFS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Order Discharged.

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture,
Order discharged.

BILL—BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th August.

MR. PERKINS (York) [5.5]: This Bill is one that has been asked for by the board of the bulk handling company and is entirely in accordance with the wishes of the company. Therefore it is not likely there will be any opposition to it in this House. Certainly I fully support it; but I would like to touch on one or two points. I do not think the Minister made it perfectly clear what the intentions of the company are. If members will examine the articles of association of the company and the record of events at the time the company was constituted, and also the proceedings when the shares were allotted to growers, they will understand that the sole purpose of the issue of the shares was to provide a body of shareholders to act as the final control of the company. That is the sole purpose of these £1 shares. The shares were allotted from the tolls which had been deducted from the growers' returns at the time their wheat was received; and as the growers cease to be active in the industry and cease to deliver wheat to the company, the shares are taken back by the process outlined by the Minister and are cancelled.

In the latter part of his speech, replying to an interjection, the Minister framed his answer in such a way that it could be interpreted that the shares still carry voting power in the hands of the company. Actually they do not. The only shares which carry voting power are those in the hands of active growers and still owned by those growers. Shares which are cancelled by the process outlined in the Bill go into a kind of share re-purchase account and are dead, so far as voting power is concerned. I desire to make that perfectly clear, because otherwise some misunderstanding might arise and some people might imagine that the shares in this share re-purchase account could be used by

the company to influence decisions at general meetings. Actually, the procedure at any meeting of shareholders is for the shareholders to be checked as they go into the conference room. Each grower's name is checked against a master list held by the company, and in any vote taken it is only the holders of shares who have actually delivered wheat to the company in the last couple of years who have any say as to the proceedings or control of the company. I wish to make that point clear, because there should be no misapprehension about this matter. The control of the company is entirely in the hands of those using the facilities provided by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

The company has had a really wonderful record. It is handling wheat much cheaper than are any of the Government concerns in the Eastern States. It is an outstanding achievement on the part of growers, and the other active members of co-operative organisations in this State, to have provided something for themselves in a much more effective manner than any Government departments have been able to provide like facilities in any other part of the Commonwealth and possibly in any other part of the world; because the set-up achieved in Western Australia has been copied elsewhere. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill and commending it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th August.

MR. BRAND (Greenough) [5.12]: The effort by the Minister to bring about the universal closure of shops at 5.30 p.m. and to abolish the late shopping night is a progressive step. As, during the war years, shops throughout the metropolitan area, and in many cases in country areas, closed at 5.30 p.m. and no great cry was raised against the system, it should be acceptable for the future.

Cases have been brought to our notice, of course, in which office staffs and others who finish work at 5.30 p.m., wish to retain the privilege of doing their shopping between 5.30 p.m. and 6 o'clock; but I feel that, as with many other things, this is a matter of habit and custom and, after the measure has been put into force, it will be accepted without any difficulty.

The abolition of the late shopping night is acceptable both to metropolitan and to country centres. During my travels in the country, I heard no great cry against the proposal; in fact, we have reached the stage where one section of the community is quite happy to work in with another and to try to make working conditions as beneficial as possible. No reason is seen why shop employees should remain working until 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. The question of the half-day closure is one that has caused some comment and, though the Minister points out that of 119 shopping centres, 39 now close on Wednesday, five on Thursday and one only on Tuesday, I do believe that it is quite democratic that we should retain the right to close on whatever day we choose in the country. There are many reasons why that should be so, but for the time being I will content myself with saying that there is a general trend towards the closing of shops on Saturdays, as is instanced in my own area by the case of Three Springs, where the shops now voluntarily close on Saturday afternoons.

