

NOSS

Mr. Chesson
Mr. Collier
Mr. Corboy
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Heron
Mr. Hughes
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Lamond
Mr. Marshall

Mr. McCallum
Mr. Millington
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Taylor
Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Withers
Mr. Panton

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Maloy
Mr. Barnard
Mr. J. H. Smith

NOSS.

Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Willson
Miss Holman
Mr. Angwin

Amendment thus negatived .

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added:—"and the use on any road of a vehicle the weight of which with the load exceeds a prescribed weight."

The Leader of the Opposition suggested we should take power to prohibit the use on roads of any of these heavy vehicles. Recently we had an application for a license for an oil-carrying vehicle which with the load will weigh 16½ tons. No bridge or road in the country will carry it. Through the Main Roads Board 12 months' notice might be given to the owners of these heavy vehicles that after a certain date the vehicles over a certain weight will not be licensed. The highways can then be allowed to carry loads up to a certain weight, and the highways loads of a lesser weight. It would pay the Government to compensate the owners of heavy vehicles to keep them off the roads.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Roads have been destroyed by vehicles that are too heavy to carry them. The best thing would be to take over the heavy vehicles now, and compensate the owners. If they are to be permitted to use the roads for another 12 months, much more damage will be done. I question whether the amendment gives the Minister full power to cover the situation. I would like to see him with the right to say that heavy vehicles should not run except over certain sections of a road, and to control the situation for a period of 12 months. All who use the roads should not be inconvenienced in order that two or three people may run heavy traffic. Our railways are designed to carry these goods. The roads should not be expected to do the work of the railways. A farmer pays a land tax, and a license fee for his vehicle to travel on the

road. He has to maintain the road for others who merely pay a license fee. Farmers who send heavy traffic to Perth by road are making a rod for their own backs. The Minister at present has not all the powers he needs. He especially requires three additional powers: to close portion of a road against heavy traffic, to purchase motor vehicles now in use that are beyond the weight which our roads will carry, and to differentiate between horse-drawn vehicles and motor-driven vehicles.

Mr. CORBOY: I wish to emphasise the point made by the Opposition Leader that the Minister should have power to permit the use of motor vehicles over certain sections only of roads. In many cases a townsite is alongside the railway, while the main road is half a mile or a mile away. The road connecting the main road with the townsite might be regarded as forming a section by itself, although only half a mile or a mile long: and the Minister ought to have control of that section.

Amendment put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.41 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 21st September, 1926.

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

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Soldier Land Settlement.

2, Forests Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—JETTIES.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 15th September.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.36]: A well known member in another place recently asserted that many of our public men were prone to careless thinking. I think the remarks of Mr. Holmes regarding the Bill before us come within that category. If I remember aright, Mr. Holmes said that though the Bill looked simple enough, it might be dangerous. At the time I interjected to the effect that the hon. member perceived a nigger in the woodpile. After reading the Bill carefully, however, I have come to the conclusion that if this particular "woodpile" were reduced to shavings, there would not be the slightest trace of any "nigger." It is by no means a dangerous measure. On the other hand, it is necessary, and I am given to understand that the passing of such a measure has been requested by the North-West people themselves. During the debate, it was asserted that the Bill would affect Busselton, Esperance and all our southern outports. It will do nothing of the kind. It will affect no jetty south of Geraldton and no jetty under the control of the Commissioner of Railways will come under the regulations. Many statements were made by some hon. members during the second reading debate that had nothing to do with the Bill. Some hon. members saw in its provisions an opportunity for the working men to engage in pilfering. I cannot see anything in the powers provided by the Bill for the making of regulations that is not covered by the regulations of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, or those applying to any other port. The regulations indicated are merely those necessary for the proper working of a port and to enable the Government to safeguard themselves. An idea that both big men and little men seem to get hold of, is that the Government are fair game. It would never do for the State, as Mr. Miles suggested, to set an example to the rest of the world in that direction. If there is one set of people who know their business better than others, it is the shipping people. If we were to set the example proposed by Mr. Miles, the shipping business of the State would be bankrupt. The clause hon. members seemed to object to most was that empowering the Government to define and limit the liability

