Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 17th November, 1925.

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

QUESTION—"HANDBOOK OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA."

Hon. W. H. KITSON asked the Chief Secretary: With reference to the "Handbook of Western Australia," which has recently been issued under the auspices of the Government, 1, Will copies be made available for distribution, and, if so, when, and to whom? 2, How many copies have been printed, and to whom is it proposed that they shall be distributed? 3, Is it intended that the publication shall serve the purpose of advertising to the world the wonderful resource of the State; and, if so, will the Minister see that copies are made available as soon as possible for members of Parliament and others who are in a position to make the best possible use of the publication for this purpose?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Copies have already been issued and distributed amongst all the Empire Press delegates who visited Australia, and a number are now on sale at the Tourist Bureau. 2, It is intended to issue 3,000, and of that total a number will be offered for sale locally. The rest will be distributed throughout Australia, New Zealand, England, Canada, South Africa, and India. 3, The publication is intended to advertise the resources of the State. The issue of a copy to each member of Parliament has already been authorised. Distribution generally will be made to the best possible advantage.

SELECT COMMITTEE—MAIN ROADS BILL.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart, the time for bringing up the Select Committee's report was extended until 25th November.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

To Discharge Order.

Debate resumed from the 11th November on the following motion by the Chief Secretary—

That the Order of the Day for Committee progress on the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill be discharged from the Notice Paper,

and on an amendment by Hon. A. Lovekin—

That the words "discharged from the Notice Paper" be struck out, and the words "made the first Order of the Day for Tuesday next" be inserted in lieu.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.36]: I moved the adjournment of the debate in the hope that the suggestions made by some hon. members that both the motion and the amendment should be withdrawn, would be considered and acted upon. I regret, however, that that object has not been achieved, and I regret it all the more because, after due consideration, I feel compelled to vote against the motion of the Chief Secretary, whom I, in common with other hon. members, hold in the highest respect and esteem.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It has been suggested that if the House negatives the motion of the Chief Serretary by supporting the amendment, the effect will be to take the business out of the hands of the Leader of the House. With the greatest respect to hon. members who have spoken along those lines, I suggest that is a wrong interpretation to place upon the position.

Hon. J. Duffell: We have a precedent for it in another State.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I believe that is so. I regard the matter somewhat in this light: The Bill is, I contend, the property of the House when once it has been introduced. It is in our possession, and it is not for any Government, Cabinet, or Party, or for any

Minister who introduced the Bill to say what shall be done with the measure. It is for the House to say. It is true that for convenience, public Bills are usually introduced by Ministers, but I would remind hon. members that Bills are introduced by leave of the House, and cannot be withdrawn without similar leave being granted. The Minister in charge has his duty regarding the Bill; when once the Bill has been introduced, it cannot be discharged without leave. The Bill is no longer, therefore, the property of the party introducing it, but has become the property of the House and it lies with the respective Houses and not with a Minister or with Cabinet to say what shall be law. Both Houses must confer before a Bill actually passes into law. If we examine the position regarding the Bill before us, which is the cause of the motion under discussion, we find that it came to us from the Legislative Assembly after having been introduced there by the Minister for Labour. We proceeded with the Bill in the ordinary way, and arrived at the Committee stage. When Clause 57 was under discussion, certain amendments were made, which fact induced the motion now before us. We have to bear in mind what was on the Notice Paper regarding that particular clause. It is true that certain amendments were made to the clause, but that was only when we were practically half way through the clause. There were other important amendments still to be dealt with. As a matter of fact, although the particular amendment moved by Mr. Lovekin was agreed to, the clause itself, as a whole, had not been put to the Committee nor passed by the Committee at all. The question therefore arises: Is the Minister justified in submitting his present motion? I contend that he is not. In order to support this assertion, I admit that I should show that by voting against the motion we will act constitutionally. I have not looked up any authority beyond that of our own Standing Orders which, I contend, are sufficient justification for the submission I make. I have already advanced the view that when a Bill is introduced, it becomes the property of the House and not of the Minister.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If that were not so, the motion would not be before us.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so. I would refer hon. members to certain of our Standing Orders. Take, for example, Standing Order 111, which reads—

> Every public Bill, except such as may be brought from the Assembly, shall be initiated either by motion asking for leave to bring in the Bill, and specifying its title, or by motion to appoint a Committee of not less than two members to prepare and bring in such Bill.