As requested by the Minister, I took the trouble to write to every road board in the Greenough electorate, and in three out of the seven shopping centres the shops are now closing on Saturday afternoons. However, I feel that the other four, for the reasons stated, such as the arrival of country trains, mail facilities, entertainments, etc., should receive consideration, and I hope the Minister will consider their claims. For the time being I am pleased to see that some effort has been made to bring about the universal closure of shops—the abolition of late shopping—and to a degree some understanding on the matter of half-day closing of shops throughout the State. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [5.18]: I agree with much of what the member for Greenough has said. I think 5.30 p.m. closing is preferable to 6 o'clock clos-

ing, particularly in winter time, because it gives the employees a chance to get out of the shops in the hours of daylight, but at the same time I think 9 a.m. is an extraordinarily late hour to have to wait for the shops to open in summer time. People in the country do not wait until they are burned out of their beds by the sun before getting up. It frequently happens that after a man starts his day's work he breaks some part of an implement or some part of the harness that cannot be repaired on the farm, and he has to go to town to get a spare part. In that case he would have to hang about the town for a couple of hours, waiting for the shops to open. While I agree with the 5.30 closing, I think provision might be made to open the shops earlier than 9 a.m. in summer in places where need might arise for it.

I am uncompromisingly opposed to the compulsory Saturday half-holiday. I think people should be able to adopt whatever day suits their particular locality. Compulsory Saturday afternoon closing would impose considerable hardship on residents in country districts. The farm employee is entitled to his half day, as is anybody else, but if he gets that half day on Saturday he cannot go into town to do his shopping, which means that he has to go in on some other day of the week. That will not make things easier on the farm because he will have to get two half-days off in the week, Saturday and the day on which he does his shopping. Another serious objection is the encouragement that will be given to centralisation. This will not apply to places far away from the metropolitan area, but it certainly will apply to places within, say, 150 miles of Perth. When this measure becomes law there will immediately be requests for fast passenger trains to Perth, which will probably leave towns 150 miles away at mid-day on Saturday, and there will probably be trains going back at midnight on Sundays.

Unless I am mistaken it will not be long before country people will rue the introduction of the compulsory Saturday half-holiday. People coming from the country districts will see goods displayed in city shops at reduced prices, and their orders will come down by mail and the business of the country storekeepers will fall off. That may not affect places such as Kalgoorlie, where there is a big shopping centre, but it will

affect places within a reasonable distance of Kalgoorlie because travelling facilities will be provided to take people into Kalgoorlie, with a detrimental effect on the local shopkeepers. As the member for Greenough pointed out, most of these country places—or the larger of them—have road mails going out to serve the districts round them. Those road mails cannot get away until the train arrives from Perth with perishables and mails. The trains frequently arrive on a Friday, with the result that the road mails go out on the Saturday.

I have already had a series of complaints from one district where the road mail goes out on a Saturday or Sunday. The main point is that the train gets in on the Saturday morning, and the Railway Department has endeavoured to expedite the running of that train but cannot get it there at an earlier time. Now these people, instead of being able to get their mails and perishables on a Sunday by the road mail, do not get them until the succeeding Tuesday. That is not the only place where such a state of affairs would exist. I cannot see any reason why the choosing of the day for the half-holiday should not be left to the people of the district concerned. They know what suits them and have had opportunity in the past, under our existing Act, of petitioning for a change to Saturday if it were desirable or, on the other hand, of choosing any other day that they might prefer instead of the Saturday half-holiday. I strongly oppose the making of this provision compulsory. I think it should be left to the people concerned. The other portions of the Bill, however, I support.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [5.25]: I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the two previous speakers, inasmuch as I have no objection to the earlier closing on the ordinary days of the week. Following the introduction of a similar measure by the Minister last year I contacted all the shopping centres in my area and the local governing authorities, some of which went to the extent of taking a plebiscite among the local residents on the question of Saturday closing. Without exception, they are all against the proposal for arbitrarily closing on Saturday afternoons, and favour the principle which operates now, that it should be a matter for local option. In my electorate three different days are observed as

half-holidays, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, in accordance with the convenience of the people of the districts concerned. The main factors are the train and mail services. If Saturday is to be the closing day for some of those districts it will mean that people will never have the opportunity of obtaining supplies of fresh vegetables.

