

Legislative Assembly, Wednesday, 24th November, 1909.

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

QUESTION — RAILWAY CATTLE TRUCKS, SUPPLY.

Mr. OSBORN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that buyers of fat stock at the Midland Junction stock sale yards last Wednesday were unable to obtain trucks to convey their purchases from the yards until the following Friday? 2, Will the Minister issue instructions immediately to the Traffic Manager to provide trucks for to-morrow, so that it will not recur? 3, Is the Minister aware that such delays militate greatly against the small butcher and plays into the hands of the wholesale men? 4, Will the Minister make inquiries and find out why such delays did take place?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, All trucks ordered will be supplied. 3, No. 4, Yes; the Midland Company's sale yards are quite outside our jurisdiction, but inquiries will be made.

QUESTION—POSTAL FACILITIES AT RAILWAY STATIONS.

Mr. GILL asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the total number of railway stations in the State where postal in addition to railway duties are being performed? 2, What is the total annual amount received from the Commonwealth Postal Department for the performance of these duties?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Twenty-eight. 2, £509 5s., which includes office accommodation.

QUESTION — RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVES, REPAIRS.

Mr. SWAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the approximate average cost of the repair of locomotives since the opening of the Midland Junction workshops? 2, What was the average cost for corresponding period immediately prior to the transfer from Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The average annual cost per locomotive from 1st January, 1905, to 30th June, 1909, is £306 3s. 2, The average annual cost per locomotive from 1st July, 1901, to 31st December, 1904, is £351 4s. Prior to the year 1901-2, locomotive repairs were not kept separate from carriage and wagon repairs, so that the figure quoted is for a period of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years only.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

MOTION—COAL MINING INDUSTRY. GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES.

Mr. A. A. WILSON (Collie) moved—

That it is advisable in the best interests of the State, and the stability of the 'banking trade' in connection with the Collie coal-mining industry, that the decision of the Government in February, 1908, fixing an equitable price per ton (with an attendant sliding scale) for Collie coal in proportion to the imported Newcastle coal, be extended for a period of five years, as from February 1, 1910; and that the several coal companies be paid such equitable price for local coal supplies to the Government, conditionally on the said companies adhering to the present existing 'wages agreement' with their workmen."

He said: I am pleased to have the opportunity of bringing this motion forward because I think the time has arrived for something of the kind to be adopted. I do not intend to say much

to the motion as I feel it speaks for itself, and I am sure its fairness will commend itself to both sides of the House. So far as I can see it will be to the best interests of the State and to the coal miners of the Collie that the motion should be carried in its entirety. No one regrets more than I the present unfortunate state of affairs in the Newcastle and Southern and Western mines in New South Wales; but while the unfortunate circumstance has taken place we have food for reflection in that at last Collie has justified its existence. If Collie has been spoon-fed in the past, as its opponents have said, the infant has nourished exceedingly well. I always challenge the statement that Collie has been spoon-fed. Without doubt the mines there supply an article which is of full value for the money the Government pay for it. In February of last year the Government arrived at a decision with regard to the Collie coal industry, and it was that they would pay 10s. 3d. per ton for approved Collie coal of 10,500 B.T.U. or more, the price of same to be reduced according to lesser calorific values, such price of 10s. 3d. being fixed as its equitable value to Newcastle coal when the contract price for same is 18s. 11d. per ton in the ship's slings, Fremantle: the price to be paid by the Government for Collie coal to rise or fall in proportion to the contract price for Newcastle, but that the maximum price shall not exceed 12s. per ton and minimum price to be not less than 8s. 9d. per ton; the colliery owners to undertake to accept a proportionate reduction in price if Newcastle contract price should become less than 18s. 11d.; on the other hand, the Government to undertake to pay a proportionate increase if the Newcastle price should be increased, and the undertaking to hold good for a period of two years from the 1st February, 1908. That is in operation now, and my idea in bringing the motion forward is to continue that state of affairs for another five years so that the Collie bunkering trade shall get a fair show. I desire to quote from the report of the Commissioner of Railways. He takes strong exception in his report, as usual, about the price for Collie coal, and remarks that

1s. per ton reduction in Collie coal means £3,000 of profit to the railways. He forgets to add that it also means £8,000 of wages less to the miners. The present industrial award means that for every 1s. per ton Collie coal is reduced the wages of the miners at the Collie are reduced 1s. per day. I will not stand silently by and allow that state of affairs to continue. I trust the House will carry the motion in its entirety so that the coal companies and miners and the State generally may get some benefit from the field.

The Honorary Minister: What is the price for bunkering as against the price to the Government?

Mr. A. A. WILSON: The cases are not similar, inasmuch as the Government insist on a proper quality of coal being supplied for their money. An inspector of the department inspects all the coal, and insists that it shall be of the best quality for the price paid. In the bunkering trade there is no such inspection, nor is there anything to show that half the coal sent out of the State is not small coal.

The Honorary Minister: What is the price?

Mr. A. A. WILSON: I am not in the company's confidence: perhaps the member for Fremantle will be able to tell the House what the price is. The only thing in which I am concerned is the price the Government pay, which is a fair and equitable one. The Premier, when giving his decision in February, 1908, was reported as follows:—

"Referring yesterday to the decision of the Government to pay a greater price for Collie coal, the Premier mentioned that the increase was approximately 1s. 6d. per ton on the present price. If the increase had been made correlative with that in regard to Newcastle coal, he added, it would have been 2s. per ton, but Cabinet, after careful consideration, came to the conclusion that an increase of 1s. 6d. was sufficient."

The Premier at that time said it should have been 2s. a ton, but he thought they were doing a fair thing in paying 1s. 6d. Cabinet said the Premier was right, and the House has agreed to that. I only

ask that the same condition of affairs should be extended for a period of five years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): I do not propose to ask the House to agree to this motion; because there is no doubt that during the past five years conditions have changed somewhat and, to say the least, inquiries should be made before the Government enter into the further contract for another period of five years. This is absolutely essential, and I do not think that under the circumstances the House should bind the Government for a further period of five years.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: You gave Newcastle three years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have made arrangements for these people for a period of three years, and the Government are quite prepared to again enter into arrangements with them for a further period; but a question of this sort demands inquiry, and we are justified, I think, in making those inquiries. We should not be asked to agree to a motion of this sort, which would bind the Government for a further period at the same fixed rate. I will not give way to any person in regard to my solicitude for the Collie district. I quite recognise it is of great importance to the State, and ever since I have had charge of a department, whether Mines or Railways, I have endeavoured to give every legitimate assistance to this industry. We have been accused of spoon-feeding it at the expense of other industries, and of paying more for our Collie coal than it is worth; but if any person will compare the Collie of to-day with the Collie of seven or eight years ago, and note the great strides made, and realise the wonderful advantage it is to have those collieries open to-day, they will recognise that the action of the Government was not only for the betterment of Collie, but for the betterment of the State. In speaking on this question I would like to congratulate the hon. member himself on having, with a few friends, made some discoveries in the Collie field, which mean a very large addition to the previously known area of our

coal beds. In 1904 the Government of the day appointed Dr. Jack to inquire into the coal resources of the district. Dr. Jack prepared a very exhaustive report in May of 1905, in which he made certain recommendations to the Government. I want to show how we have endeavoured to carry out those recommendations. Dr. Jack in his report states—

"In plain figures, therefore, I think the Government should be prepared, if necessary, to pay a direct subsidy to the industry, limited to £23,000, in any period of ten years. The Treasury might be called upon up to this amount, as required, at any time within any period of ten years to raise the price payable to the producers of the coal (for railway use) to about eight shillings per ton, if ever the "equitable price," with the addition of "insurance," should fall below that sum; and I recommend that it should, if necessary, be called on, in such event, to pay a direct subsidy (limited to £23,000 in each decennial period) up to 20 per cent. on the price paid by the railway. Further, in consideration that the necessity for an immediate reduction of costs to meet a fall in the price—say, to 8s., or 27 per cent.—would probably close the mines at once and for many years, if not forever, I recommend that, for one year only, a bonus up to 1s. 6d. per ton on the coal taken by the railway be paid by the Treasury to the producers, provided that the total price thus earned does not exceed 9s. 6d. per ton, such bonus not to be held to be part of the decennial amount of £23,000."

Mr. A. A. Wilson: That was when the coal was 15s. 7d. per ton; now it is over a pound.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Dr. Jack, in making his report, gave us what he termed the equitable value of the coal as compared with coal purchasable from Newcastle at 15s. 4d. per ton. In framing his equitable value Dr. Jack considered that we should allow a sum of 1s. as insurance value to the State, by reason of having the coal mines in our midst. My opinion is that the insurance is worth 1s. 6d.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: How much is the insurance worth now?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is impossible to estimate its value just now, but one has to take the lean years with the full, and I estimate the average insurance value at 6d. a ton. However, Dr. Jack valued the insurance to the State, by reason of having coal mines here for the purpose of building up our industries, at 1s. a ton, and he considered an equitable price of Collie coal, with the insurance added, would be 7s. 10d., or, roughly, 8s. a ton. The Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Railway Department also made an exhaustive examination in connection with the use of Collie coal, and he found that Collie coal would not give the same good results when the coal had to be conveyed a distance, or when it had to be stored for some days. He allowed an insurance of 6d. a ton on Collie coal, and with Newcastle coal at 15s. 4d., he placed the equitable value of the Collie coal, with insurance at 6d. a ton added, at 6s. 7d. per ton. Now when Newcastle coal rose to 18s. 11d. per ton, we considered the equitable value of the Collie coal at 9s. 13½d. per ton. I might say that although Dr. Jack recommended the Government to expend something in the nature of £23,000 as a subsidy to this industry during a period of ten years, we estimated that up to the end of 1907 we had paid for Collie coal approximately £40,000 more than we would have paid for coal under ordinary conditions. In the last annual report of the Commissioner of Railways it will be seen that the Commissioner considers the department has paid as a bonus to the industry £18,000 in excess of value. The hon. member pointed out the conditions under which the Government were prepared, nearly three years ago, to work Collie coal, instead of taking the action adopted by a previous Administration who apparently ignored Dr. Jack's report. Whereas in 1905, when tenders were called for this coal, the Government of the day decided to give the whole of the contract to one colliery at 8s. 2d. a ton, we entered into an agreement fixing the equitable price of that coal and made

the railways pay a value far greater than the engineers of the department considered to be a fair value. I think the Government are deserving of every credit for the way in which they have fostered that industry. The average price paid for Collie coal in 1907 was 8s. 6½d. per ton. With Newcastle coal at 18s. 11d. per ton we have now fixed the equitable value of Collie coal at 10s. 3d. per ton. And I might remark that, in addition, we have given these collieries a rebate on the royalty. Each of these coal mines should be paying a royalty of 3d. per ton on all coal, but in this agreement, in addition to the extra price to be paid for the Collie coal, we have omitted all royalty. I certainly propose, after the expiration of this agreement, to insist upon the payment of royalty on all coal, with the exception of coal for the bunkering trade. I think we would be justified in making this exception in order to help the bunkering trade, which promises to be of vast importance to the State. But it is certainly proposed in the near future to ask that the royalty prescribed by the Act should be made payable in connection with the coal supplied to the railways or for local orders. Last year our coal bill was 10,000 tons more than in the previous year, and we spent £18,000 more than we would have paid if we had taken the coal at what we considered to be its actual value; that is, the Railway Department consider they were paying that much more than they believe to be the fair value of the coal. There is a special reason why this motion should not be passed, because the motion if carried would bind the Government to continue the contract with the coal companies on the same terms as are contained in the existing contract. For one thing it has been clearly proved that Collie coal has not given the same results for locomotive purposes after being some days out of the collieries as are obtained when the coal first comes from the pit. After a period of eight days some of the coals give very poor results, and the results are very bad indeed after exposure to the air for ten, twelve, or fourteen days.