The Bill has to be initiated in that manner. It has to be initiated by motion, and if hon. members will look at Standing Order 111 they will find that it reads as follows—

> After a motion has been read by the President, it shall be deemed to be in the possession of the Council, and cannot be withdrawn without leave of the Council.

That is my contention. There is the standing order.

Hon. J. Duffell: Every motion brought before the Council has to be dealt with in the same manner.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Precisely. Standing Order No. 425 dealing with lapsed Bills makes reference to Bills in possession of the House. It reads:—

> Any public Bill which lapses by reason of a prorogation before it has reached its final stage may be proceeded with in the next ensuing session at the stage it had reached in the preceding session if a periodical election for the Legislative Council or a general election for the Legislative Assembly has not taken place between such two sessions, under the following conditions:—(a) If the Bill be in the possession of the House in which it originated, not having been sent to the other House, or if sent, then returned by message, it may be proceeded with by resolution of the House in which it is, restoring it to the notice paper. (b) If the Bill be in possession of the House in which it did not originate, it may be proceeded with by resolution of the House in which it is, restoring it to the notice paper, but such resolution shall not be passed unless a message has been received from the House in which it originated, requesting that its consideration may be resumed.

That is the position here. Everything there points to the Bill being in the possession and subject to the control of this House. There are certain standing orders dealing with amendments to Bills received from the Assembly. It is interesting to refer to them because they serve to emphasise my contention as to the course which should have been adopted. Being in possession of the House, it was our duty to finish with the Bill. We should have gone through with the amendments, reported the Bill to the Council, and then sent it back to the Assembly with our amendments. If the Bill was not acceptable to the House from

which it came, then the usual conference could have been held, and if the conference had not resulted in an agreement, it would have rested with another place to accept the amendments or disagree with them. Standing Order No. 225 reads—

> In case where the Assembly—(i.) Disagrees to amendments made by the Council, or (ii.) Agrees to amendments made by the Council with further amendments thereon, the Council may, in case (i.):—(1), Insist or not insist on its amendments. (2), Make further amendments to the Bill consequent on the rejection of its own amendments. (3), Propose new amendments as alternative to its own amendments to which the Assembly has disagreed. (4), Request a conference, or (5), Order the Bill to be laid aside; and in case (ii.):—(1), Agree to the Assembly's amendments on its own amendments with or without amendment, making consequent amendments to the Bill if necessary. (2), Disagree thereto and insist on its own amendments which the Assembly has amended. (3), Request a conference, or (4), Order the Bill to be laid aside. Unless the Bill be laid aside, a message shall be sent to the Assembly to such effect as the Council has determined.

The PRESIDENT: Do you think that applies to the Bill in its present position?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I contend that the course which should have been adopted was not for the Minister to move to discharge the Bill from the notice paper, the Bill being in the possession of the House, but to allow it to proceed along its course unimpeded. We should have exhausted all the usual methods of procedure before the Minister took such an extraordinary course. I maintain it is an extraordinary course for a Minister who has introduced a Bill to move to discharge it from the notice paper because of certain amendments having been made. Indeed, it has been suggested that it was a premature action on the part of the Minister in seeking to withdraw it at this stage.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Do we need to go outside Standing Order No. 111? That is mandatory.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so. Standing Order No. 111 lays down the position emphatically and clearly, namely, that any Bill received here is in possession of the House, and it is our duty as a House to deal with it and not allow it to be removed from the possession of the House, save with the sanction of the House. Sometimes certain motions have been brought before us that indirectly may have had the effect of taking the business out of the hands of the member introducing it, whether the Leader of the House or a private member, and would it be contended that if I moved in Committee, "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair," I should be adopting tactics that amounted to taking the business out of the hands of the Leader of the House? Is not that a familiar course to take when such action is justified? It is not long since we had such a motion before us. It would be extraordinary for any member to maintain that we were taking the business out of the hands of the Leader of the House because a member moved the Chairman out of the Chair and the motion was carried. On second reading debates it has happened on more than one occasion that a member has moved to amend the question "That the Bill be now read a second time" by striking out the word "now" and adding the words "this day six months." Would that be deemed to be taking the business out of the hands of the Minister or a member who introduced the Bill? I contend that it would not. It is provided for in our standing orders.