Mr. Read: They do not come under this clause.

Mr. LESLIE: Possibly not, but we must remember that most of the country people are not in a position to get on a tram, pay 2d. fare and then buy their vegetables and the week-end joint.

Mr. Seward: In the country the perishables go to the grocers' stores.

Mr. LESLIE: I agree. To return to my argument, for the majority of these people it involves a journey by car or other motor vehicle of at least ten miles into town and ten miles out, a total of 20 miles and sometimes up to 60 miles, in order to buy their foodstuffs. They therefore have to pick the time when they can obtain the greatest facilities. They do not want to have to make the trip every week, or more than once a week. In a number of centres it is the practice for the people to go to town only once per fortnight particularly—I stress this—during those seasons in the year when they are compelled to devote every minute of their time to farming operations.

Seasonal conditions lay down what operations shall be carried out on the farm. To get his crop in with the maximum benefit—the farmer knows this—he must get his seed in when the ground is in its most receptive condition, a couple of days after rain. Unfortunately we cannot lay down that there will be no rain on a Thursday or a Friday, so that they may have the week-end clear. If it rains on a Friday or Saturday these people work even on Sunday, as they must in their own interests and in the interests of economy and production generally. They are dependent upon seasonal conditions, and not on man-made conditions such as exist in the city. Therefore their opportunity of visiting their main centre and doing their shopping is not a matter that they can decide for themselves. Most country businesses are either one-man or family affairs. It is not a question of a great number of employees being concerned, who are deprived of pleasure and entertainment or

sport, as the case may be on Saturday afternoons, through having to work. They are mostly small businesses where the owner of the business lives in. If the Saturday half-holiday is arbitrarily applied everywhere we will merely cause a set of conditions similar to that applying in the case of S.P. betting, and we will need a host of policemen to try to trap these people, owing to the back-door trade.

Mr. Seward: Will they have the Saturday half-holiday?

Mr. LESLIE: They will not have it, but that is the position that will arise, as the farmer will be compelled—owing to circumstances outside his own control—to fit the whole of his operations in with seasonal conditions. He will find people who are ready to meet him because they understand his position. For those reasons the introduction of an arbitrary law of this nature will not suit every part of the State. If conditions prevailed everywhere similar to those in the metropolitan area I would have no objection to it. I could then see no objection to closing all day Saturday. I would then prefer to see it, because one of the dangers is centralisation, to which the member for Pingelly alluded. The concentration of business in the city would be eliminated. The country people would not have to fear competition from business people in the metropolitan area, because of the people in the country at certain times of the year being able to do their shopping in the metropolitan area. No great inconvenience will be experienced by the industrial people or by those who live in the closely settled areas, irrespective of what day is chosen for the half-holiday, but it will make a very great difference in the country areas.

The Minister for Justice: It does not matter in the country on other than mail days.

Mr. LESLIE: It does affect them regarding perishables.

The Minister for Justice: They arrive that day.

Mr. LESLIE: If the Bill be agreed to, it means that the Commissioner of Railways and his Minister will have to get busy and alter the train services in order to meet the altered conditions that will be set up.

The Minister for Works: That might be a good thing.

Mr. LESLIE: It might be, but it would also mean that the related services would have to be altered as well. Perhaps the only way in which we could overcome the conditions that would arise in such circumstances would be to remove all restrictions on road transport and allow private enterprise to bring goods from the markets into the consumer areas without any restrictions at all. If that were done, the goods would be transported at suitable times.

The Minister for Justice: In my electorate the shopping day is on Friday, with the half-holiday on Saturday.