We are extending our railways, and we are endeavouring to use as much of the coal as is possible, but when we have to take the coal long distances to utilise it, for instance on the Norseman line we find that as the result of weathering the coal does not give the same results as it does within the first six days of being taken from the colliery. Therefore after a period the coal has a smaller equitable value for the railways than it has when directly taken out of the pit. There is another point. I consider that with the possibility of a larger bunkering trade the coal mines should give better terms to the Government than they have been giving in the past. I do not know what the bunkering prices were just prior to the New South Wales strike, but I think they were something like 8s. or 8s. 6d. at the pit's mouth. Now if the mines can raise coal at 8s. or 8s. 6d. at the pit's mouth for bunkering purposes they could certainly afford to give us coal at a slightly less price than they do.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: It is not the same quality for bunkering purposes; there is more small stuff among the coal.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I should say an equally good class of coal is wanted for bunkering purposes. I think the State ought to insist upon a clean coal being sent away for bunkering purposes; but I do not like to interfere with any person's private trade, and I am merely suggesting this by the way; but it would be a great pity indeed, when the owners have a chance of building up the coal trade and of showing the public we have some fairly good coal, if they did not turn out the very best coal and try to get a continuance of the orders they are receiving. I feel sure the coal is not so bad as it has been painted, and I am satisfied that many of those who are now ordering the coal will find out it would be to their advantage, when they take their fuel supplies on visiting our ports, to take a fair proportion of Collie coal.

Mr. Angwin: They will not be allowed to; the combine in the other States will block them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think our Federal laws should have something to say in regard to that, but we would probably blame ourselves if we did not do this. If the big mail steamers, who are not allied to the steamship owners of the East, find Collie coal is of value, I think they are certain to give us a fair proportion of their orders. Dr. Jack in his report showed that 75 per cent. of Collie coal and 25 per cent. of Newcastle coal will give very fine results; and if Collie coal will do that in locomotives it should do something similar in steamships. If these things are pointed out to the proper people, I have not the slightest doubt our bunkering trade will increase, and if the bunkering trade does increase and the coal mines are kept fully employed, we should be able to get better terms for the Government than we have been able to get in the past. We have been endeavouring to build up the industry—in fact, we have been accused of spoon feeding it—we have been trying to foster it on the lines laid down by Dr. Jack; we consider having these coal mines here is well worth an insurance, and we are paying 6d. per ton on the equitable value of Collie coal by way of insurance. Again we are justified, I think, in making a fair comparison with Newcastle coal and in paying on the equitable value of the coal in comparison with the equitable value of Newcastle coal; but under the hon. member's motion a minimum of 8s. 9d. would be fixed. I do not know whether the hon. member is aware of it, but in our agreement with the colliery owners it is provided that the coal shall not become less than the minimum of 8s. 9d. per ton in value. In fact I do not think we could raise Collie coal and be fair to the men and the mine owners if we asked for the coal at a lower price than 8s. 9d., but as the industry progresses and orders from outside come in there is no doubt that by turning out larger quantities of coal in future than has been done in the past the mine owners certainly should be able to give us the coal cheaper than they do now with small orders.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: You have also a maximum.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes; but let me point out that should they turn out 200,000 or 300,000 tons per year, instead of, say, 100,000 tons per year as now, they could give us the coal at a lower rate. In other words if they were going full time they could give us cheaper coal than if they only worked two or three days per week. I do not think the motion should be carried. The hon. member knows perfectly well the sympathetic consideration the industry has had from the present Administration. So far as we have had dealings with the collieries everything we have done has been with the sympathetic desire to try to foster the industry. All I desire is that the hon. member should take our word that we recognise, and have the desire, to build up the industry, and that he should leave this question of fixing an equitable price to the Government. On that basis he could rest assured that the industry will receive every fair consideration from the Administration. I hope the hon. member will not endeavour to pass his motion in its present form, because we ought to look very fully into all the matters appertaining to our present contract with a view probably to obtaining a small reduction in what we consider the equitable value. I can assure the hon. member with regard to ensuring the stability of the industry and his desire to have it given fair consideration, that in any circumstances it will be done.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): I have just a few remarks to make in connection with this motion. I do not propose to go into the relative merits of Newcastle and Collie coal because, in the opinion of the Government, and I think in the opinion of the House, seeing the Government are supported in it, that matter has been settled for some time. It is not my desire to in any way interfere with the industry which is of so much importance to the State. The value of Collie coal as a fuel has been thoroughly ascertained by the report of Dr. Jack and by the evidence given by the Railway Department and by the knowledge we all have as observers. That is quite sufficient to settle what the value of Collie coal is. We may

put different values on it but that does not matter. The coal is of value to the State, and I hope I shall not say anything to-day that will be detrimental to its value as a fuel. What appeals to me in this motion is the latter portion of it, and I do not think the House can accept it. It is evidently the desire of the mover that the—I suppose I may call it—prosperity of the industry may be ensured for a period of five years. That is all right. I do not think there is anything we can object to in that very much. I should like to see the prosperity of the industry secured for fifty years if we could possibly do it. But in the latter part the motion says, "that the several coal companies be paid such equitable price for local coal supplies to the Government"—that I do not object to—"conditionally on the said companies adhering to the present existing wages agreement with their workmen." I do not even object to that; it binds the coal companies to the present existing wages agreement; but what is there in this motion that binds the workmen to the present agreement? The hon. member has asked the House to confirm a principle that it is desirable that the conditions of the wages agreement with the workmen shall be made secure for five years so far as the employers are concerned, but has not offered to the House any guarantee that the wages agreement will be respected by the workers for that period.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: On the face of it it is an industrial agreement for five years signed by both parties.

Mr. GEORGE: Whatever motion may be passed here cannot interfere with the present wages agreement that has been fixed by the Arbitration Court. All a resolution of the House can do is to express the opinion of the representatives of the people here assembled as to what shall be done. Beyond that it cannot go. I am not disagreeing with any portion of the motion, but I say it does not go far enough. If in this motion the employers are to be bound to a wages agreement, surely what is sauce for the goose should also be sauce for the gander, and it should also be binding on the workmen.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Put in an amendment to that effect and I shall support it.

Mr. GEORGE: I have no objection to doing so. If my friend opposite wants my assistance in this matter he is going to get it if he agrees to what I want. I do not wish the House to thing I am holding a brief for the coal companies; I have no more sympathy for them than I have for the workmen; but seeing how events are marching in the Eastern States, my objection is that if any industry akin to the industry in the Eastern States which is having trouble desires from the House the support of a motion of this kind the least it can do is to give in return the same loyalty it expects the House to ask the employers to give. If that can be added to the motion I am prepared to support it.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Strike out the last three words of the motion and add the words "and their workmen" after "several coal companies," and I will agree to it.

The Minister for Mines: You are not asking the House to fix an industrial agreement are you?

Mr. GEORGE: I am not desirous that the House should frame an industrial agreement. My desire is to see whether we cannot get industrial peace for a long period in this State. It has been perhaps my luck at times to have to go into the Arbitration Court and also deal with large bodies of men apart from the railways, and anyone who knows my career in connection with railway construction will know that I have been able to steer away from bother with my workmen. It will be better for every one if we can arrive at some understanding by which these troubles can be averted. What is appealing to me is the trouble on the other side, but though I know nothing of the complaints of the men, I know this, that if the federation of labour were to exert its full powers it could do sufficient damage in Western Australia to paralyse not merely our industries but the people who are actually wanting bread at the present time. We have an opportunity with regard to our coal, and if we are allowed to

benefit by it we shall be able to put the industry on a sounder basis than it has ever been before. But if it should happen that those on the other side who pull the wires—and I hope that is a respectful way of saying it—desire the colliers in this State to come out, it will mean the crippling of our coal industry and do great harm throughout the State. I think I may speak with some knowledge on this question. I am frequently in the neighbourhood of Collie and I know a lot of people there, and I know also that they are desirous of carrying on their work. I know further that the men are so loyal to the principles of unionism that if they were called out they would all go out. This is a matter to which I think the House should give very serious consideration, not with the idea of making the men disloyal to their unions, but when we have an industry which has an opportunity which should be regarded as unique in its history, that opportunity should be availed of to its fullest extent so that the decriers of the coal might be shown what it can do. Then, when the strike is off, without injury to the people in the Eastern States of Australia, we may find that there has grown a larger demand for our coal and that there has been the opportunity for giving employment to a greater number of miners in the State. I repeat that I desire to see industrial peace in connection with this industry. The hon. member who has put this motion before us, if he were to tell us all that is in his mind, would say that there are many men at Collie who have not had too good a time during the last few years. These men have their opportunity now, and if we can do anything to assist them to avail themselves of that opportunity we should use every effort in doing so. I beg to move an amendment—

That in line 12 after the word "companies" the words "and their workmen" be inserted, and that in the last line the words "with their workmen" be struck out.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. Price): Before we adopt either the motion or the amendment I think we want to give this matter some further consider-

ation. The mover in introducing the motion has furnished the House with but few facts in connection with this matter, although there are many members in the House who are not *au fait* with all the conditions of the industry, and who are not fully aware of the assistance Collie coal has received during the past few years. It is a question with me whether to-day that field is not in such a position that will enable it to pay good wages, and profitably supply the Government with coal at a price approximating to the price paid in connection with bunkering. To-day the price of Collie coal of 10,500 B.T.U. is 10s. 3d. per ton, and the bunkering price is something like 1s. 6d. per ton less. The hon. member for Collie read an extract from some remarks made by the Premier that the price paid by the Government was 1s. 6d. per ton more than the price paid by private consumers.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: I did not read any such thing.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That was what I understood the extract to be. But it is within our knowledge that the price for coal for bunkering is considerably less than that paid by the Government.

Mr. Angwin: One is fine coal and the other is not.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have watched coal put into bunkers, and I have seen the coal which is supplied to the Railway Department, and as I have had experience on the London Coal Exchange I think I may say that the subject is one that I am not altogether unacquainted with. I was saying that I had noticed but little difference in the quality of the two coals. Colliery proprietors know well that if they want to secure a bunkering trade in this State they have to supply the best possible article, and that if they supply an inferior article it will be fatal to their hopes of ever building up a considerable bunkering trade in the various ports of Western Australia. The question to be decided is what is the intrinsic value of the coal, making due allowance for the cost of raising. It is not a fair thing that it should be said

that taking Newcastle coal of 10,500 B.T.U. as a standard we should be prepared to pay approximately the same price for similar coal obtained from Collie. The cost of raising in the two districts is very different. The hon. member for Collie can tell this House that there is no coal in Australia which is so cheaply mined as Collie coal, and he knows well that the cost of mining Newcastle coal exceeds that of mining Collie coal. This is a fact which I have heard those associated with the Newcastle trade admit on many occasions.

The Minister for Mines: Coal is sold in some places in New South Wales at 5s. 6d. per ton.