of the Government in "respect of goods landed, discharged, deposited, stored, carried or left on or in any public jetty or any premises appurtenant thereto, or used in connection therewith, or loaded or shipped by the department from any jetty or any such premises." The Government must have that authority, and every harbour authority in the world must have it.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Why not include that in an Act, rather than in a regulation?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I see nothing wrong with it. Then there is also the power to make regulations exempting the Government from liability, as set out in the Bill. That provision is also necessary. Mention was made of high charges in the North. When we consider the different regulations in operation, we must admit that there is very little difference between the handling charges at the various northern ports and those levied at Fremantle. When we appreciate the facilities and quick handling provided for shipping at Fremantle, which is only natural, seeing that Fremantle is the chief port of the State, it is remarkable that the charges in the North are so low in comparison. I have perused the different charges levied in the several ports and I have found out that the difference between the handling charges in the North and those levied in the South, taking into consideration the facilities available for handling cargo, is only slight. I have the different regulations, but do not wish to weary hon. members by making lengthy comparisons. I do not know whether the Minister can give the House any information on the point, but I believe that at one time the charges levied were practically identical. Most of the North-West cargo comes under the heading of "all other cargo," the handling charges in connection with which are 5s. a ton. Under that heading are grouped a host of things not specified in the schedule. The Fremantle Harbour Trust charge 5s. a ton on unspecified lines and in 1917 that charge was increased in the North by, I think, one-fifth. Mr. Holmes suggested that we were handicapping the North by a 20 per cent. surtax that represented from 20s. to 24s. a ton in the North, as against a charge of 5s. in the South. I wish to tell Mr. Holmes that I regard his statement as a mere figment of his imagination.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I gave the figures only to show the result of plussing any rate. I did not say that those were the charges

in the North and at Fremantle, but merely pointed out the effect of plussing by 20 per cent.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: A comparison of the actual charges levied in the North and at Fremantle will show that the difference is merely a small proportion of that suggested by Mr. Holmes. The handling charges are comparatively the same as at Fremantle. In my opinion the hon. member confused the position arising out of other charges, such as charges imposed for hauling, which, if applied at Fremantle in the same way as in the North, would mean that shippers would expect their cargoes taken out of the ships at Fremantle and conveyed to Perth. The handling charges would not come into that at all, so that there is no comparison whatever. I cannot understand why some members should hold the opinion they do regarding pilfering on the wharf.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It occurs on the ships, too.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It occurs on the ships before they reach Australia, and it is done not by lumpers, but by skilled thieves in all countries of the world. Pilfering occurs in big shops and warehouses. If members took the trouble to inquire they would find that the costly ullages are the work not of the lumpers, but of a gang of international crooks who make a business of it. Goods have been delivered at Fremantle, the packages of which appeared to be intact and untampered with, but the packages have contained nothing at all. I am referring now, not to foodstuffs, but to valuable cargo. When members refer to pilfering on the wharf, they are apt to convey a wrong impression to the public.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Goods are pilfered between the time they leave Fremantle and are landed in the North.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: There is less pilfering on the Fremantle wharf now than there ever has been. During the trouble on the wharf some years ago, a call was made for volunteers, but shippers make no secret of the fact that they would not like a return of those days. The ullaging, pilfering, and thieving done by that so-called grand band of loyal workers, who went to the wharf to save Australia, was staggering.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is only your opinion.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is a fact. Anybody associated with the Fremantle Harbour Trust or with the shipping offices would tell

the hon. member the same thing, and I can prove it by the records.

Hon. J. R. Brown: All scabs are thieves.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: While the trouble lasted, anyone passing along the wharves could see theft being committed in broad daylight by men who were supposed to have come to the aid of the country, and nobody was more pleased than were the shipping people when those men were removed from the wharf.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You suggest that the pilfering is not done in daylight now.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Those volunteer workers were allowed to do as they liked, because they were said to be working in the interests of the people and were trying to defeat the waterside workers. I deplore that any aspersion should be cast upon a body of men when the amount of pilfering is so slight. In this respect, Fremantle compares favourably with any other port, that is after allowing for the international thieving, for which the lumpers are not responsible. I myself have worked on the wharf and I say the aspersion cast on the lumpers was uncalled for and likely to do injury to a large number of men.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You know what the Minister for Justice, Mr. Willcock, said about them.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: He was not referring to them. Although Mr. Holmes said I knew very little of the North, I think I have shown that I know more about the shipping charges operating there than he does. It is a big mistake for a member to give expression to statements that he cannot substantiate.

HON. J. E. DODD (South) [4.50]: I am somewhat loth to speak on this Bill because I am not conversant with seaport legislation, but there are one or two features of the Bill that might need additional explanation. The Bill does not apply to either Fremantle or Bunbury, and the references made to those ports are therefore beside the mark. It also does not apply to the jetties controlled by the Railway Department. I should like to know whether the jetty at Esperance is controlled by the Railway Department. The object of the Bill is really to empower the Government to make regulations. A tremendous amount of government has been done by regulation, especially during the war period and after the war under the War Precautions Act. No doubt that Act