Mr. LESLIE: The people there may have the benefit of mail and train services that suit them. As a matter of fact, in portion of my electorate the half-holiday is observed on Saturdays, but in those places it makes no difference to them what day is chosen for the half-holiday, because the train service is suitable. In other portions of the electorate, a Saturday half-holiday would make conditions absolutely impossible. Let members consider the position along the Bonnie Rock line, where there is one train a week. It goes up on Fridays and returns on Tuesdays. The people there have to fit in with the train service and the only time they are at their siding is when the train arrives, so that they can pick up their goods and mails. It would be futile for them to go along in the middle of the week when the storekeeper might have had to hang on to the perishables for three or four days. Further than that, at some sidings there is no storekeeper or attendant, and it is necessary for people in such districts to travel upwards of 20 or 30 miles to be at the siding to receive the goods direct from the train.

Mr. Graham: If there is no store at the siding, it would not matter much.

Mr. LESLIE: No, but it would matter at adjacent places. In many instances, the storekeeper is only an agent, but he would be covered by this legislation. He carries lines not of a perishable nature, lines such as farm machinery, oils and other heavy materials. He may act as the receiving agent for goods, but he will not carry them over lengthy periods, because it is not his responsibility. In such circumstances, a great deal of inconvenience will be caused. It has been suggested that one benefit that

will accrue to country people is that it will enable shop employees to indulge in Saturday sport. The number affected in that respect would be so small that they need hardly be taken into consideration, in view of the position of other sections of the community vitally concerned. Another point is that in many country districts sporting fixtures are, for various reasons, held on Sundays. Take the position at Goomalling, which is a large centre. The people there have their football games on Sundays because they find they can secure the services of umpires from Perth. Irrespective of when the half-holiday was fixed, they would still hold their sports on Sundays throughout that area.

The Minister for Works: They could get very good umpires from Northam.

MR. LESLIE: They may have tried them and found them wanting! We have had some from there for Wyalkatchem, and some have been good and some bad. Perhaps the local sporting fraternity feel that they get a better spin from umpires from the metropolitan area, although I would not say that they do.

The Minister for Works: They do not.

MR. LESLIE: Reverting to the Bill, I suggest that local conditions should demand special treatment and nothing could be more reasonable than to allow the people to decide for themselves which day suits them best. That system has operated for years. If it has inconvenienced any, the number so inconvenienced has been infinitesimal, and cannot be considered in view of the upset this proposed alteration would bring about. In accordance with definite instructions I have received from my constituents, I must oppose the provision in the Bill which relates to a compulsory Saturday half-holiday.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [5.35]: The electors in my constituency are rather mixed respecting their views on the Bill. At present, three towns have the Saturday half-holiday, while two other towns open on Saturday afternoons.

MR. J. Hegney: Majority rule!

MR. MANN: That is not always so. For instance, if majority opinion prevailed in this House, the decisions on many Bills would be reversed. The feeling throughout most farming areas is that Saturday is the

day for shopping. In the summer months, when the farmers are harvesting, many of them regard it as a waste of time, but shopping has to be done. In my opinion, the question as to when shops should close is one for people to decide for themselves. There should be no hard and fast rule. I appreciate that such conditions could easily be applied throughout the metropolitan area, and in that respect I think the Government could as easily require shops here to be closed at 12 o'clock on Saturdays instead of at 1 o'clock.

MR. WATTS: They could close them altogether.

MR. MANN: Yes, so far as we are concerned in the country. I know, of course, that the war has made a difference. When shops were compelled to close in the country areas great hostility was displayed, but now the feeling has died down somewhat. A Bill of this description has been before the House previously, and I am wondering what the feeling on the subject of the Saturday half-holiday is in a centre like Northam. The shops still open on Saturday afternoons there.

MR. SEWARD: Yes, they went back to it.

MR. MANN: How does the Minister feel on that point?

The Minister for Works: He strongly advocates this Bill, and always has done so.

MR. MANN: Perhaps the Minister has the people of Northam under his thumb. Most members listen to what their constituents desire and do not force their views upon those who elect them.

The Minister for Works: I think you and I are pretty safe.