The HONORARY MINISTER: As the Minister for Mines informs me, there are many places in New South Wales where coal has been sold at 5s. 6d. per ton. What we have to ask ourselves is not what is the relative value between Collie and Newcastle coal, but what is the intrinsic value of this coal after we take into consideration the cost of raising. Another important fact that we have to take into consideration is the question of wages, and I would be one of the last to wish to see any diminution in the wages of miners at Collie. But we know well that wages there are based on the price that the Government pay for coal. If therefore wages are fixed on the Government price, it must affect the price of coal sold for bunkering below the price paid by the Government. I do not know whether the position is such that the mine owners will be able to pay the enhanced wages for coal whether it goes out for bunkering or for Government use, but there is the position that if we agree to this amendment we are going to fix the wages which the mine owners must pay for a period of five years, and this will affect the price for bunkering. At all events, it is one of those questions which I venture to think this House has no definite information upon, and if this amendment is carried we will tie the Government down for a period of five years. It is possible also that in this period of five years the trade at Collie may assume dimensions which

will have the effect of bringing the cost down below the price existing to-day. We know the output is increasing enormously, and we know in mining that the greater the output the less the cost of production. We should not deal with the matter in a haphazard way and bind the Government down for the period I have stated. We have adopted the principle which has been followed for the purpose of giving the industry assistance to enable it to get on its feet, and the question now is whether it has not got to that position that it can do without any further spoon-feeding. At this juncture the Government should be left in a position to go fully into the matter to ascertain whether it is not possible for them to come into line with the ordinary purchaser. I have intervened because I look upon it as an extremely important matter for the constituency I represent. I am in hopes that in the near future the Collie coal bunkering trade will increase at the port of Fremantle, and not only there but at the various ports of the State. I hope to see a big trade in our own coal built up at the various ports, and I venture to think that not only this Government but other Governments, by the assistance given to the industry in the past, can be fairly trusted to do a fair thing by them in the future.

Mr. Angwin: How will this affect it?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Whatever the conditions or the cost of raising the coal within the next five years may be, this motion will tie the Government down.

Mr. Angwin: How does it affect bunkering?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The wages paid for bunkering are based on the price paid for the coal by the Government.

Mr. Walker: This is likely to further the bunkering trade.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I wish I could think so: I should have no hesitation in supporting this question if that were so. I think the time has come when the Government, like any other purchaser, should be allowed to come into the open market and buy on exactly the

same footing as others. We want to settle that question, we want to find out if sufficient assistance has been given; if not, we want to ascertain if it is necessary to tie the hands of the Government for five years, or whether a shorter period would not be all that is required. In view of the assistance and sympathetic consideration which hon. members have given to this industry the House, I think, can leave the matter with every confidence in the hands of the Government.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): I cannot understand the argument of the member for Fremantle who rose to oppose the motion.

The Honorary Minister: No, I did not.

Mr. ANGWIN: Because he was of opinion that it might affect the bunkering trade. At the same time he pointed out that he could not see why the Government should not purchase their coal at the same price as those who purchased for bunkering purposes. If the assistance given here has been the means of reducing the price for bunkering coal, I see no reason why this proposal will not add to the bunkering trade rather than diminish it. I am of opinion that as far as the bunkering trade is concerned, there will be no opportunity of increasing it unless some power is used to open the trade publicly. As a matter of fact a large number of oversea steamers visiting Fremantle are not allowed to take more than a certain quantity of Collie coal, because those engaged in the coal trade, whether ship owners or colliery owners, are combined and will refuse to supply any Newcastle coal if the steamers take over a certain quantity of Collie coal. I received the information from the agent of a large company at Fremantle. Therefore, Collie coal is boycotted by the combine that has the control of the coal trade. The position is to get over that difficulty. There is one way of counteracting it; why not charge a wharfage rate or harbour due on bunkering coal from the other side. Why not make them pay a certain proportion of the upkeep of the harbour, and thus give Collie coal an opportunity of entering into competition as far as the bunkering trade is con-

cerned. I think at the present time the owners of the mines at Collie should be able to make arrangements to compel the oversea steamers to enter into contracts and ensure their supplies for some time to come, because immediately the difficulty, which is being experienced at the present time, is removed, the same conditions of contract as now exist will apply to the oversea steamers, and the amount of Collie coal which they will be allowed to take for bunkering purposes will again be enforced, consequently the trade from the coal mines will be diminished. This is a serious thing as far as Western Australia is concerned, and I hope the Government will give it some consideration. A few weeks ago I asked a question about the matter, and the Premier said that he intended to investigate the question, and if he does so he will find that the statement I have made, that the coal trade at Collie is under a boycott, is correct, and that coal cannot be supplied in the quantities that even some of those who represent the shipping companies at Fremantle wish to obtain. Only a few weeks ago one steamer had to remain in port seven hours longer than necessary, if it had been allowed to take a larger quantity of Collie coal than was permitted.

The Honorary Minister: What steamer was that?

Mr. ANGWIN: I am not going to mention the name. I hope the Government, and even the member for Fremantle, in the interests of the port of Fremantle and the State generally will see that Collie coal shall have fair play as far as the coal trade is concerned in the future.

Mr. BOLTON (North Fremantle): I want briefly to say, as a member representing the port of Fremantle, that I cannot see where the adoption of this motion, as amended, will interfere with the bunkering trade. The cost of assistance given to this trade, as referred to by the Minister, has been returned to the Government with interest. The Government have controlled the price of Newcastle coal ever since they began to use Collie coal to any extent, and that has

been such a saving to the State that it must be acknowledged that whatever assistance the Government have rendered to the coal industry has been returned to them with interest. A little bigger price has been paid by the Government for the coal used by them than is paid by private consumers, or that the private trade commands, because there are certain conditions that govern the supply of coal to the Government that do not govern the supply of coal to private consumers. In connection with the coal supply to the Government, every bit has to be screened and in addition to that the coal supplied has to be in certain sized lumps, therefore, it has to be broken before it is accepted, which may account for the enhanced price paid by the Government. The contention that the member for Fremantle raised that if the Government were tied down to a certain price, would be governed by the wages, therefore the bunkering price would also be governed by the same conditions; what I mean to say is this: it was contended by the Minister that if the Government were bound for five years that would also govern the price of the bunker coal. I am of opinion that it is not the price that Collie coal has to fight. The price at which they can supply the coal is all sufficient and satisfactory to the shipping companies. Even if the price to the Government, and to the bunkering trade, was raised, I am still of opinion it is only the prejudice that has to be broken down, and not the price they have to pay. I am of opinion it would pay the shipping companies to use the Collie coal at a higher price than they are paying today, if they could get rid of the prejudice.

Mr. Angwin: It is not prejudice, but boycott.

Mr. GORDON (Canning): I fail to see the reason for the motion being moved by the member for Collie.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Killing time, are you?

Mr. GORDON: The position at present is a very remarkable one, and unless there is some rumour that the wage is likely to be reduced there is no reason

for the motion to be brought on. If the wage is likely to be reduced perhaps there would be some valid reasons for the proprietors reducing it. It seems to me to be unreasonable to have to pay 10s. a ton for coal at the pit's mouth, while in New South Wales the colliery proprietors can sell it at 5s. 6d. per ton. The reason for paying the extra price may have been the building up of the trade, but to-day the trade is practically built up. I am not going to be a party, with my eyes open, to recognising a conspiracy—because it is nothing else—between the mine owners and the workers, to rob the public.

Mr. Bath: Is the hon. member in order in making use of that word in reference to the motion of the hon. member?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member should not make it apply to the hon. member's motion: but I understood he was using it as an expression of opinion of what outsiders feel. If it is in any way offensive to the hon. member he must withdraw it.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: No one takes any offence.

Mr. GORDON: If the proprietors pay more for getting the coal than it is really worth, if the price of the coal is raised the public have to pay for it, and it stands to reason if this is acknowledged, it is reasonable that the proprietors of the mines and the workers may say, "We will go a bit further, and in addition to the people paying an extra price for Collie coal supplied to the Government the householders shall pay the extra price also." After all, supposing this arrangement is made and these conditions are passed by the House, and future Governments are bound to pay the price, we know that the Government will stick to the arrangement, but are the men going to stick to it? Will the member for Collie give a guarantee that all the men will work for five years at this rate.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: I will give you a guarantee for what it is worth.

Mr. GORDON: It is worth nothing. That is the very position which I take up. We have no way of securing that these men will work at the rate if this motion is passed. It is a most unreasonable

position. I desire to move a further amendment, providing that the men shall be held responsible as well as the mine owners. I should like to add something to the effect, that there shall be some guarantee in addition to the handwriting of the union, some money guarantee put up on both sides; I think that will be a reasonable proposition.

Mr. George: You mean a penalty.

Mr. GORDON: A deposit on each side; and if either side breaks the agreement then the deposit will be forfeited.

Mr. George: Do not make the deposit too big or you will break the proprietors.

Mr. GORDON: I intend to move a further amendment in the direction I have indicated.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (on amendment): In regard to the amendment that has been moved to add words to the motion, I think the House would be going very far indeed to pass the motion, thus binding the Government. It would fix a wages agreement without the slightest knowledge in any shape or form of what the agreement is. I believe the agreement is a good one; it has been in force for three years and has worked well, but we have no knowledge of it, and the House would surely not commit itself for a period of five years to an agreement which, perhaps, only two members in the House have given the slightest consideration to.

Mr. Bolton: But it is satisfactory to both sides.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member knows that I have gone very fully and carefully into Dr. Jack's report, and into the question of the percentage that should be paid according to the price of Newcastle coal. I do not desire to deal with that question again, in fact I think I would be out of order if I did so. But I want to deal with the question that will make the Government a party to an agreement of which, perhaps, not more than two members in the House have any knowledge.

Mr. George: It is based on an arbitration award.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Is it an arbitration award?

Mr. A. A. Wilson: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Does the hon. member know that? I think I am correct in saying that after the award was made other conditions were arranged between the workmen and the owners. Is there not a condition to the agreement by which if the price rises there is a method for the workmen to get a higher rate of pay than under the arbitration award.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I believe that after the industrial award was made a fresh arrangement was entered into by the workmen and owners by which there should be additional payment.

Mr. Walker: That has now become the award.

Mr. Bath: Anyhow it does not affect the Government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a motion binding the Government.

Mr. Bath: It binds them to an equitable price.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a motion binding the Government to take the coal for five years. If it is I think it is out of order, as it would bind the Government to enter into a contract for five years, which I contend the House has no power to do.

Mr. George: It does not bind them to price, but to conditions.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It binds them to the price. We are bound by it to the prices in our present agreement. There is an agreement in force whereby we pay the coal companies ten shillings and threepence per ton.

Mr. Scaddan: All the amendment does is to insist on the workmen keeping faith with the companies.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As I have said, if the motion is binding it is out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the motion is binding it is not in order, but the motion as it stands reads as an abstract one.

Mr. Collier: The question at present under discussion is an amendment to insert certain words.

Mr. SPEAKER: I was asked whether the motion would be in order if it were binding and I said it would not be.

Mr. Scaddan: The question before the House is the amendment, but the Minister is debating the whole motion.

Mr. Osborn: I am not at all clear on the position. There is a motion and an amendment before the House, are they to be taken as one motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: The amendment is to insert the words "and their workmen." The member may speak to the amendment if he likes.

Mr. Osborn: If those words are inserted can we speak to the motion afterwards?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, but the amendment is now before the House.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. GORDON: I desire to move a further amendment.

Mr. Walker: That cannot be done as the member has already spoken.

Mr. SPEAKER: Another member can move it for him.

Mr. HUDSON: I desire to move a further amendment to strike out the words "with their workmen" at the end of the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a consequential amendment upon the previous one and is unnecessary.

Mr. OSBORN (Roebourne): I wish to understand what we are voting on because I have not grasped the situation exactly. I understand that if the motion is carried with the amendment it binds the Government for five years to the present conditions.

Mr. Walker: It only advises that they should take that course.

Mr. OSBORN: I say this motion will be binding in its present form. I have not the legal knowledge of the member for Kanowna, but I have a certain amount of common sense which leads me to that belief.