was abused by the way it was retained to permit of government by regulation. This is a Bill almost entirely to make regulations. It contains something like 12 clauses; one is the short title, another the repeal clause, another the definition clause, and there are three clauses dealing with regulations. Those clauses comprise four-fifths of the Bill. That is one aspect I do not like, especially in view of the fact that the Bill contains no provision for the disallowance of regulations by either House of Parliament. When the Bill leaves us, that will be the end of it so far as this House is concerned. I have not looked up the parent Act to see what provision it contains for regulations, but I think we might improve this measure somewhat. The regulations provide for the imposition, fixing, levying, collection, and payment of berthing, wharfage, handling, storage, crane, haulage, and other charges, and the department will be the sole arbiter of those charges. Parliament will have no say as to whether the charges are fair or unfair.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The department have been doing that for many years.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I do not say that this legislation is not necessary; probably the regulations made by the trust at Fremantle and the board at Bunbury are of a similar nature. I am dealing with the measure with an open mind, but it certainly does propose to give very wide powers. Members representing the North, I consider, are justified in directing attention to those powers. I do not intend to discuss the clauses, but I cannot grasp the effect of the proposal to exempt the Government from liability in respect of damage to or loss of any goods discharged, landed, loaded, or handled outside the hours prescribed as the working hours to be observed in connection with any jetty. If the Government are not responsible, who is to be responsible?

Hon. E. H. Gray: Everywhere in the world a similar condition obtains.

Hon. J. E. DODD: If that is so, we shall be doing no harm in accepting it. I do not know what the legislation in the other States provides, but we shall certainly be giving the Government wide powers if we exempt them from liability that must be shouldered by someone. I shall listen to the debate and vote accordingly.

HON. A. BURVILL (South-East) [4.55]: I rise to ask for an explanation of Clause 5. The regulations are not to apply to jetties forming part of any Government

railway or under the control of the Commissioner of Railways. At Albany there are two jetties, the deep water jetty and the town jetty. Would they not come under this measure? Mr. Stewart last week raised a question on the provision that the regulations shall not apply to any jetty or work under the control of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners or the Bunbury Harbour Board. Would the Minister consider it advisable to have an amendment to exempt Albany or any other port that might be handed over to a harbour board in future?

Hon. E. H. Gray: They are exempt now.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am not sure of that. If Albany, Geraldton or any other port was placed under a harbour board in future, it should be exempt from these regulations, just as Fremantle and Bunbury will be exempt.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. W. Hickey—Central—in reply) [4.57]: I appreciate the force of the arguments of members representing the North-West. I agree that they were probably justified in criticising the measure and holding it up until they could acquaint themselves with the position. This Bill affects practically the North-West alone. Regarding the question raised by Mr. Stewart and Mr. Burvill, the Bill does not apply to Albany any more than it applies to Bunbury, Busselton, or Fremantle. The jetties affected are at Wyndham, Derby, Broome, Cossack, Onslow, and Carnarvon.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about Esperance?

The HONORARY MINISTER: All the other jetties are controlled by a trust, by a board, or by the Railway Department.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Hopetoun jetty looks after itself.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is under the Railway Department, but I shall make further reference to Hopetoun later on. In this Bill we are merely making provision for conditions that obtain to-day. Experience has shown that a number of the existing regulations are ultra vires, and consequently we have not been able to put them into force. Therefore it is important to embody them in an Act in such a form that we shall be sure where we stand. Members have contended that the Government propose to frame regulations to exempt them from liability. What is intended is to define and limit the liability of the

Government. I cannot see the force of the arguments advanced by Mr. Miles and Mr. Holmes, because this Bill is framed on the lines of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act and no objection has been taken to that. The powers are similar to those vested in other harbour authorities and no exception has ever been taken to them. Yet members have objected simply because the proposed regulations are new as regards their application to portions of the State not governed by the existing Act. Even I view legislation of this kind critically because if there is one part of the State more than another towards which I would allow my sympathy to run away with my judgment, it is the North. Therefore, if I thought that any suggested legislation was going to operate harshly, I would be the first to suggest that it should be closely investigated. In respect to the Bill, I have gone into it very carefully, and I am satisfied that it will not in any way operate to the detriment of any part of the North.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about paragraph (e) on page 4?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That can be dealt with when we reach the Committee stage. There is no need to rush the Bill through and if members require a little further time before starting on the Committee stage, it can be granted. If it can be shown that the paragraph in question will not be to the best interests of the North, I shall be glad if an amendment can be suggested.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Guardianship of Infants Act Amendment.

2, Married Women's Protection Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th September.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [5.8]: The Bill was clearly put before the House by the Honorary Minister at the previous sitting. He dealt exhaustively with the var-