MR. MANN: One cannot always be perfectly definite about that. I hope the Government will agree to the people deciding by way of a referendum what day shall be chosen for the half-holiday. That is merely fair and in accordance with British justice.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [5.38]: I do not think anyone could grumble at the principle underlying the Bill, which would be all right provided it worked no hardship on minorities. In that latter respect there can be no doubt at all, having regard to the points made by other speakers on this side of the House indicating that the measure will

work substantial hardship. I can understand members who sit behind the Government not caring a great deal whether the measure goes through or not, for there are only two members on the Government side of the House who might be expected to share to some degree the fears that we entertain. One of them is the Minister for Works himself, whose constituency embraces a not very substantial proportion of the agricultural country. He, of course, says that everyone up there is in favour of the Bill.

The Minister for Works: I do not.

Mr. DONEY: I do not suppose he has made inquiries in that respect to canvass the opinions of the farmers. I will swear that he has not. If we take the State by and large we shall find that farmers almost to a man will be against Saturday closing while the rest of the population will be almost entirely favourable to Saturday closing. The habit of the farmer is to go into the town on Saturday for his sport and, while he is there he likes to find the store open so that he can purchase the goods he requires, particularly perishables. In a number of instances the trains arrive that day with perishables so necessary to carry the housewife over the Sunday and the beginning of the next week.

I cannot see why it is necessary to be so arbitrary about the matter. There is no special virtue in upsetting the working and shopping arrangements of so many people merely for the sake of being uniform and having everyone doing the same thing at the same time. If this proposal be carried into effect, it will become a piece of very oppressive legislation. Some members seem to think that people will accept it after an experience of three or four years, but that is not the way to look at it. I say that if a substantial number of the people can show good reason why legislation of this sort should not be enacted, they have every right to be listened to. All this striving after uniformity does not appeal to me at all.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.42]: I propose to support the second reading of the measure, but I must say that while uniformity in itself is very desirable, it is not altogether desirable unless the circumstances applicable in every case are themselves uniform. This cannot be so in a State like Western Australia and in circumstances such

as exist here. Nevertheless, I regard the idea underlying the Bill as an extremely laudable one and one that ought to be brought into operation as quickly as possible without any more inconvenience than is necessary.

It seems to me that so many townships in the country have adopted the Saturday afternoon closing system that it cannot be very long before the greater number will have voluntarily done the same thing, and we should have narrowed down the issue simply to those others where considerable hardship might be caused mainly through the incidence of transport. Before Saturday afternoon closing is forced on those people, consideration should be given by the transport authorities to providing them with facilities on different days of the week. In my own district I believe there is absolute unanimity on this subject; I think that all the shops in the six or seven towns of various sizes in the electorate now close on Saturday afternoon and have done so for months or in some cases for years.

The Minister for Justice: That is very helpful from a sports point of view.

Mr. WATTS: It is found quite satisfactory in that area, but in the majority of cases in that part of the State, transport facilities are immensely superior to those that exist in some other places. There are more regular transport services to the larger centres of population, and the services catering for those places run on such days of the week as not to make Saturday closing difficult, and so none of those places has had any complaint against the proposals in the Bill. We seem to be seeking uniformity simply for uniformity's sake, and without giving much consideration to the difficulties of some people who, while they have been made light of by jeers from the Government side of the House, have a great deal of substance in them. Speaking for myself, however, because the proposal seems desirable and is not going to affect any of the people I represent, I feel inclined to support it.

Regarding the 5.30 p.m. closing on the ordinary days of the week, there is no difficulty about that except insofar as the Minister for Labour mentioned to the House. I propose to overcome that in Committee by an amendment which I am having prepared. I understood from the Minister for Labour that it is not intended to proceed with the Committee stage immediately and