Mr. SPEAKER: I said that if the motion were binding in would not be in order.

Mr. Bath: The motion merely expresses the desirability of a certain course being taken.

Mr. SPEAKER: So far as I am concerned it is an abstract motion, but as I have said, if it is binding, it is out of order.

Mr. OSBORN: I still think that the resolution is binding on the Government.

Mr. Scaddan: Get on with your speech.

Mr. OSBORN: I am reading through the motion again in order to try and thoroughly understand it. If members of the Opposition do not interfere with me I will continue.

Mr. Bath: Is the member in order in discussing the members of the Opposition?

Mr. SPEAKER: The member must confine himself to the motion.

Mr. OSBORN: I still think this motion is a direction to the Government to continue the agreement already entered into. The Speaker has not ruled on that point. He says if it is a direction it is not in order. Under the motion the Government will have to continue the existing conditions. I cannot quite understand the advocacy of the members of the Opposition in this matter, for they are endeavouring to bind the country to what I have heard referred to on several occasions as a great monopoly. If the country has assisted these companies for the last three years and if that assistance has fostered the industry to such an extent that it is in a flourishing state to-day, and supports itself, I cannot understand members of the Opposition advocating that the companies should be further assisted from the revenues of the State. We have heard a great deal about monopolies in certain industries and I hope the House will not approve of assisting companies supposed to be in a flourishing condition. While I am prepared to give all reasonable assistance to all local industries, no matter from what source they come, still when I consider those industries have arrived at a stage when they are able to look after themselves, the State has no right to continue that assistance, but should look for some other industries to which the assistance would be of much value. I hope by this motion we are not giving a direction to the Government to assist further these flourishing companies. It appears by the remarks of members on both sides

that the coal mining industry has advanced very rapidly of late.

Mr. George: That is owing to the strike.

Mr. OSBORN: Apart from that altogether. We heard months before the strike occurred that the coal trade was in a very flourishing state. Members of the Government have referred to the fact that the coal mines are a credit to the State, have made wonderful strides and are in a flourishing state to-day; such being the case the taxpayers should not be called upon to pay into Consolidated Revenue money for the benefit of the proprietors of the coal mines. I hope the motion will not be agreed to. Although perhaps it might be said that the motion is not a direction to the Government, still we all know what will happen if the instructions embodied in this motion are not carried out.

Mr. George: There will be another debate.

Mr. OSBORN: And perhaps a Royal Commission would be appointed which would run this country into thousands of pounds expense. Putting aside the view that it is not a motion of direction we know what it will mean if the motion is carried; however, my opinion is that it is undoubtedly a direction to the Government even if it is not binding. It is a very serious thing indeed for the House to attempt to step in and, without giving any consideration to it at all, direct the Ministry in this matter. If we are to entrust Ministers with the administration of the State, surely we can entrust them in respect to a question like this of Colliery coal. Their actions in the past have shown that they are in sympathy with the industry; yet now, without any cause whatever, the hon. member brings this motion forward directing that the Government should further continue the agreement for five years. It has been said that the agreement contains a protective clause; but a protective clause would not be of much use if the men decided to go to the Arbitration Court. It will tie the Government, if not legally, at all events morally; but the men would

not worry about carrying out the wishes of the House.

Mr. George: Equally as much as the employers.

Mr. OSBORN: I say they would do nothing of the kind. Some hon. members say it is not a direction to the Government, but I say it is a direction, and I say also that the men should be made to fulfil their part of it.

Mr. Bolton: I desire to ask if the hon. member is in order in his repetition. Seeing that the hon. member does not know any better, I think it would be as well that he should be informed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is certainly not in order in repeating himself.

Mr. OSBORN: If there has been any repetition it was caused by the repeated interjections of hon. members. However, what I wish to impress upon the House is the fact that I consider the motion to be a direction to the Government. I hope it will be rejected. We have heard various accounts of the effect it would have upon the bunkering trade at Fremantle; but there seems to be a difference of opinion in this respect, and that being so I think it would be better to leave it in the hands of the Government, for the Government would then be free to make the best possible arrangement.

Mr. FOULKES (Claremont): The hon. member for East Fremantle referred to the necessity for imposing wharfage fees on coal from other countries, and more particularly on that from the Eastern States. I had hoped, and indeed I still hope to hear something from the Minister for Mines and also from the Minister for Works in respect to this suggestion. They might reasonably tell us whether, in their opinion, it would be a good policy to pursue. We are all anxious to see that every encouragement is given to the Collie coal industry, and if that industry has to compete against the collieries of the Eastern States, the people controlling the industry will have a very difficult problem before them. The Harbour Trust have to earn an enormous amount of revenue in order to pay interest on the capital cost of expendi-

ture; and not only that, but I venture to predict that in future years it will be burdened also with the interest on the dock to be constructed at Fremantle.

Mr. Hudson: Are the hon. member's remarks relevant to the subject of the motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: The Fremantle dock has nothing to do with the motion.

Mr. FOULKES: Perhaps I was wrong in mentioning the Fremantle dock; I was merely pointing out that in view of the revenue it is necessary for the Fremantle Harbour Trust to collect, it seems to me strange that the Trust should neglect to increase their receipts by the imposition of wharfage dues on coal from other countries. I do not profess to know very much about the working of this Collie industry; all that I am anxious to do is to see that no injustice shall be inflicted upon the revenue of the Harbour Trust at Fremantle. If we had some announcement as to the intention of the Government in respect to fees imposed by the Harbour Trust it would help us to come to a conclusion on this motion. On the face of it the effect of the motion would be of considerable value to the Collie coal industry, but I do not know that, standing by itself, the motion is likely to be of sufficient assistance in that respect. I should like the Minister to consider the suggestion brought forward by the member for East Fremantle as to whether the time has not arrived when we should take steps for imposing wharfage fees on coal arriving from overseas. It would be of considerable benefit to the Collie coal industry if that were done, and I would ask the Minister seriously to consider the suggestion made.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): The motion in its present form to an extent binds the hands of the Government, because not only does it deal with the question of the price, but under the existing agreement there is a certain allocation made to each of the mines, whereas since the agreement was made certain new mines have been opened up and the new

pits have been told that in the case of making a new agreement or any extension after the expiration of the present period their claims for a certain proportion of the allocation of the Government's order would receive consideration. That is a feature that would necessarily have to be taken into consideration at the expiration of the present agreement. The treatment the Collie coal industry has received in the past is the best indication the House can have that sympathetic consideration has been given to the coal trade, and that there has been a desire to foster the industry. At the same time members will recognise it is desirable the Government should have a free hand to some extent in connection with an agreement of this kind or any extension of any agreement. I am prepared to approve of the first portion of the motion, that which reads—

"That it is advisable in the best interests of the State, and the stability of the 'bunkering trade' in connection with the Collie coal-mining industry, that the decision of the Government in February, 1908, fixing an equitable price per ton (with an attendant sliding-scale) for Collie coal in proportion to the imported Newcastle coal, be extended."

I understand it is impossible to amend the motion, otherwise I would have preferred earlier to have moved to delete the latter portion, but if the hon. member would withdraw his motion I can give him an assurance that the Government will favourably consider the question of extending the present agreement. At the same time it may be necessary for the Government in connection with the allocation of any future orders to consider the claims of those new pits since opened up. It is necessary that we should have a free hand to some extent, because while at present the Government order forms the bigger proportion of the output from Collie, at the same time if the bunkering trade is fairly well established it may mean that the Government order will be only a small percentage of the total output. This is why I am anxious we should to

some extent have a free hand in regard to the allocation at the expiration of the present agreement. I think the desire of the hon. member is to practically get an assurance from the House that the present agreement that has run so smoothly shall if possible be extended, and I think his wishes will be met to that extent by carrying the first part of the motion I have read.

Mr. A. A. WILSON (in reply): I am pleased at the assurance given by the Premier, but I would ask for an extension of that assurance for two or three years. If the agreement be extended for two or three years, I would be only too pleased to accept the suggestion and withdraw my motion. I do this in order that we shall at least have some period of stability.

The PREMIER: The same argument would apply. The hon. member can rest assured from past actions in regard to this industry that the Government desire to have that stability. That is proof why they should not be bound to any particular time.

Mr. A. A. WILSON: Very well, I accept the assurance of the Premier and, with the consent of the House, I beg leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

MOTION—BORING, NORTH-WEST.

Mr. OSBORN (Roebourne) moved—

That in the opinion of this House it would be in the best interest of the State that the Mines Department should undertake deep boring in the Roebourne and Onslow districts to test the country for minerals and other deposits.

He said: I do not wish it to be understood that it is not recognised that the Government are doing and have done a considerable amount of good by putting down bore wells for the convenience of the prospectors in the North. At the same time there are other aspects of the question. Some years ago the Government put down a bore at Onslow 1,500 or 1,600 feet, I think, but it was not successful, not because the prospects were not good, but because of some error of

judgment. The bore was discontinued just at that juncture when had it been continued most likely it would have resulted in some very good discoveries.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What were they boring for?

Mr. OSBORN: For water and for coal. There were two objects in view. They were prospecting the country just there because there was an idea that coal existed somewhere in the locality. Also Onslow had and still has no water supply, and the Government decided to put down a bore, and that bore showed very good indications indeed at the point at which they ceased. The operations had to be discontinued because of some error in judgment in regard to the casing.

Mr. Underwood: What formation were they in?

Mr. OSBORN: I do not confess to having any knowledge of the indications in that direction except that the report went to show there were good indications of coal. Water was not reached, though there was every belief water would have been reached had they not had the misfortune to make some mistake in regard to the casing. Since then the Government have been boring at Port Hedland for water. That has also been unsatisfactory, but still I think we should not be disheartened; I think it is quite right and proper that further investigation should be made in that direction. There has been a considerable amount of money spent in other portions of the State in prospecting both for water and minerals, and we can see no reason in the North why further extension should not be made in the North to further test it for minerals and other deposits that might exist. In face of the fact that certain reports are not favourable as to the existence of artesian water, I think we might have some hope of doing good by assisting the district in the direction I indicate. I can see no reason why we should not carry out this work when we have indications and prospects of very successful results. I have no intention of confining operations to Roebourne and Onslow in particular. I would have preferred the inclusion of the Pilbara and Ashburton goldfields. The whole of the area should

be prospected, and I am sure the Mines Department, if they undertake any work in this direction, will certainly select the point in the district they think most likely to give any results. Though I confine the motion to Roebourne and Onslow, yet I am quite certain the department would use its discretion as to whether it would confine its endeavours to those particular districts, or whether it would go over the whole field and endeavour to test it downwards as well as upwards.