ious amendments it contains, but perhaps I may be pardoned for adding a little to what he said. The Bill amends the parent Act of 1902. That Act and the Arbitration Act were passed at about the same time and were assented to on the same day. The Coal Mines Regulations Act, 1902, has been amended on two occasions. On the first occasion the amendment related to the board of examiners for engine drivers' certificates. That matter now comes under the Mines Regulation Act. The second amendment was made in 1915 and it related to manager's certificates. Both amendments were small, so that it may be said that the Act has stood the test of time for a period of 24 years. When the Act was introduced in another place in 1902 it was referred to a select committee. That committee did excellent work, and the result was embodied in the Act we are now seeking to amend. If members will look at the Bill they will see that there are only one or two principles involved, and that they will not to any great extent materially alter the existing legislation which controls the great industry of coal mining. I like to speak of it as a great industry. When it was first started the Forrest Government were sympathetically disposed towards it. They built a railway to the district and soon afterwards coal was being turned out. The late Lord Forrest was a man of great vision; he looked far ahead in respect of many things, and he certainly did look far ahead in connection with the coal mining industry. He knew what it meant to Western Australia, for at that time the colony was dependent on other parts of Australia for its coal supplies. In the early history of the work of development the people connected with it worked very hard, and they were obliged to fight against great opposition. It is not my intention this afternoon to allude to what took place in those days; I shall merely briefly touch on what was happening at that time so as to permit members to realise the progress that has since been made, and the value the industry is to Western Australia at the present time. Before 1901 the total quantity of coal produced from Collie was 176,254 tons, of a value of £82,547. In 1902 when the Act we are now seeking to amend came into force, there was produced 140,883 tons of coal, of a value of £86,188. In many parts of the world, perhaps, legislation affecting an industry is not introduced until the industry is well es-

tablished. That was not the case in regard to the coal industry of this State; it may be said to have been in its infancy when the Act was passed in 1902. Though there was very little legislation in existence anywhere dealing with the regulation of coal mines, those who were in power set to work and, taking everything into consideration, framed an excellent Bill, which soon afterwards became law. That it was good legislation is shown by the fact that it has stood the test of time. The Act has been of great value to the industry. Miners have had good conditions under which to work; the men have always known where they stood and they have worked under the Act for 24 years. In the first 10 years great difficulty was experienced in the way of getting the industry established. The improvement in the quality of the coal was marked in the first three or four years, but it was more marked in the succeeding eight or 10 years. That improvement is really wonderful when we remember the earlier stages of the industry's history. The introduction of capital was a difficult matter, because we were then competing with the Eastern States. Eventually capital was secured, and with that capital came the introduction of modern machinery. With the coal-cutting machines here came electrical apparatus so necessary for the proper development of any industry, and especially coal mining. To show the advance that has been made, I may mention that from the output of 140,883 tons in 1902, last year the figures had increased to 137,460 tons of a value of £360,203. Although some have said the progress of the industry has been slow, it must be remembered that there are thousands of difficulties in establishing such an industry. All things considered, it is astonishing that in a quarter of a century the output should have increased to so great an extent.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Will you tell us how much the price per ton has increased?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, presently, and I think members will be satisfied with what I have to say upon that point. Looking through the mineral production of the State, I find that outstanding is the gold industry, which has produced to the value of 152,195,000. That industry has made Western Australia, as indeed it has made Australia and many other countries. During the same period the coal industry in Western Australia has produced 7,258,978 tons of coal, of the value of £4,500,000. So

it will be realised that it is no mean industry. Indeed it has attained a position that marks it as the second mineral industry in the State. Tin has been produced of the value of £1,522,000, and the value of the production of silver, copper, lead and ironstone has been approximately £4,000,000. Altogether we have produced minerals of the value of £162,000,000. In the early days of the coal mining industry it was difficult to get the railways to use the coal. Now, however, owing to the great improvement in the quality of the coal and to the sympathetic attitude of the locomotive drivers towards the local commodity, practically 100 per cent. of Collie coal is being used on our railways. It will be seen from this of what great value the Collie field has been to Western Australia. And, outside the railways, Collie coal is used generally throughout the State today. I do not suppose any users of coal in Western Australia would agree to having anything but Collie coal. Also it must be remembered that we have a fair bunkering trade for the coal. Members, when they consider the figures I have submitted, may well wonder what is going to happen to the industry during the next 10 or 15 years. I can assure them that in all probability the production will be doubled. If it is, it will do all that is necessary for the development of the State itself. It is a key industry and is of the utmost value to Western Australia. Mr. Wilson, the member for Collie in the Assembly, has on several occasions introduced Bills to amend the Coal Mines Regulation Act. Last year such a Bill was received in this House too late in the session to be considered. Mr. Wilson was bitterly disappointed and so, instead of introducing the Bill again this session, he has succeeded in getting the Government to do it. The Minister for Mines introduced it in another place, whilst the Honorary Minister has sponsored it here. The Bill was framed after a conference between the mineowners, the miners, and the Mines Department. That conference agreed to all that is contained in the Bill. A number of the smaller amendments can best be considered in Committee, but there are laid down in the Bill certain principles that will require mature consideration. I will endeavour to deal with them as concisely as possible, clearly pointing out my own position: for I wish to justify my attitude towards those principles. I have been told by many that I cannot do this and