therefore I have not yet had the amendment drafted. Though the Minister made the point fairly plain, I should like to amplify it. The request from the Katanning Chamber of Commerce was to allow the shops to remain open on Friday afternoon until six o'clock. The sales there on that day, which bring a considerable number of people to the town, do not conclude until roughly 4.15 p.m., and in consequence the number of customers to be served by the shops cannot be dealt with by 5.30, and either the shops must lawfully remain open for a little longer, or conclude the business in an unlawful manner, which is not desired. It would not be wise to introduce an amendment stipulating one day in the week, namely, Friday, because identical circumstances exist elsewhere on Thursday and Tuesday, so my proposal will be that, with the approval of the Minister, on any week-day other than Saturday, an extension of half-an-hour may be permitted in any shop district. I think that will solve the problem, although I realise that there are problems other than that existing in other districts of the State.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [5.48]: I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, though I wish to point out to the Minister for Works some of the difficulties that would arise in an electorate such as mine. In the agricultural portions of my district, I find a desire for Saturday afternoon closing. However, there are several holiday resorts in my district to which large numbers of people travel for the week end, and I rather fear that if the shops at those resorts were compelled to close on Saturday afternoon, visitors would have to take their own goods with them.

Mr. Graham: They would not want new shirts.

Mr. McLARTY: The hon. member is talking nonsense; he knows perfectly well that I am referring to foodstuffs.

The Minister for Works: Shops purveying foodstuffs would not be affected.

Mr. McLARTY: The visitors might need groceries. People going to such resorts for a week end usually arrive on Saturday afternoon. They may require many things.

Mr. Withers: It would be like going fishing without taking bait.

Mr. McLARTY: It is a matter of the tourists obtaining their food requirements. If they had to bring these from the metropolitan area, it would be to the detriment of the local business man.

Mr. Styants: On what day do the shops close in Mandurah?

Mr. McLARTY: Wednesday afternoon! I rose to make that explanation to the Minister and I think special consideration should be given to the difficulty arising in such places.

MR. PERKINS (York) [5.52]: This measure is one that affects country people particularly. It will cause a certain amount of heartburning whatever is done. Most of the points which can be raised have been raised by members who have already spoken on the measure; but, obviously, the matter is one in which the will of the majority must prevail. Opinions in the York electorate, like those in other electorates, are mixed. I have asked many of my constituents how they view the measure and probably the majority favour it as it stands. Other people in the electorate, however, oppose it vigorously; they consider that the universal Saturday afternoon closing will cause much hardship in certain districts.

Mr. W. Hegney: Are you supporting the Bill?

Mr. PERKINS: Possibly some of the difficulty could be overcome by sympathetic administration of the measure. Those who are familiar with country districts in the Eastern States, where Saturday afternoon closing is the established practice, know that there is a certain amount of winking of the eye at after-hours trading where it is difficult to apply the provisions of the Act strictly. I am afraid a similar position will arise in this State; but, provided there is no pinpricking in the administration of the measure, possibly the difficulties foreseen by those who are opposing the Bill vigorously at the present time can be lessened to a very great extent. I would commend to the Minister the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition that consideration should be given to some extension of the closing hour at least on one day in the week.

There will be occasions during the busy part of the year when it will be difficult for

some people in country districts to obtain the necessities they require within the trading hours set out in the Bill; and if some extension of the hours on one day in the week is permitted, it will give them the opportunity to buy what they require without breaking the law and losing as much time as they would otherwise lose. However, as I said, opinions are mixed; whatever we do will be criticised to some extent, but I believe that the majority of the people in my electorate desire the Saturday afternoon closing and therefore I will not oppose the second reading. I hope the Minister will at least give favourable consideration to the suggestion that the hours be extended on one day a week.

MR. WILLMOTT (Sussex) [5.55]: I am quite agreeable to the opening and closing hours and most of the people in the area where I reside are satisfied with Saturday afternoon closing. But in Busselton and in the area surrounding it we consider that Saturday afternoon closing will impose a hardship on tourists. The district is a summer resort. Tourists leave Perth at one o'clock on Saturday and, if this measure becomes law, they will have to carry food requirements sufficient for the half day on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, perhaps even Tuesday morning also. In doing so, they will be forced to leave some of their family at home. The same remark applies to petrol, as I presume garages will come under the measure as well.