Mr. GORDON (Canning): I second the motion.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): I regret that I cannot approve of the motion and I hope the honourable member will withdraw it. What he is asking for is that we should initiate a system of deep boring in the North-West for the purpose of searching for minerals. To undertake a means of prospecting in new country by boring would be an exceedingly unwise and exceedingly expensive policy. Boring for coal, where there are large deposits extending over a considerable area, can usually be carried out with success, but to endeavour to prospect for gold or silver, or copper, or tin lodes, would be a system of blind stabbing, and the result would be that probably there would be more harm than good done by carrying on operations of that sort. Moreover, it would be very expensive to endeavour to carry on prospecting by such means. I am quite in accord with the hon. member that if any well-defined scheme can be brought forward it would receive every consideration and assistance from the Government, but to encourage a system of boring without having a special recommendation from the Geological Department of a report that such operations would be likely to lead to success, would certainly be disastrous from a prospecting point of view, and very expensive. When the motion first appeared on the Notice Paper I obtained a report from the Geological Department so as to ascertain their opinion on the matter, and they considered it would be a most unwise policy to adopt. There are certain places in the North-West where boring operations might be successfully undertaken. I

have been urging that in one place especially boring operations should be tried, with a view of endeavouring to locate certain lodes. To adopt this system generally, either in the North-West or in any other part of the State, except in special circumstances, would be making a very great mistake. Recently we have had a little boring done at Leonora and Mount Morgans. Local syndicates assisted by the Government carried on boring operations. At Leonora they turned out a great failure, but at Mount Morgans they were successful in locating a couple of lodes, one of which went over 11dwts. This will probably prove of very great value to that district. Where well-defined lodes are known to exist, and with a knowledge of likely values, boring operations might be made successfully. If we adopted the principle we might easily cause great trouble, for certain small rich shoots might be discovered, they would induce a large expenditure, and the property might turn out a duffer. In connection with surface prospecting, the initial prospecting, I very much prefer the sinking of a shaft, for if any indications are established it is so easy then to follow them up, whereas it is absolutely impossible to do that with a diamond drill. We have given a little assistance in connection with some silver lead shows in the Onslow district. Very great expense was occasioned there in getting the lead ore to the coast and on the boats. This, with the heavy cost of shipment, militated against the successful carrying on of the industry. We are giving a bonus, increasing it as the price of lead goes down and decreasing it as the price goes up. We have been able by this means to give assistance to people who have been struggling with lead mines in the Onslow district. If the hon. member can bring forward suggestions to assist the copper industry at Roebourne I will see if anything can be done with a view of again bringing those mines into prominence. To agree to a motion like this, when it would mean the expenditure of an enormous sum of money, would be a big mistake, especially when it is not recommended by the Geological Department. It is pointed out by the officers of that department

that it would be almost impossible to endeavour to prospect by that means. Therefore I would ask the hon. member to withdraw, assuring him at the same time that if he can bring forward anything with some fair show of success, towards building up the industry, I will have a report made upon the proposal by the officers of the department, and if their recommendations are favourable I will do what I can to have them carried into effect.

Mr. SWAN (North Perth): I cannot miss this opportunity of congratulating the Minister, for I do not often feel disposed that way, but on this occasion he is to be congratulated on the way he has received the proposition. I am as anxious as anyone to assist that particular district. So far as Roebourne is concerned I do not know a great deal about it, but as far as the Ashburton is concerned—which is the locality particularly dealt with by the motion—the proposition is a manifest absurdity. Had the hon. member proposed to take steps to supply Onslow with a satisfactory water supply he would have had enthusiastic support from me, but it would be absolutely hopeless to attempt to do anything in the way of boring for minerals in the vicinity of Onslow. Something might yet be done in the way of encouraging the mining industry further up the Ashburton, where I believe there are prospects of very good development, not only in regard to gold, but also as to copper and lead. The department might give assistance for that purpose. There is an absolute need for something in the way of providing Onslow with a water supply. As the hon. member's motion does not propose anything of the sort I cannot see that it is of very much use. An attempt has been made to get water there by boring but it has been a failure. I would recommend to the member for Roebourne that in bringing forward matters in the interests of his constituency, he should endeavour to get the local governing bodies in his electorate to take him into their confidence.

Mr. George: Don't they?

Mr. SWAN: I think not. I hope the member will give further consideration to the needs of his district and will endeavour

our to have some assistance given to the mining industry further up the Ashburton, rather than in the immediate locality of Onslow.

Debate interrupted by Standing Order 214.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair; Mr. Hudson in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of 1 and 2, Edward VII., No. 5, S. 2:

Mr. BUTCHER moved an amendment—

That paragraph (a) be struck out.

The original definitions in the principal Act were sufficient without the addition of these.

Mr. HUDSON: Taking the Bill as a whole, and if it be carried these definitions would be no longer necessary. Under the circumstances, it would be as well if that part of the clause were allowed to pass, and later on it might be recommitted. Certainly, the inclusion there was necessary if the Bill was to be a Bill.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Perhaps the hon. member in charge of the Bill would explain, if these definitions "engineering work" and "factory," even if they remained in the Bill, what injury they would do to the Bill. The worst that could happen would be that they would be mere surplusage. The hon. member was not yet aware whether the proposals he outlined in this measure were going to be carried. They were proposals of a highly controversial character, and it would be time enough to alter the definition when the Committee had altered the main principle of the existing legislation. The hon. member would have an opportunity later on of carrying out his suggestion. In the meantime no harm could be done by allowing the definitions to remain.

Mr. HUDSON: The paragraph might be allowed to pass, and the clause could

be recommitted if necessary. If the definitions were struck out it might not be possible to go back and secure their reinsertion on recommitment.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There was absolutely nothing to prevent the hon. member if the salient portions of the Bill were carried to recommit the measure. At the present time he was moving what would become a consequential amendment before it had become consequential.

Mr. Walker: Postpone it.

Mr. HUDSON: That is what I have asked for.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member might explain what the full scope of the Bill would be when these words were deleted. The Committee ought to take action now with regard to the matter.

Mr. HUDSON: The Chairman might inform the Committee whether if the clause were struck out it could be reinserted on recommitment.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. BUTCHER suggested that in lines 5 and 6 of paragraph (b) the words "or in any proclamation under this Act," might be struck out. The Committee would then have before them the diseases mentioned in the schedule, and those diseases only. It would be unwise to have any other diseases that might be brought in excepting those which were specified in the schedule.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member was endeavouring to add to the Schedule the very diseases which might be contracted from the nature of a man's employment, and he had taken it for granted that the Committee would agree to the ailments silicosis and anthracosis being included and compensation being paid. When the Bill was before the House on its second reading he (the Minister for Mines) pointed out that it would be unwise for the House to introduce legislation of that kind without giving it serious consideration. He would like to test the feeling of the Committee whether members would be justified in including in a measure of this sort provision for the

payment of compensation to any person who might contract silicosis and anthracosis while employed in a mine. It would be as well to secure the opinion of the Committee, and if the Committee affirmed the desirability of doing so, a good deal of time would be saved. In connection with this matter the hon. member desired to bring in legislation similar to that introduced last year in New Zealand, and somewhat similar to the legislation introduced in the old country.

Mr. Bath: It is law in the old country.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the Minister submit his amendment to the Committee?

The MINISTER FOR MINES moved an amendment—

That all the words after "employment," in line 4 of paragraph (b) be struck out.

We should look to New Zealand for the result which had followed the passing of their legislation, and also what would be the probable effect of such legislation being passed here. In his second reading speech on the Bill he had explained to the House what had occurred in New Zealand. The hon. member was then kind enough to say that he (the Minister) was acting on behalf of the Chamber of Mines.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not traverse second reading speeches.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was known what had resulted in New Zealand from the passing of this legislation.

Mr. Angwin: What are they doing in England?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There was a very great difference in the system employed in the old country as compared with the system out here. There was a great difference also in the classes of employment.

Mr. Swan: The results are the same; they just die.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Hon. members should consider what the effect of the provision would be. It would probably do more injury to the workers than if we were to take a negative action. Certainly if it were to be passed,

the insurance companies, even if they did agree to insure, would demand that the miner should pass a medical examination. As in New Zealand, the miners would refuse to undergo the examination, and a large number of them would be thrown out of employment. No provision had been made for this contingency. The hon. member had stated that under the Mines Regulation Act he (the Minister) had power to prevent the employment in the mine of persons who were suffering from tuberculosis; certainly the power was there to make such regulations, but not to cause an examination, and unless Parliament, by resolution, gave explicit instructions on the point he would not frame a regulation which would probably throw a large number of persons out of employment—except, indeed, he were able to make proper provision for them.

Mr. Bath: That is an excellent reason why it should not have been included in the Act.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The reason why the provision had been included in the Act was that at the time there had been a lot of ankylostomiasis discovered in Western Australia. This, of course, was a disease due to dirty and insanitary conditions and, therefore, was preventable.

Mr. Bath: This, also, is preventable.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Tuberculosis was preventable only if one agreed to place oneself in a glass case. One could never tell where tuberculosis was lying about. This proposed provision, if agreed to, would cause an enormous amount of trouble. Of course hon. members who never employed anybody did not mind. We wanted to feel satisfied that injury to a large number of persons would not follow the passing of the provision. It was certain that all persons suffering from silicosis and anthracosis would lose their employment. If passed, the provision would certainly give a great deal of work to the lawyers. If it were to be admitted that sickness should be made a portion of the right to claim compensation, why should it be made to apply to the mining industry alone—why

should it not be extended to a number of other industries? Then, again, a great deal depended on the mine in which a person was employed. Recently Dr. Ellis had told him that living on the surface close to the dumps at Bonnievale was more dangerous, so far as silicosis was concerned, than working in the depths of the Kalkoorlie mines. What was required was that some national scheme should be evolved under which the worker could pay his quota on similar lines to those adopted in Germany. Then all workers who had subscribed to the fund would be able to get compensation from the general fund without there being any taint of dependency about it, and the scheme could be made to apply to all classes of the community.

Mr. HUDSON: The Minister had suggested that the miners did not contribute to any compensation that might be demanded on account of an accident. That was not quite correct, because there were funds in the union and in other societies to which the miner contributed and from which he gained a benefit in the case of accident. With regard to the extension of the provisions of the Bill in respect to diseases beyond those arising from the occupation of mining he would be quite willing, and indeed glad, to accept from the Minister an addition to the schedule. On the other hand, so far as he knew there was not in the State any particular industry other than mining which it was desired should be included in the provisions of the Bill. The Minister had gone through the usual platitudes as to the probable result of the passing of the measure. The Minister had said that it would lead to unemployment, and that it would mean the dismissal of a large number of men. The Minister might also have gone so far as to say that it would mean the closing up of all the mines in Western Australia.

The Minister for Mines: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. HUDSON: There did not seem to be any real reason urged against the provision for the inclusion of diseases as a class of injury. A great deal had been said in the papers recently in regard to

what was known as the white death among the miners on the goldfields. To include this provision was made in the Bill. Provision was made for the extension of the schedule by proclamation, and the Minister need have no fear in that direction.

Mr. WALKER: One had a feeling of pain as the Minister pointed out the objections to the clause. The Minister claimed that men working in the mines would receive dismissal. Why was that? Because they were inflicted with some form of disease contracted by mining, and which was liable to be increased by working in the mines. If that were so the more necessary it was to insist upon the clause, because if it were possible that those employing men were employing those who might be dying; it was a sad state of affairs and should be stopped. If it would preserve the lives of men by preventing them from finding employment that was killing them, the sooner this measure was brought in the better. The essence of the clause was humanitarian. It showed a sense of brotherhood for all those who had to toil for their bread and butter, and it showed a desire to protect them from the wrongs which in the greed of life they were obliged to encounter. The Minister said there was some little disturbance about men refusing to be examined in New Zealand. Could we believe this as a serious argument, that men wanting work, with families dependent on them, would decline the ordeal of getting a certificate from a doctor if that was all that stood between idleness and obtaining a livelihood?

The Minister for Mines: The whole body of miners refused.

Mr. WALKER: Then, it must have been a protest for the way this was forced upon them. It was only because they felt that the employers determined to take a strong hand over their men as a protest against this kind of legislation.

The Minister for Mines: The insurance companies demanded the examination.