cannot do that, because my principles are well known. However, there is in the Bill one big principle that I will be able to justify. Section 6 of the parent Act provides for an eight-hour day from bank to bank. That has been in existence for the past 24 years. On that one point the difference between the Act and the Bill is the difference between eight hours and seven hours. I wish to justify my present attitude, because on many occasions I have argued against it. Prior to 1902 we had an Arbitration Act, which was only a skeleton sort of an Act. But in 1902, the year in which the Coal Mines Regulation Act was passed, Parliament passed also an Arbitration Act. So in the one session Parliament was considering the Arbitration Bill and the Coal Mines Regulation Bill. That Arbitration Bill fixed the hours, rates of wages, and all conditions of work. Notwithstanding the passage of that Arbitration Bill, Parliament embodied in the Coal Mines Regulation Bill a clause granting miners on underground work an eight hours' day from bank to bank. I am going to justify the support I propose to give to the seven hours' day provided for in the Bill before us. I am not going to argue that the Arbitration Court should have sole control of the hours, rates of wages and all other conditions of work. The Bill we are considering provides the seven hours' day from bank to bank. I was responsible for inserting into the Bill of 1902 the eight hours' day from bank to bank.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It stands to your credit.

Hon. J. Cornell: It was already in the Mines Regulation Act.

Hon. J. EWING: I did not know it was in the Mines Regulation Act. However, it is for us now to decide between the seven hours' day and the eight hours' day. Recently, in the Old Country, the Baldwin Government put through a Bill for a seven-hour day, but now they have reverted to the eight-hour day. Since the seven-hour day has been worked here for the past five years without any trouble, I am prepared to support it. All parties concerned agree to it. When Mr. Scaddan was Minister for Mines he went to Collie and presided over a conference that arrived at the principles embodied in this Bill. So the seven-hour day was fixed, not by the present Government, but by the previous Government. It was fixed on account of its existence in the 1902 Act.

Hon. J. Cornell: It was originally fixed on account of the conditions underground.

Hon. J. EWING: But the hon. member is not following my argument. I am justifying my present attitude. On a previous occasion I agreed that hours, rates of pay, and all conditions should be embodied in the Arbitration Bill, and in consequence I have to justify my position to-day.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There is no sacrifice of principle; it is merely an extension of the same principle.

Hon. J. EWING: As applied to coal mining it is perfectly just and fair. Coal mining is particularly arduous work. I have done a lot of it myself, so I know what it means, and I know the conditions under which the men work. It is not possible for them to work more than seven hours. This agreement, which has been signed by all parties, is registered in the Arbitration Court to-day, and as the outcome of that registration the men are working under an award of the court.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: If all are agreed about it, why put it in the Bill?

Hon. J. EWING: That is why I am referring to it so pointedly this afternoon. I am not prepared to take from the coal-miners what has been in the existing Act for 24 years.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But you want to give, not take; you want to give them a seven-hour day instead of an eight-hour day.

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know what the men on the goldfields are working; certainly not eight hours.

Hon. J. Cornell: They are working 44 hours.

Hon. J. EWING: This is practically the same, except that the men cannot remain below for more than seven hours. On the goldfields the men work eight hours a day for five days and four on Saturday, but under this Bill the coal miners will not work more than seven hours a day. Mr. Glasheen remarked that coal miners did not suffer from miners' phthisis. Thank God, they do not. Many troubles, however, do come to coal miners.

Hon. J. Cornell: What are they?

Hon. J. EWING: I will tell the hon. member. They are working under tonnage rates.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is not a disease.

Hon. J. EWING: I will deal with that later. The fact that the men are working under contract means that they are working

at high tension. They get through their work as fast as possible, and that is why they are producing as much coal under the present system, bank to bank, as when they worked under the 8-hour day system.

Hon. J. R. Brown: They were on piece-work then.

Hon. J. EWING: It is dangerous work and it is done at high speed. The atmosphere is humid. When miners work for long underground, they develop pit asthma. I have seen many distressing cases of that in Collie. They also suffer from rheumatism and neuritis. I will say this to the credit of the mine owners, that everything they can do to ventilate the mines and keep them dry is being done. The conditions of work are about the best in the world.

Hon. J. R. Brown: If you sent some of the hot air out of this Chamber down there, the miners would be pleased.

Hon. J. EWING: The air is all right down there. The miners are satisfied with the conditions, but they do not want to stay underground too long because of the liability of developing pit asthma. Although they have not got miners' phthisis, there are other diseases they are liable to contract, and this liability would be increased if they worked longer than seven hours a day underground. The fact that the 7-hour day was brought in five years ago has had a material effect upon the working of the industry. During the last 10 or 12 years, when there has been such tremendous industrial strife in the Old Country and in Australia, amongst coal miners, there has been no strife in the Collie district.

Hon. J. Cornell: For a very good reason.

Hon. J. EWING: Why?

Hon. J. Cornell: They have had all they asked for.

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know about that. The conditions in the other States are quite good, but it stands to the credit of the Collie miners that during the war they did all that was required of them.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And the management too.