The Minister for Works: Garages come under a special section of the Act.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I was not sure. The Busselton storekeepers approached me on this matter. They are dead against it.

The Minister for Works: They would be!

Mr. WILLMOTT: I believe they are right, as they are not thinking of themselves but of the tourists.

Mr Leslie: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILLMOTT: As I said, Busselton is purely a tourist resort. The storekeepers said that if they were permitted to keep their shops open on Saturday afternoon they would be agreeable to close them all day Monday, and they asked me to put this suggestion forward. Personally, I consider it would be wrong to apply the Bill to Busselton; we have to consider not only the people who visit

that district for a week or fortnight's holiday, but also for the week-end tourists. The Bill, if passed, would have the effect of keeping tourists away from the town. For that reason I oppose it.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore) [5.58]: I shall not take up much time in dealing with the measure. The storekeepers at Moora are very emphatic about keeping their shops open on Saturday afternoon. They wrote me quite a number of letters on the subject. I have also received many letters from residents in Moora asking that the Bill be opposed. The measure is a strange one. It is full of anomalies, because while it might suit some people, there is another section of the community to be considered, namely, those who work during the week-end and have Wednesday afternoon off. They find that Wednesday afternoon does not really take the place of Saturday afternoon. They would like to visit Perth on Saturday and return on Sunday. I found opinions very divided. The Moora Road Board wrote to me some time ago requesting me to use my influence, if I had any, with the Minister for the purpose of bringing down a Bill such as this. I showed the letter to the Minister and spoke to him about the matter. I forget what he actually said, but members will recall that last session he brought down the Bill which was postponed until this session. Subsequently I have had this complaint from many residents that they do not like it. I do not know what the actual position is, because my electorate would appear to be in a similar position to that of some others, where opinion is divided. Some portions say they would be perfectly satisfied with Saturday closing. I think I was told in Moora that the main town in the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition, Katanning, had had Saturday closing for quite a long time. Is that so?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. BERRY: And that they are perfectly satisfied.

The Minister for Works: They are very happy.

Mr. BERRY: Then we hear that Northam has not had Saturday closing.

The Minister for Works: They are very unhappy.

Mr. BERRY: I do not know what the position is. One rises with a turbulent mind. One does not know which way to express a definite opinion.

Mr. Leslie: Let them decide for themselves!

Mr. BERRY: If they were allowed to decide for themselves, that would be very good. I was interested in the remarks made by the member for Murray-Wellington and the member for Sussex concerning seaside resorts. If this Bill is deliberately going to close seaside shops on Saturdays—I suppose they would open again on Sundays, but I do not know—it will be doing them a gross injustice. I know what I am talking about in this connection because I have been mixed up with Safety Bay for a long time. At one time I was more or less associated with one of the stores there by virtue of selling to unsuspecting people some very nice blocks of land, which were originally owned by the member for Murray-Wellington. I can assure members that if we were to close down shops in places like Safety Bay and Rockingham on Saturdays we would be doing a disservice which would be by no means popular. I do not think it would get many Labour votes.

Mr. J. Hegney: They are open on Saturdays and Sundays.

Mr. BERRY: They have to keep open on Saturdays and Sundays because visitors are not there on the other days. The hon. member knows that as well as I do; so his interjection is worth tuppence a dozen.

Mr. Watts: They are never worth more than that.