Mr. WALKER: The insurance companies were too fond of cash to refuse money for insuring people. The suspicion one feared was, not that the men

would not be examined, not that the insurance companies would not accept the risk, but that the examination would give such a revelation as to the amount of disease and death occasioned by this particular kind of employment that it would startle the whole State. Underneath the earth, down in those shafts and workings, there were men to-day carrying death in their breasts. The Bill would stop that. The examination by the insurance companies would show it. The need for preserving the lives of these men would become conspicuous. Not only did these men have disease playing havoc in their own lives, but they were becoming the disseminators of the disease among their fellow workmen; and in the name of the health of the whole community the clause should stand as drafted. What argument could one adduce that the diseases mentioned in the schedule were peculiar to mining work? What objection could there be to that? As the member in charge of the Bill rightly pointed out, the Minister might find people suffering in other employments. If so, the Government could add to the schedule. The clause suggested the possibility of that. Its wording was that there should be compensation for injury to health or loss of life from a disease mentioned in the schedule or in any proclamation under the Act.

Mr. HEITMANN: That is just what the Minister wants; he wants to proclaim other industries.

Mr. WALKER: That was very desirable. If there was any other work in any factory that generated any disease through working a particular kind of material we should have it proclaimed. Science in respect to the discovery of particular germs was only in its infancy, and it was safe to prophesy there would be diseases catalogued by and by of which we had no knowledge now, and it was necessary to have protection against these particular diseases, so that when they were discovered and named they could be proclaimed and added to the list of dangerous diseases. We were legislating not to safeguard pockets, but to safeguard human lives, and not to limit or restrain the operations of the measure. This kind of legislation was of

recent origin. It was found beneficial in thousands of cases, and its operations were so valuable in a limited circle that it was desired to extend them to a wider field. All that was said against this extension now proposed was said with much more fire against the first step in this direction and against any extensions already made, and no doubt the arguments used to-night in opposition to the clause would be found just as futile and valueless as those put forward against passing measures of this kind in the past. He sincerely hoped that the humanitarian sense of members would speak in the measure and that members would consider their fellow creatures who were making the country richer, and whose lot in bringing wealth from the bowels of the earth was to get enough to live with and scarcely enough for their burials at their deaths.

The PREMIER desired to disabuse the minds of some members. Apparently they were under the impression that the matter had not received every consideration at the hands of the Minister for Mines.

Mr. SCADDAN: Oh! It has.

The PREMIER: The question of miners' disease had been brought under his (the Premier's) notice more prominently during the last month or two than previously. Owing to the fact that he had not been associated with the mining industry to any large extent he had not been able to realise the seriousness of the disease, but during the last few weeks he had received numerous resolutions from various bodies and public meetings in different parts of the State to the effect that it was desirous that the Government should take early steps to have an inquiry into this dread disease, with the object of ascertaining the proper methods to arrest its progress to some extent. The member for Cue had also taken a great interest in the question, and on more than one occasion had drawn his (the Premier's) attention to the need for action being taken. As a matter of fact, owing to a reference made by that hon. member during last session, certain inquiries were conducted at the Great Fingal mine. It was necessary that some inquiry should

be made in connection with this matter, but whether this Bill would tend in the direction of securing inquiry he was not convinced.

Mr. Hudson: It will provide an immediate remedy.

The PREMIER: It would not arrest the progress of the disease but would provide compensation in the event of injury as a result of the disease being contracted by men working in the mines. The preventive application was due to the fact that provision was made for medical examination.

Mr. Hudson: There would be greater care exercised.

The PREMIER: The employers would see that the men employed by them were in a perfect state of health. They would not take the risk of having to pay a substantial sum for compensation. The operation of a similar Act was not a success in New Zealand, and the Government there had intimated their intention to bring down a measure to repeal the clause providing for compulsory medical examination.

Mr. Hudson: They are not doing away with what we want.

The PREMIER: Sir Joseph Ward intended to repeal the clause. This matter had been discussed by the Government, but as to what form the inquiry should take had not been absolutely decided yet. In order that the Committee might know that the Minister for Mines had taken a considerable amount of interest in this question, and that the matter was receiving serious attention, he might state that quite recently in a minute to the Under Secretary for Mines the Minister stated that it was necessary that a most complete investigation on the question should take place, and that the fullest power should be given to any investigating committee who might deal with the question to compel the attendance of witnesses and take evidence on oath. Therefore a Royal Commission was necessary, and no time should be lost in making the necessary arrangements for this being done. The Minister added that there was no doubt about the danger of allowing consumptives to work in mines, that there was a

certain amount of silicosis which we might be able to minimise by preventive methods, and that suggestions should be made as to alleviating the condition of those who had already contracted the disease. At a recent meeting of Cabinet the Minister for Mines was requested to make recommendations with a view to instituting an inquiry. The Minister had consulted several of his officers and with officers of the Medical Department on the matter. Probably the discussion to-night might lead to suggestions being made as to the scope of the inquiry and the personnel of the commission, and the proper methods that should be adopted in order to obtain by inquiry some authoritative information so that the matter could be dealt with. The question was a very important one, and he would like to emphasise the point that it did not necessarily follow that because some members might be opposed to certain clauses of the Bill they were not actuated by the same humanitarian principles as those members advocating the passage of the measure as printed. The Government desired to obtain the fullest information on the question, and to-night should provide an opportunity for suggestions by members who, by virtue of their close association with the industry, had practical knowledge. Those suggestions might be adopted when the question of appointing a commission to inquire into this particular disease was under consideration.

Mr. BATH: The question as to the investigation concerning the prevalence of miner's complaint or tuberculosis was entirely foreign to the clause. As a matter of fact that proposal would deal with those who had already contracted the disease, and to a lesser degree to exercise preventive methods against others contracting it. In the clause provision was made for compensation to be paid to those who by nature of their employment were subjected to this disease, just as under the Workers' Compensation Act we made provision for those who met with accidents during their employment. In providing the clause we were in a very great measure preventing workers from being subjected to the risk of contracting

the disease simply because it was a form of insurance by which the employers exercised greater care than they might if the clause did not exist. There was no very great difference, except in a matter of degree, between the industrial conditions in the old country and those in Australia. The employments were the same except that we had not the same number employed here as there, but the conditions were similar. In England this provision had been inserted in an Act of Parliament, not in a hasty manner but after proper consideration. That Act was the result of a report by a Commission which spent a considerable time in investigating this subject of diseases contracted by persons following certain employments.

The Premier: Would not the same result be obtained by an address from both Houses asking for a proclamation in so far as this disease was concerned?

Mr. BATH: We were discussing now a method of securing relief with a degree of certainty, whereas the other system was only problematical. The figures for 1908 as to the amount of compensation paid under the English Act of 1906 showed that the amount of compensation for industrial diseases was only small proportionately to the amount paid for industrial accidents. That was according to the report as to the operation of the Act in 1908. The reason the amount was not great was that the existence of the section in the English Act had acted as a warning to employers. They had taken greater precaution and exercised greater care in regard to those peculiar conditions which subjected workers to this disease, and that would be the result here if the clause were carried.

The Premier: Is the care exercised both as to the conditions of working and the state of health of the men employed?

Mr. BATH: Care as to the conditions of employment by better ventilation and more supervision. What the employer really said to himself was "I will have to pay if the workers in my employment through my neglect contract this disease, and rather than pay I will exercise greater care." The argument that men would be turned out of employment because they

suffered from the disease had been used against every Workers' Compensation Bill. Exactly the same argument was used by clergymen when Robert Owen agitated for the first Factories Act. They said that the youngsters employed in the factories would take to immoral ways if they were not employed for 12 or 14 hours a day. Experience had shown that there had been a material improvement owing to this legislation, and the terrible calamities prophesied had not arisen. To-day the move was in the direction of giving greater protection. Quite apart from the necessity for the clause it was desirable that an investigation into phthisis and tuberculosis should be prosecuted. That however had no connection with the clause.

Mr. HEITMANN: As a means of dealing with the whole question of tuberculosis and miners' phthisis the clause was not sufficient. By drawing attention to the matter by causing a dislocation of certain lines of business, as it would do, and by forcing the medical examination of miners, it would cause the serious attention of the people of the State to be drawn to the extraordinary position in which the miners were at the present time. There were hundreds of cases in this State of men suffering from the terrible disease. If there were medical inspection of miners these men would be prevented from working below. That appeared to the Minister to be the chief reason why we should not pass the clause. He seemed to be of opinion that the calamity which would overcome the miners by the fact of several hundreds being put out of employment, was sufficient to prevent us from passing the Bill, but if it threw every miner out of work, because they were suffering from miners' complaint, he would pass the measure. It was the duty of the State to see that the miners, and all other workers, had fair conditions of work, and had a fair chance of living out their lives. Medical inspection would be asked by the insurance companies, and even though that would be brought about he would be prepared to support it because it would force the hands of the people. It was certainly a matter that should call for at-

tention on the part of the Government, and it had to be confessed that the matter had not received the attention it deserved. Several times it had been brought forward, and the statements made had been deprecated on every occasion. It was satisfactory to hear that the Government contemplated the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate this question. Personally, he believed he could make out a fairly good case for inquiry, but he was not prepared to do it in Committee that evening. If we were to deal with the matter properly we must first ensure that every man suffering from lung trouble whether tubercular or non-tubercular was provided with means of sustenance for his dependents, and then the question of the remedy for the evil could be tackled. Tuberculosis in miners could be prevented. The chief reason for its existence was the dust in the mines. Every inquiry held in various parts of the world had shown that the first and chief factor was the dust. This dust could be prevented in connection with drilling because water could be procured in most mines, and it could be prevented also in connection with the removal of quartz in the different parts of the mine, and by the prevention of the dust we would in a short time remedy the evil. There were other factors, but the chief one was the dust. It would be said that it would cost the companies a good deal of money to bring their mines into a satisfactory state, and he was sorry that this matter had not been gone into some five or six years ago when the operations were not so extensive. He suggested some five years ago that action should be taken, and said then that the difficulty would be ten times worse than in the deep mines in Victoria, simply because of the extensive operations. At the present time to force the companies to provide natural ventilation would put them to great expense; but that should not be taken into consideration by the Chamber. The first consideration should be the workmen, and speaking personally, he could only express pleasure that the Government were going to appoint a commission of inquiry into the whole question.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Every member of the Committee would gladly pay a tribute to the humanitarian object which was the motive power at the back of the subclause, but the member in charge of the Bill had scarcely explained with sufficient attention to detail the necessity for changing the definition of "injury," and had not altogether convinced him that the change was for the better, or was precisely in the direction which he would himself wish if the object which he was seeking was to be attained. In the Workers' Compensation Act already in force there were provisions for compensating workmen who suffered from injury or disease caused through the unhealthy nature of their employment, and in the principle Act in the definition of "injury" it was specifically set forth that it meant not only loss of life by accident, but injury to health, or loss of life arising out of or consequent upon employment which might be regarded as dangerous to life. Seeing that in the existing legislation there had been adopted compensation for disease caused through employment, why should we, at this stage, depart from the existing Act? The hon. member might address himself to that aspect of the question. There was a strong opinion that there were diseases which workers in a certain class of employment were especially prone to. If it was desired that those diseases should be proclaimed there was nothing to prevent the adoption of that course. If, on the other hand, it was argued that there might be a difficulty in securing unanimity with regard to that proclamation, and that although it might be approved of by the Committee, it might not receive endorsement elsewhere, then the same objection applied to the Bill before the Committee, and it was open to the same objection that the law should not be amended until it had been clearly shown that the existing law was incapable of doing that which all wished to have done, although we might differ as to the method of securing some amount of compensation to the workers who had contracted disease in the course of their employment.