Hon. J. EWING: They were loyal supporters of the British Empire and of their own State. They were also loyal supporters of their own industry by keeping on as they did.

Hon. F. H. Harris: They were well paid.

Hon. J. EWING: The shorter hours are to a great extent responsible for that. The men had time in which to enjoy themselves, and look after their domestic affairs. When

they went below, they settled down to work. It is well known that the output of the Collie mines on the basis of the tonnage per man is the highest in the world.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is all piecework.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. They may be making what are considered to be good wages. I am a great believer in good wages, and I do believe the miners earn every penny they make. The owners do not in any way exploit the people or the State. The cost of Collie coal to the railways to-day is in the region of 19s. a ton based on 10,000 B.T.U. I suppose that by comparison with New South Wales and imported coal, the Government are saving between 8s. and 10s. a ton through the purchase of Collie coal. The saving may be more than that. On the practical value of the coal, its efficiency and work, it is cheaper at the price by 8s. or 10s. a ton than is New South Wales coal.

Hon. H. Seddon: Have you any figures to prove that?

Hon. J. EWING: There is no exploitation of the Government or the State in the carrying on of the industry.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where is your authority?

Hon. J. EWING: The owners are charging a fair price for the coal, a price that is much less by comparison with other coal if the efficiency of the commodity is taken into account.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What is your authority for the comparative values?

Hon. J. EWING: My authority is my knowledge of the industry. If the hon. member will go through the figures I have he will see that it is greatly to the advantage of the State that the railways should burn 100 per cent. of Collie coal rather than New South Wales coal.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: What has been the increase in the tonnage used by the railways during the last six years?

Hon. J. EWING: I should say it would amount to 100,000 tons.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: One penny per ton means over £10,000 a year on the cost of running the railways.

Hon. J. EWING: That may be so. Surely no member can say that those who are managing the industry and selling coal to the Government are getting more than a fair value for the commodity. I am glad to have an opportunity of making these remarks. Members sometimes say that the Collie industry is being coddled. They must appreciate the value of it to the State. They also

say that the group settlers have been coddled. If group settlement does as much for the State in 25 years as the Collie coal industry has done in the last 25 years, it will justify all the coddling it has had. The Collie industry has been worked by honest capital, and by people who are seeking not only their own advancement, but the advancement of the State.

Hon. J. Cornell: If there is any grumbling to be done, very few of us will be here to do it.

Hon. J. EWING: I think I have said sufficient to show my reasons for supporting this Bill. I would not be a party to taking from the Collie miners, or any other section of workers, anything that had been embodied in an Act and had been working satisfactorily for 25 years. This, however, is not going to be taken as a precedent.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Now we have got it.

Hon. J. EWING: I am quite justified in making that remark.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You have spoilt everything you have said.

Hon. J. EWING: It is a logical statement, and I am justified in making it. The Bill provides that the coal must be weighed within 200 yards of the mouth of the tunnel. In the case of one property the pit's mouth is more than 200 yards away. I trust the Minister will not interfere unduly with people who are trying to make good. He has the power under this clause to extend the distance. It is not a good thing to extend the distance very greatly. The miners are working on piecework, and load their skips down below. A skip sometimes has to travel two miles before reaching the mouth of the tunnel. Anything that falls off the skip is so much loss to the miner, because it has not then reached the weighing machine. Every hundred yards that the skip travels after leaving the pit's mouth means further possible loss to the miner through coal falling off. If the Minister feels it is necessary to sanction a greater distance for weighing than 200 yards, I am sure he will do so in the interests of the industry. Clause 21 provides for every mine having one manager. There is some misunderstanding on this point, which appears to be confused in some way with the goldfields. The report of the Royal Commissioner who inquired into the goldmining industry was favourable towards centralisation. That is exactly what is being done at Collie. On the goldfields the amalgamation of the mines was suggested, and under this

there would be one general manager, one policy, and one treatment, with separate managers for every mine. In deep mines it is necessary to have a manager on the spot all the time.

Hon. J. R. Brown: There would be better conditions on the fields to-day if this had been done.

Hon. J. EWING: It has always prevailed in Collie. Every coal mine that is opened up will have its own manager, although the general management may be in Perth. Every mine will be carefully watched by its manager with a view to preventing accidents, and to seeing that the coal is mined in a proper manner. It has been agreed that there should be one manager in each mine. I suppose the misunderstanding that arose led to the embodiment of this provision in the Bill. A new section, 71a, is being added to provide for change houses for men coming out of the mines, and for hot water and other conveniences. That is a good provision.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is absolutely necessary.

Hon. J. EWING: More especially in coal mines. A man is wet and dirty when he comes off his shift. Fortunately coal dirt is not filthy dirt, and is easily removed. It is wise to provide change houses and bathing accommodation for the men.

Hon. J. Cornell: If these things are provided, the men should be forced to use them.