Hon. J. R. Brown: When you move the Chairman out of the Chair, it is taking the business out of the hands of the Leader of the House.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is procedure provided for in our standing orders. If the hon. member refers to Standing Order No. 266 he will find that it is provided for. Likewise, provision is made in Standing Order No. 183 for amending the motion for the second reading of a Bill. In neither case can it be contended that this would be taking the business out of the hands of the Leader of the House. What is happening here, however, is that the Chief Secretary is moving to discharge the Bill from the notice paper and so taking it out of the hands of the House. Members who vote in support of the amendment are not seeking to take the business out of the hands of the House, but are seeking to maintain and assert the right of the House to retain the Bill and deal with it inaccordance with our standing orders.

Hon. J. R. Brown: The Minister did not move in that direction until the Bill was of no further use to him.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the hon. member thinks that because certain amendments were made at a comparatively early stage of the Bill, the measure is of no further use

to the Minister, he will experience that difficulty with almost every Bill that comes before him. In my experience—and I feel sure I am expressing the views of many other members—I have seldom discovered any two men who thought exactly alike.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Great minds do think alike.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If we all thought alike and as the Minister for Labour evidently desires us to think, we might as well, as he suggests, cease to exist as a House. I think there is sufficient independence of thought in this Chamber for every member to express his truthful convictions and his determinations regarding any measure coming before us. Our duty is not to vote under the misapprehension that clearly has been created that we would be taking the business out of the hands of the Minister, but to realise that the Minister himself is seeking to deprive the House of one of its possessions. It is exactly the reverse of the interpretation that has been put upon the question during the debate. I noticed statements published in the newspapers attributed to the Minister for Labour.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He cracked the whip over you a bit.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But we do not respond like you do. That is the difference.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You have the hide of a rhinoceros.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In one of these statements the Minister for Labour is reported to have referred to "these people." It may be difficult for you, Mr. President, to know who was meant by "these people." I had some difficulty at first to decide whom the Minister meant, but he was referring to hon. members of this House. He said—

> These people must be taught that they are not put there to play at making laws. They are there to do the serious business of the country.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Do they do it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the words I have quoted are correct, I think I can express the opinion of every member here when I say we strongly protest against such discourteous and undeserving utterances. The Minister for Labour, apparently, has not learned that there is a decency of language, and a courtesy to be observed, not only between the respective Houses but also between members of the Houses. How would the Minister for Labour appreciate the use of somewhat similar words towards him in his official capacity, or even against the members of the Legislative Assembly? I venture to say that he would be the first to take exception to words of a similar character addressed by any member of this House towards either himself or the members of the Assembly.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He came down here on one occasion and wanted to fight.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: A little chap always wants to fight.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The statement that the members of the Council are playing at making laws is absolutely untrue.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You do not make them, you break them.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I contend that every member takes the work of this House most seriously. I know of a large number of members who, after the House has completed its sittings, at the week-end, take home with them to study, Bills that have been introduced or reports that have been presented, so that they make themselves thoroughly familiar with the whole of the business that is before the Chamber.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It would be better for the country if they did not.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I take exception to a member of this House making an interjection such as that. I am sorry to think that there is a member here who feels that such is the case. Just by way of example, I mention that it is within my recollection that no one was more industrious than you, Mr. President, when occupying a seat on the floor of the House, in attending to the business of the House, and making yourself fully acquainted with the details of every Bill that was presented. Likewise could one refer in a similar way to Mr. Dodd. I could name other hon. members, and speak of their qualifications and their desire to befit themselves to discharge their duties in the direction of creating wise legislation. This would, however, take up too much time. In any case it is unnecessary for me to do so because everyone knows that the members of this Chamber do not play at law-making, but that, on the contrary, they treat from a serious standpoint all the business that is introduced. They also look at everything that is submitted from a fair and unprejudiced point of view. Apparently, judging by his remarks, the Minister for Labour does not view matters of public interest and importance in this way. I venture to say that it is the duty of a Minister, above all

others, to take an unprejudiced view of measures that come before either the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council, and the Minister for Labour should not adopt the attitude that he has taken up in regard to this particular Bill. I have no doubt members of this House read a further statement by the Minister for Labour published in yesterday morning's newspaper, in which statement the Minister said—

> It is highly amusing to me to have members of the Legislative Council at this juncture so concerned about the interests of the workers in this State being sacrificed if the Arbitration Bill is lost.

I am surprised that a serious Bill such as this, and which has been taken very seriously, should have occasioned such a comment. No one here can say that any one clause of the Bill has been dealt with in a light or airy or amusing manner.

Hon. E. H. Gray: A serious attempt has been made to wreck the Bill.