Mr. HUDSON: The examination of the definition in the original Act would lead members to no other conclusion than that at the time of the passage of that Act the principle of the payment of compensation in the case of diseases was affirmed. That having been affirmed the Attorney General argued that we should accept it as it was, because there was quite sufficient power given to the Governor-in-Council by proclamation to extend the provisions of the original Act. The Attorney General also complained that in introducing the measure he (Mr. Hudson) had not been specific in showing the necessity for the alteration. The Attorney General had shown the necessity himself. He pointed out that in 1902 the Act was passed and power given to the Governor by proclamation to do what we were seeking to do in the Bill. It had been shown, and it was admitted by the Premier, that the diseases mentioned in the schedule were so prevalent in the State that it was thought necessary to appoint a royal commission to inquire into them. That being the case the time had arrived when we should take it out of the hands of the Government and not leave it to the sweet will of any particular party who might be in power. The Committee should pass the clause and deal with it as might have been done by the Government under the original Act. We should do it now and do it in the Bill before the Committee.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was understood that the Bill before the Committee was similar to the measure passed by the House of Commons in 1906, but it was to be regretted that the hon. member did not include Sections 6 and 8 of that Act, and also the second schedule whereby his proposals would have been much improved. As it was, if his proposals were passed they would lead to practically endless litigation, whereas under the British Act power was given to appoint a medical referee to assess damages. The Committee of the House of Commons reported that the inclusion of industrial diseases under the Workmen's Compensation Act led to increased difficulties in connection with old men finding and retaining employment, and the diffi-

culty had grown. He would be the last to wish that any man who was already suffering from any of these diseases should remain out of employment. It was all very well to say that the men would willingly submit to examination, but it was known that the experience in New Zealand was that they declined to submit themselves. Unless we got these men medically examined there would be a difficulty in insuring. The diseases referred to in the British Act were specifically connected with a particular trade. The diseases included in the Bill were not to be found in the English measure. Moreover, it was to be remembered that it would be an extremely difficult matter to define with any certainty the time at which a man contracted a particular disease; yet if the man was to be compensated for such disease it would be necessary to ascertain when first he had contracted it. Perhaps the hon. member would tell the Committee how he was going to get over that difficulty. Certainly some means should be provided whereby those workers unfortunate enough to fall victims to the diseases specified should receive something in the shape of compensation, but he objected to the methods of the Bill. In connection with the potteries in the old country, the matter had been solved by the formation of a particular fund, contributed to both by masters and men. When any man was found to be suffering from a disease peculiar to pottery work he was compensated from the fund. In Germany they had a system of compulsory insurance. He would lend his assistance to any scheme of compulsory insurance. The Bill would have a tendency to limiting employment for men who, while outwardly they did not appear to be in the best of health, might, perhaps, easily pass the medical examination if they would but consent to the test. Furthermore, it would tend to reduce the opportunities of employment for men who had passed the prime of life, and who, by reason of their age, would be more susceptible to the disease than would those in full vigour.

Mr. GEORGE: The object of the Bill was laudable to a degree. It was only

right that those who might be injured, whether by accident or disease, should be placed in a position in which they could receive something to enable them to live without carrying the stigma of charity. All would agree with that. The trend of opinion throughout the world was that this question of compensation, and of looking after those who might be injured in their employment, was a matter rather for the State than for the industry. It was for the State to look after its sick, its infirm, and its incapable. The State was doing it to-day in respect to the insane, and in respect also to the indigent sick. It was only a question of a few years when the State, refusing to tinker with workers' compensation measures, would assume the duty of looking after those who were prevented from earning an independent livelihood. He did not like the Bill because, in his opinion, its provisions would give rise to a tremendous amount of confusion, which would be as detrimental to the interests of those whom it was desired to serve as of those who were expected to provide compensation. The idea that we should have old men's homes, and consumptive sanatoriums just as in the old days in the old country they had the workhouse, was repugnant to anyone of independent spirit. If the State were to take up a matter of this sort it would have to place the recipients of the compensation beyond any possibility of experiencing a feeling of degradation.

Mr. DRAPER: So far as this particular definition of injury was concerned, no exception could be taken to the first portion of it; but the second portion of it, namely, that making reference to diseases, would serve to make the Bill unworkable. For instance, it would be a most difficult matter to state the specified time at which a disease started. We were all familiar with cases in which men had gradually fallen under some mysterious illness which was not diagnosed until after death. How, then, could it be expected that insidious diseases, such as those referred to in the schedule, could be recognised at the first moment of attack. The last employer was to be made responsible for the worker; and it was only right

that there should be someone to whom the worker would look.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting away from the amendment.

Mr. DRAPER: In the circumstances he would ask for a little latitude. His object was to state his reasons for wishing to excise a portion of the definition. The last employer might be a totally innocent party. The disease might not have been contracted in his employment, yet he might have to look to some previous employer who might be a man of straw. The employers might readily say that without a test by which they could guard against the risk they were running an industry in which they were engaged must necessarily be hampered. It was reasonable to suppose that if the Bill passed in its present form a considerable amount of injury would be done to the mining industry.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Instead of adopting the course of introducing a Bill which was of a highly controversial character, the member for Dundas could have achieved his object more expeditiously by moving a motion that an address be presented to the Governor asking that a specific disease should be proclaimed under the existing Act, and possibly certain wage-earners would have received a loaf of bread, whereas now the only possible object of the hon. member's course was to give them nothing more than a stone.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The amendment was moved with the view to giving members the chance of deciding whether these diseases should be set out in the schedule. There was no desire to injure the definition in the parent Act. In regard to the New Zealand legislation the diseases mentioned in the schedule were anthrax, lead poisoning, mercurial poisoning, phosphorous poisoning, arsenical poisoning, and pneumoconiosis. Other diseases were to be declared by the Governor. Pneumoconiosis was the only one applying to mining, and according to a newspaper clipping Sir Joseph Ward had remarked it was the intention of the Government to repeal the

portion dealing with that. He (the Minister) held the opinion that we should not do anything to injure any industry or persons, and that we should protect not only the persons affected by the diseases in this measure, but also those affected by diseases or injuries incurred through following any employment. The measure before the House appeared to be more a Bill to assist lawyers instead of employees. At any rate, silicosis was a disease of gradual growth, and might take years to develop. The only thing was that it made one more susceptible to tuberculosis and phthisis.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was a fact, as the Premier had said, that this matter had received attention from the Minister for Mines. It had played so much on the mind of the Minister that it was doubtful if the Minister had received any deputation on any subject within the last two months without introducing this matter in his reply. During this month, in reply to a deputation that waited on him in connection with the Perseverance fire, without any reference having been made to the subject, the Minister dealt with the question of miners' complaint.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not clear as to the relevancy of the hon. member's remarks.

Mr. SCADDAN: The reply made to a deputation that waited on the Premier of Victoria on this subject was one that members should have always before them, especially those members so much concerned about the industry and not about those who made the industry. We should look after the man while he could do something for the State and not after the employer who would use a man until he was of no further use and then throw him on the State. We should regard the 6,000 men employed underground in the mines rather than the £20,000,000 of dividends that had gone out of the State to foreign owners of the mines. This was the reply of the Premier of the supposed conservative State of Victoria. He agreed that the request of the deputation was reasonable and that the disease must be stamped out, and that the industry would need to be stamped out

if it meant death to the men going into the mines; also that it was a serious question, and that he would be against any man going down a mine and committing suicide. The Premier of Victoria also said the cheapest method for the employer to ensure himself under the provisions of the Bill was to improve the conditions of work. As usual in this State the Chamber of Mines were the prompters of the Government.

The Premier: You are wrong.

Mr. SCADDAN: One could read to-night's speech of the Minister for Mines almost in toto in the journal of the Chamber of Mines. That Chamber consisted of individuals who were themselves employees, though representing foreign capitalists who had never shown any regard for the welfare of the citizens of the State. The Chamber of Mines had stated distinctly that matters like this should be considered in Committee, because its members, as representatives of foreign capitalists, would be inclined in public to give views suitable to their employers and not in line with their own opinions. That of course was natural. He did not agree for a moment that the managers of the mines, on the Golden Mile, or on other mines really believed it would be detrimental to the interests of the citizens that the clause should be passed. That was not their personal opinion. None could tell him that the member for Kalgoolie believed that, and he was a member of the Chamber of Mines. That member recognised that the mining industry had caused the loss of many valuable lives. For the Government to say now that they were thinking of the matter was a means of trying to shelve the question. They appointed a Commission once before, but what had they done in regard to the report of the Commission? Now they proposed to appoint another. It might interest members to know that in an article in the journal of the Chamber of Mines there was something about the attitude to be adopted by the Government. Knowing the Attorney General as he did, doubtless that gentleman was influenced in opposing the amendment by

the standpoint taken by the Chamber when they said that possibly it would be interesting for the Government to realise the fact that they would have to undertake a similar financial obligation in the matter. That would be sufficient to induce the Attorney General to oppose an amendment of this kind. The Honorary Minister and the Minister for Mines had said that the miners would object to medical examination. What evidence had they that such would occur?

The Minister for Mines: The action in New Zealand.

Mr. SCADDAN: Against that there was the action of the miners in Victoria where the disease was more pronounced. The Miners' Association there had a ballot on the question, not only as to whether they should be medically examined, but as to whether any person suffering from miners' complaint should be allowed to go underground. That included the present as well as the future, and it was carried by a majority of something like 17 to 1.

The Minister for Mines: They call it consumption.

Mr. SCADDAN: No, they put it down as miner's complaint. The illness was exactly the same as the one existing in Western Australia, and everyone called it miners' complaint. The Chamber of Mines had also said that the result of the Bill passing would be the throwing out of employment of a number of men who had just reached, or had just passed, their prime. The Bill would not have that effect because that state of affairs already existed in the mining industry, for, so soon as a person could not give his pound of flesh, the Chamber had no time for him, and when once a man was dismissed from one mine he could not get on to another. The members of the Chamber informed one another as to the abilities of the men dismissed, and in no case was a man taken on who had been dropped by someone else. A few elderly men were employed on the mines, but very few, and the correctness of that could be proved by watching the men who went on shift at the various mines. It would be seen that they were nearly

all between the age of 18 and 30. Immediately miners were over 30 years they began to show age, owing to the nature of their calling. He knew many men not 40 years of age who had to give up the calling altogether and were forced to eke out an existence on the coast. Any calling that had such an effect on those employed in the industry should bear the cost of it. If this were not done, then the mine should be handed over to the State. If the mining industry were not worthy of keeping our citizens in health it was worth nothing to us. We were inducing immigrants to come here, but we were giving no consideration to keeping the citizens of the State alive. In spite of the attitude adopted by the companies with whom the employers would insure their workmen, and in spite of any attitude of the employer himself, the clause would have a very beneficial effect. Even if what happened in New Zealand happened here it would have a good effect, for it would bring before the public the dire effects of the disease and thus the State would be made to care for those who had become infirm owing to the nature of their calling. The Honorary Minister urged that what occurred in New Zealand would occur here also, but even if it did that was not sufficient objection to cause the clause to be defeated now. If the clause were thrown out the main purposes of the Bill would be defeated.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was to be regretted that the member for Ivanhoe instead of addressing himself to the general question did not deal with the clause actually before the Committee. He had already contended that the definition of "injury" in the existing Act was ample for the purpose, and he was still awaiting a reply either from the member in charge of the Bill or from any other member opposite showing why they had not availed themselves of the powers under the existing Act. The member for Ivanhoe twitted the Government with having no wish to assist the workers in this matter, and with having acted under the direction of some body at Kalgoorlie,

but what had he done to avail himself of the provisions now on the statute book? What was there to prevent the member taking action so that the existing legislation should be made operative? That was not done, but members opposite remained idle and yet accused the Government of doing nothing in the matter. The Premier had pointed out that the Government instead of being idle were investigating the matter and, no doubt, if it were found that the position was such as to justify them in availing themselves of the provisions of the existing law, steps would be taken to set the requisite machinery in motion. That would be very much more practical than introducing a highly controversial measure which, almost from the first line, must lead to long discussion owing to the difficulty we had in obtaining from members opposite the reason for departing from the existing law. There was an admirable provision in the Act, and it was to be hoped the member in charge of the Bill would address himself more particularly to pointing out why it was necessary to disregard that very admirable definition and insert the one in the Bill in its place.