Hon. J. EWING: They do use them.

Hon. G. Potter: The miners boycotted a change house in one mine.

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know about that. The men go to their work in good clothes, change before they enter the mine, and naturally desire to put on their good clothes again before going home.

Hon. G. Potter: In this case the management would not open the change house until five minutes before the men were due to knock off work, so that they should not knock off too early.

Hon. J. EWING: It is a good thing to educate miners to use these conveniences. They come to appreciate them very much. In the parent Act of 1902 provision is made for a coal mines accident relief fund. That fund is financial at present. It is raised by the men providing 1s. a fortnight and the boys 6d., and the owners ½d. per ton on all coal sold. It is a most laudable provision, and has been of great value to the coal mining industry. One proposal, which

non. members may not at first sight understand, has a retrospective effect. Some 10 or 15 years ago a mine manager at Collie was killed, and as he was not in the fund his widow received no compensation. The case was reopened, and possibly payment might have been made but for the fact that he had unfortunately not paid into the fund. In this Bill there is a provision requiring managers, clerks, and all others connected with the industry to pay the 1s. per fortnight, so as to obtain the benefit of the measure.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Are they all going to join the union?

Hon. J. EWING: There is no use in talking about joining unions. This provision is apart from all that sort of business. I may say that the Collie union is a very close union, and that it has not done much harm to the industry. The men themselves, with the owners, have provided all the money required for the miners' accident fund, and the Government have never been asked for a penny. Now there is a proposal to extend the fund in a manner that may be described as most humane, making it also a superannuation fund for aged and infirm coal miners.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you not think that ought to be extended to all industries?

Hon. J. EWING: It would be a fine thing. There are at Collie many aged men who have given their lives to the industry and are no longer able to work. Till their fellow miners are prepared to pay 3d. per fortnight towards their maintenance. One-eighth of all moneys contributed to the original fund is to be set aside as a superannuation fund. In addition, the owners will contribute an equal amount. Unquestionably the resultant fund will do an immense amount of good. The provision is most humanitarian, and must appeal to everybody. I should be delighted to see a similar provision extended to every branch of industry, especially as the Government are not asked to provide any subsidy. It is one of the brightest features of industrial life in Collie that the people there have never asked the Government for anything but sympathy. They provide the money themselves, and wonderful work is being done with it. The Collie miners relieve their fellow workers every day and every hour, through the medium of subscriptions paid by the miners. I commend the Bill to the House, and hope that after the explanations I have given on various points the votes of members will be

with me. Hon. members can fairly and honestly vote for the seven hours bank to bank, seeing that the provision was originally in the 1902 Bill.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It was eight hours in the Bill, and not seven.

Hon. J. EWING: Yes, but that does not touch the question. Every member who spoke on the measure in another place said seven hours was long enough for a miner to work from bank to bank. Even those members who were opposed to the Bill said eight hours from bank to bank was too long. If it is too long, what harm is there in having the hours fixed by the Bill?

Hon. G. W. Miles: Seven hours is not mentioned in the Bill at present.

Hon. J. EWING: I know what the hon. member's argument is, but the argument is not right.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is it seven hours in the Bill, or eight?

Hon. J. EWING: It would be just as well to have the seven hours in the Bill. As the Honorary Minister has stated, seven hours have been worked at Collie for the last six years. That being the case, why cavil at what is the obvious thing to do? I have pleasure in supporting the second reading, and hope that the passage of the Bill will make for the advancement of the coal mining industry.

On motion by Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom, debate adjourned.

BILL—NAVIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th September.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [5.51]: Clause 12 of the Bill, making special provisions relative to harbours and ships, was justified by the Honorary Minister on the ground that the competency of persons placed in charge of human life should be proved by examination. The clause contains a reference to examination by the Chief Harbour Master of persons desirous of obtaining certificates of competency as marine motor engine-drivers for harbour and river vessels propelled by mechanical power other than steam. It is customary when legislating for the certification of persons engaged in a calling to provide that those who have followed the calling for

a number of years shall be entitled to obtain what is called a service certificate. On this point I may draw attention to the Inspection of Machinery Act, Section 55 of which provides for certificates of service for internal combustion engine drivers, boiler attendants, and electric crane drivers. On producing satisfactory evidence of having driven and been in control of engines of these types, such men are, under that Act, entitled to obtain service certificates on payment of the statutory fees. Some provision of that nature should be included in this Bill. Further, Section 63 of the Inspection of Machinery Act provides for the recognition of certificates of marine engineers, and goes on to say—

On production of satisfactory testimonials, and a certificate granted after examination by the Board of Trade of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or by any board in His Majesty's Dominions having authority from the said Board of Trade to grant certificates, the board may grant, without examination, the following certificates of competency. . . .