Mr. BERRY: The fact remains that the member for Murray-Wellington and the member for Sussex have given a warning which needs very decided consideration. If we are going to close on Saturdays shops, the proprietors of which depend on the week-end trade for their living, we are going to put them out of business. I trust, therefore, that in the Committee stage somebody with more brains than I have will devise an amendment which the Government will be prepared to accept. We have not any right to deprive these people of the major portion of the time in which they make an income to keep them for the remainder of the week.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [6.4]: I think we are prepared to agree to the early closing of shops, but I claim that the different country towns should be allowed to make their own decisions regarding the half holiday. We should be well satisfied if the employees in country towns receive a half holiday some time during the week. Everything depends on the different train services and on what is the most convenient time for the farmers to shop. In several country towns perishable goods arrive on certain days by train, and those are the days that are often fixed as special shopping afternoons. It is not fair to people in the country to say that shops should close on a certain afternoon, but we should be well content if employees receive a half holiday during the week. I agree with the contention of the member for Murray-Wellington, the member for Sussex, and the member for Irwin-Moore that seaside resorts should be allowed to trade on Saturday afternoons and over the week-end. They should be given a right to make a living. We are all in accord with the necessity for encouraging tourist traffic. Why should we not allow those people who are endeavouring to make provision for tourists, to trade over the week-end? If we debar them from having this privilege, what will we do? We shall do something that I have heard members opposite express themselves against. That is to say, we shall be giving all the trade to big business. We shall be allotting trade to the city.

Mr. Smith: The Harvey trade goes to Bunbury under Saturday afternoon shopping.

Mr. THORN: Probably the hon. member knows more about Harvey than I do. The point is that the seaside resorts will not get the trade.

The Minister for Works: Of course they will!

Mr. THORN: Of course they will not!

The Minister for Works: They will get more.

Mr. THORN: No, they will not.

The Minister for Works: I will prove it next week.

Mr. THORN: If the Minister can prove that, he will be proving something to the satisfaction of all.

The Minister for Works: All right!

Mr. Doney: It will be a tough job.

Mr. THORN: Yes, it will be. But if I can be assured of that, I shall have nothing more to say. We should allow these people to make a living and not force shopping into the big centres in the city. If the assurance I have sought can be given, I feel that all those who have spoken on this matter will be perfectly satisfied.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 20th August, 1946.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. W. R. Hall, leave of absence for twelve consecutive sittings granted to Hon. H. Seddon (North-East) on the ground of ill-health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Tenth Day.

Debate resumed from the 15th August.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.34]:

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the high position you have attained in being elected to preside over the doings of this Chamber. I feel sure that you will at all times safeguard the rights and privileges of members, and of the House itself, so that it will long remain a standing example of fair play, freedom and democracy under the charter granted us by the Motherland, to whom we all feel such strong

loyalty and attachment. My congratulations also include Mr. Seddon, our new Chairman of Committees, whom we all wish a speedy recovery of health. I welcome the new members who, I feel sure, will strengthen the confidence held by responsible people of the State in the necessity of maintaining the bicameral system of government as granted to us in the Constitution.

I extend to Mr. Kitson, the Chief Secretary, my congratulations on his appointment as Agent General. He, I am sure, will be an able ambassador of Western Australia. I hope that among his multifarious duties he will be able to divert an endless stream of people to our shores, ready to throw in their lot with us so as to strengthen the bonds and ties of nationhood, and also to inspire hope in a land where there is ample room for new energy and ideas. Such people would also help the population dilemma in which we are likely to be swamped if it is not soon remedied. We want many families!

This is the last session of this Parliament. I would remind old members and advise new ones to be wary on the eve of an election! Do not be too eager to swallow the bait that is put on the line to catch the voters. Australia is in an ugly mess and it will take a lot of nursing to get back on to an even keel, or even on to its financial legs—and the 40-hour week will not help. If one Chamber is enough to govern the country, then I would advise that we pass out the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. A. Thomson: Hear, hear!

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The Legislative Council created that body, and now the unruly fledgling thinks it can push the parents out of the nest. Human, is it not? I now quote from the Speech—

In common with the rest of the world the State faces serious problems due to the disruption of industry, trade and commerce inevitably arising from six years of war.

That is very true, but I say "fiddlesticks" when it places the period at six years. The disruption of trade has been going on for many years—long before the war started. It has been in existence since we started to stop strikes by the introduction of the Arbitration Act. Strikes were rife throughout Australia and it was our earnest endeavour to help industry and to help our