Mr. BUTCHER: The amendment moved by the Minister for Mines practically embodied the one he had moved. His idea in moving the amendment was that the diseases should be set out in a schedule, and that it should not be left to a future Government to include other diseases by proclamation. The alternative to the scheme was to allow the definition to stand as it was in the old Act which enabled members of Parliament to discuss the matter and decide what diseases should be included. The Government should not be allowed by proclamation to include any diseases they liked in the schedule.

Mr. KEENAN: There was a great deal in what the member for Murray had said that the situation created by diseases arising from employment should be dealt with not by a measure of the character submitted here, but by a measure which would cover an insurance, not merely in respect of the parties

who were affected by the disease to such a degree as to warrant compensation being paid to them, but would cover the much graver risk of creating a large number of persons who would be dependent on their living, and would find no means of obtaining work. There was no doubt that a large number could not obtain employment in the mining industry now as they had passed the age when they could give the same return as others in the industry were prepared to give. It was the competition of labour. Members would remember the time on the goldfields when any man could get employment. That was because employment was plentiful and labour was scarce. Then the danger came when the industry began to shrink, and it was still shrinking, although we all hoped in the early future that the shrinkage would cease and expansion would again follow. It must be clear to members that so long as there were two or three men applying for a job, the man who would get it would be the young man.

Mr. Scaddan: In Victoria you will find they do get consideration, but not here.

[*Mr. Taylor took the Chair.*]

Mr. KEENAN: There was no industry where if two or three persons applied for the same position the employer would not be likely to select the man he considered most fit. This created in a large measure the unemployment which existed in the State. Although he had admitted that the evil from the disease arising from employment was one that asked for a remedy, what he objected to was the half remedy which would create another evil. He was inclined to agree with the member for Murray, therefore, that a measure should be brought down which would cover not merely the risk that the Bill attempted to cover by removing the possibility of the employment of men affected with a disease, but would provide a measure of compensation or a measure of livelihood for those deprived of means of employment. While the Committee had before them only a half measure it would not be wise legislation, and it could not commend itself

to the wisdom of members. Moreover, by passing such a measure it would delay the proper consideration of the subject, and a proper and wholesome remedy which, whatever Government was in power, it would be found imperative to introduce at an early stage.

Amendment negatived.

The MINISTER FOR MINES moved an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (b) there be added the following words "Provided that no such proclamation shall issue except on Addresses of both Houses of Parliament."

That would not affect the schedule of the Bill. The schedule would stand.

Mr. Walker: Are the Government not capable of doing it without that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a fair thing to include the proviso.

Mr. HUDSON: In the existing Act it was provided that no proclamation could be issued except by an address from both Houses of Parliament. It was understood that the diseases in the schedule would remain.

[Mr. Daughish resumed the Chair.]

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

Ayes	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	19
Majority for				3

AYES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Carson	Mr. Monger
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Osborn
Mr. George	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gregory	Mr. J. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Keenan	
Mr. Male	

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. W. Price
Mr. Bath	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Swan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. GHI	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Haiman	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Hettman
Mr. O'Loughlin	

(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

Mr. GORDON moved an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (c) the word "three" be struck out and "two" inserted in lieu.

The effect of the amendment would be to reduce the remuneration which could be earned by way of manual labour from £350 to £250 per annum. It was not likely that a man would earn more than £250 by manual labour, unless the man was a specialist. Moreover, £250 was the amount of the English Act.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Would the member in charge of the Bill accept the definition of "worker" as taken from the New Zealand Act rather than the definition which was in the Bill which seemed to some extent to be involved. The clause dealt with a person who gained his livelihood by manual labour, and it was difficult to say whether a man was engaged by manual labour or otherwise. For instance, on many occasions engineers had to do manual work. It would be exceedingly difficult to say what persons would be entitled to be classed as labourers. So, too, it would be difficult to define casual labour. The New Zealand Act contained a much clearer definition than that in the Bill.

Mr. HUDSON: The definition in the Bill was just about the same as that in the New Zealand Act, but it had been drawn in such a way as to fit in with the other provisions of the English Act which had been adopted, and also to dovetail in with the definition in our original Act upon which other portions of the Bill had been framed. Nothing could be gained by adopting the New Zealand definition *en bloc* at this stage.

The CHAIRMAN: The question put by the Minister and the answer had been allowed, but the issue should be discussed after the present amendment had been disposed of. The question before the Committee was to strike out the word "three" with a view of inserting the word "two."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member would accept the amendment he would be bringing the definition not only into line with the English Act.

but with that of New Zealand, which provided that the definition of "worker" should not include any person whose wages exceeded £5.

Mr. Bath: You must take into consideration the difference in cost of living.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Were there in Western Australia any manual workers earning £350?

Mr. Bath: We have many earning more than £250.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Surely it was not desired to make the Bill more stringent than was absolutely necessary. He would again suggest that the amendment be accepted.

Mr. HUDSON: The amount had been fixed at £350, as being equivalent to the £250 of New Zealand and of Great Britain.

Amendment (that the word "three" be struck out) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	22
Noes	19

Majority for 3

AYES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Carson	Mr. Monger
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nansoc
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Osborn
Mr. George	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gregory	Mr. J. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Keenan	(Teller).
Mr. Male	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. W. Price
Mr. Bath	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Swan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Gourley
Mr. O'Loughlin	(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

Mr. HOLMAN: Before the second part of the amendment was put he would like to express the opinion that, except in the ranks of the Opposition, there was no genuine desire to have the measure

brought forward at all. When any measure affecting the workers was brought down the members on the Ministerial side, and more especially the Minister for Mines, who was a very good agent for the Chamber of Mines—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not say that.

Mr. HOLMAN: That being so he would withdraw. However, it was undeniable that the Minister for Mines acted on the suggestion of the Chamber of Mines. The Chamber of Mines had said that the legislation could not be countenanced although accepted in Great Britain and in New Zealand; but immediately it was attempted to improve the New Zealand legislation the Minister said "Oh, no, we should follow the lines already laid down." The Committee had been discussing the Bill the whole of the evening, and had not yet got beyond the definition clause. Very frequently when the Opposition were fighting important points they were accused of stonewalling; yet, never, perhaps had they held up a measure as this one had been held up by members on the other side of the House. It was found that no progress could be made, although an assurance had been given that the measure would be fairly discussed. Orr a paltry point which could not possibly affect the interests of the measure, the Government whip had moved an amendment and had talked about what obtained in New Zealand. As a matter of fact the Government whip had never read the New Zealand Act, nor would he understand it if he did.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not be allowed to make personal remarks.

Mr. HOLMAN: If the remarks were out of order he would withdraw them. However, the position was that members on the Government side were being put up to move amendments which were of little or no importance. The amendment was put up to prevent legislation being brought into force that would protect and benefit the interests of the workers. It was said that if the Bill passed in its present form it would affect the miners, but the only effect would be a slight increase in the pre-

miums, and it would not throw any more responsibility on the employers. He strongly resented the attitude of the Government towards this measure, especially that of the Minister for Mines, who should be one of the first to protect the men who were working and sacrificing their lives in the interests of a gang of "boddlers" in London who did not care a button for the lives of the workers.

The Minister for Mines: I demand a withdrawal of the words used by the hon. member, that I am working in the interest of a gang of "boddlers" in London.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not hear the hon. member use the words the Minister attributes to him.

The Minister for Mines: Then I must move "That the words be taken down."

The CHAIRMAN: I did not hear the member for Murchison use the words the Minister attributes to him.

Mr. Holman: I did not use them.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask the hon. member if he used any words reflecting on the Minister to withdraw them, but personally I did not hear anything that required my intervention.

The Minister for Mines: I understood the hon. member to say it was my duty to look after the interests of the miners and not to be working in the interests of boddlers in London. If these words were used I certainly demand a withdrawal.

Mr. MALE: I move—

That progress be reported.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I take that motion I would again ask the member for Murchison to withdraw any imputation affecting the Minister for Mines.

Mr. Holman: If I made any reflection I will withdraw.

The Minister for Mines: If the hon. member says he did not use those expressions I am satisfied.

Mr. Holman: I deny having used them; but if I did, in accordance with the Chairman's ruling I withdraw them.

Motion (progress) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	23
Noes	..	..	..	19
Majority for	..	..	..	4

AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Male
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Carson	Mr. Monger
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Osborn
Mr. George	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gregory	Mr. J. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Keenan	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. W. Price
Mr. Bath	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Swan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gill	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Willson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Heilmann
Mr. O'Loghlen	(Teller).

Motion [] thus passed; progress reported.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. Speaker, may I make an explanation?

Several Opposition members: No.

The Minister for Mines: I claim the right.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has the right if he asks to make an explanation.

Mr. Johnson: I decidedly object. It is an action the Minister perpetually adopts and I decidedly object.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member wishes to make an explanation no one can object.

Mr. Bolton: But there is no reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is entitled to make his explanation.

Mr. Walker: It is too late now; the time should be when the debate was on.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	24
Noes	..	..	..	19
Majority for	..	..	..	4

AYES.

Mr. Brown
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Carson
Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Davies
Mr. Draper
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. George
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Keenan

Mr. Male
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. C. F. Moore
Mr. Nanson
Mr. Osborn
Mr. Plesse
Mr. J. Price
Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Gordon
(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Bath
Mr. Bolton
Mr. Collier
Mr. Gill
Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Holman
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Johnson
Mr. O'Loughlin

Mr. W. Price
Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Swan
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Underwood
Mr. Walker
Mr. Ware
Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Gourley
(Teller).

Question thus passed.

House adjourned at 10.42 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 25th November, 1909.

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

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

Transfer of Land Act Amendment,
Registration of Deeds, etcetera,
Amendment.

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report after recommitment adopted.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: Hon. members are aware this is a Bill that comes up annually. In fact I think two amending Bills have been brought down in one year. The object of the Bill is in the first place to increase the capital of the Agricultural Bank from £1,500,000 to £2,000,000; and secondly to increase the maximum amount that can be loaned to one borrower from £500 to £750. An Agricultural Bank Bill was first introduced 12 or 14 years ago at the instigation of Mr. Throssell, and the capital then provided for the bank was £100,000. That measure provided for 50 per cent. advances against value of work done, and the interest to be charged was 6 per cent. To-day the capital of the bank has considerably increased. The reserve fund, that is the money repaid by borrowers, amounts to £24,255, while the balance sheet shows figures totalling a million and a half. I think it says a great deal for the management of the bank that although it has been in existence doing business for 12 or 14 years it has practically made no bad debts. It shows that the administration is good, and that the machinery provided under the Bill must have been as nearly perfect as it was possible to make it. Hon. members will agree that it is very desirable that the amount of land under cultivation should be increased as much as possible, and with this end in view this amending Bill we are now discussing has been brought forward increasing the maximum amount that may be advanced to a borrower from £500 to £750. Under the amending Act passed in 1906 advances were used for ringbarking, fencing, draining, water conservation, and clearing. Of the total £500 that could be advanced to one borrower the bank advanced £300 against