I would like an assurance from the Honorary Minister that similar consideration will be shown in this Bill. The Chief Harbour Master will issue these new marine motor-engine drivers' certificates, and men who have been acting in that capacity on vessels trading along the coast will not be issued the service certificate. I understand, though I have no absolute authority on the point, that the Board of Trade issues certificates which are recognised throughout the United Kingdom. There should be service certificates also in reference to other positions which at present do not require to be filled by holders of certificates. Clause 3 of the Bill states, "This part of the Act shall apply to all ships, British or foreign, except passenger steamers in respect of which certificates granted under Part 3 of the Merchant Shipping Act, or declared to have the same force as if so granted, are in force." It is, however, Part 2 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, which relates to certificates of competency. Part 3 relates to passenger and emigrant ships. Clause 8 of the Bill reads—

No ship shall go to sea or ply upon any of the navigable waters within the jurisdiction of the State unless a valid certificate as hereinafore provided has been issued and is in force in respect of such ship. . . .

Now, Clause 2 defines "vessel" as including "any ship or boat or any other description

of vessel used in navigation." Under that definition Clause 8 might apply to boats on the Swan River if propelled by anything but oars, and such boats would need to be under the charge of a certificate-holder.

The Honorary Minister: No.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: My interpretation may be wrong. I hope that in replying the Honorary Minister will make the point clear. Subject to the reservations which I have indicated, I support the second reading.

HON. A. BURVILL (South-East) [5.59]: I support the Bill, but would like the Honorary Minister to agree to a certain amendment. I am particularly interested in Clause 8, having regard to the small boats used on our rivers, especially in the neighbourhood of Albany and Denmark. The Bill as it stands will greatly affect navigation of this sort. Some kind of certificate is needed for the persons in charge of such boats, and they should be required to keep within the limits of safety. There is a tendency for the man in charge of a boat suited for the inner harbour at Albany to go into the outer harbour, and then into the open sea. That should not be done with a boat of the size here contemplated, even if the man in charge has a certificate. I fear, however, that the Bill will bear hardly on the owners of small motor boats or motor ships. The measure provides that such men will have to obtain certificates. For instance, when we were dealing with the Inspection of Machinery Act 1922, provision was made by which a certificate of competency could be given to a person who had been driving an engine for a considerable time prior to the passing of that Act, although after that date applicants for drivers' certificates had to comply with the requirements set out in the Act. No such provision appears in the Bill under discussion. Some people have been in charge of boats on the lakes, proceeding as far as Denmark, and have also been engaged in Albany waters. Ships not propelled by steam, and not used in trade or commerce, or for the purpose of gain, are to be exempt. Fishermen in southern waters have been installing motors in their boats and have relied upon them instead of their sails as in the past. Again, people with pleasure boats have put in motors and at certain times of the year they ply for hire. Such people as I have indicated would come within the scope of the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And they should do so.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I agree, but if the individuals concerned have proved their competency, as they have done, that should entitle them to a certificate of service. Some such provision appears in the Inspection of Machinery Act, under which certificates of service for internal combustion engine drivers, boiler attendants, and electric crane drivers could be granted, without examination, to drivers or attendants who produced satisfactory evidence that they had been in charge of such plant for at least one year within a period of two years prior to the commencement of that Act. If a similar provision were included in the Bill, it would be satisfactory. Without it, a hardship may be inflicted upon a great many persons, especially fishermen and others who, for a short time each year, ply for hire.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.3 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 21st September, 1926.

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

QUESTION—INSURANCE, ASSISTED SETTLERS' CROPS.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Has the attention of the Industries Assistance Board been drawn to the opinion given by Sir Walter James, K.C., and Mr. H. B. Jackson regarding insurance of assisted settlers' crops, published in the "West Australian," and reading as follows: "If the Agricultural Bank and Industries Department, or any other department purporting to act on behalf of an assisted settler, effects any insurances against fire or hail with the Government, whether on crops, buildings or otherwise, all moneys paid to the Government by way of premiums would be illegally paid and the settler could repudiate all liability should any attempt be made to enforce payment against him. He could also challenge and have disallowed all debits made against him for any such premiums"? 2, In view of this opinion, is it still the intention of the board to proceed with assisted settlers' fire and hail insurances with the State office?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is the intention of the board to proceed with settlers' fire and hail insurances.

QUESTION—RABBIT-PROOF FENCE, ROAD FACILITIES.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that owing to the restriction regarding the use of the rabbit-proof fence road south from Burracoppin great difficulty is experienced by people from the areas between Merredin and Carrabin in getting access to the new Glenelg Hills find? 2, Will he endeavour to get the ban lifted to permit the use of this road, or make some arrangement to give the required access?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: 1, No. Apart from the road along the rabbit-proof fence, there is access via Narembeen for the people on the Merredin side, and the find is also accessible from Southern Cross. 2, Permission to travel along the fence road cannot be granted, because it would soon become badly cut up, and the fence damaged. Consideration is at present being given to the construction of a permanent road to the find.