Hon. A. Lovekin: On a point of order; Mr. Gray just interjected that this House had made a serious attempt to wreck the Bill. Under Standing Order 391 it is provided that no member shall reflect upon any vote of the Council except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded. I take it that the hon. member, in making such a remark, is out of order.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member's remark was out of order and he should withdraw it.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There are about 56 amendments on the Notice Paper——

The PRESIDENT: It is no use the hon. member attempting to justify his remark. My ruling is that the remark was out of order and it must be withdrawn.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I withdraw.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I was saying that there has been nothing of an amusing character in connection with any part of the debate on the Bill. It has been dealt with throughout with the utmost seriousness and thought. Much study has necessarily been given to the measure. The Minister for Labour states that he has been amused by the members of this House being so concerned about the interests of the workers. I assure the Minister that members here are seriously concerned.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The Minister for Labour has no sense of humour: he never had and never will have any. Nothing on earth will ever amuse him.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Then I hope he will be amused in heaven.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It is pure imagination on his part.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: We have dealt with the Bill in a serious manner and we are deeply concerned about the interests of the workers for this reason, and I would like the workers to appreciate the fact. Members of this House who may have moved amendments have one object in view and it is to endeavour to pass laws which will have the effect of bringing about the establishment of a greater number of industries than exist at the present time, and in that way provide more employment. If we pass measures that are calculated to prevent the establishment of industries here, are we not injuring the workers?

Hon. T. Moore: Does arbitration prevent industries being established?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have in mind many measures that come before us which will be affected by the Arbitration Bill. I do not say that arbitration will prevent the establishment of industries, but there are measures that are presented to us that would have that effect. Whatever we can do to help forward the establishment of industries will be of help to the workers.

Hon. T. Moore: Will not arbitration do that?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Industrial arbitration is quite right and I have endeavoured to support it at all times, but many provisions in the Bill, which have already been referred to by previous speakers, are most objectionable, and this House cannot be blamed for negativing clauses of an objectionable character because they would have a harmful effect on the establishment of industries. The Minister for Labour, in his newspaper comment, proceeds—

> The whole structure of the Bill has been altered and its fundamental basis destroyed, and it is quite obvious that the Legislative Councillors were not taking seriously the task of bringing our arbitration system up to date and giving the parties a quick and effective method of having industrial grievances redressed.

If any member looks at the Bill disinterestedly and without prejudice, he will see that it has progressed to a wonderful extent. Very many amendments have been agreed to, so far as the Committee have gone, which will admittedly be most beneficial to the

worker. Take the establishment of the various boards, industrial magistrates, industrial committees, and a host of other things, which we, as a committe have agreed to. Can anyone say that these will not be beneficial? Has the structure of the Bill been altered in that respect? If it has been altered in certain respects it has been altered for good and sound reasons.

The PRESIDENT: The question is whether we should continue the consideration of the Bill.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I think I have said sufficient on that point. I would add that, in the circumstances, and in view of the reasons I have given, hon. members should have no hesitation in supporting the amendment. The amendment will have to be altered.

The PRESIDENT: The word "Tuesday" will have to be altered.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The time has not yet arrived to move that amendment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I wish the Chief Secretary to take this assurance from me that my voting against him will not be intended as a reflection on him. It is merely a right that this House has. For example, at the opening of Parliament we are all familiar with the first motion that is moved by the Leader of the House. He invariably submits this motion, "In order to assert and maintain the undoubted rights and privileges of this House to initiate legislation. I move, without notice, for leave to introduce a Bill entitled, etc." There is an assertion of the rights of the House, moved at the opening of Parliament by the Leader of the House. Here we have those rights being challenged, and the honour of the House probably at stake. By voting against the Minister's motion we shall be merely asserting the rights and privileges of the House. I, with other members, suggest that the motion moved by the Chief Secretary should be withdrawn, and that the amendment also should be withdrawn. If that cannot be done, then undoubtedly there is only one thing remaining, and that is to vote for the amendment. I respectfully submit that any hon. members who support the Minister's motion will be supporting and endorsing the objectionable and unjustified statements of the Minister for Labour regarding the members of this House.

Hon. T. Moore: That is your opinion.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes. There is only one thing to be done, namely, to uphold the honour of the House and assert its rights. In order to do that, one must vote for the amendment. I regret that it should be necessary to take up this attitude.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—on amendment [5.17]: In the first place let me explain why I so quickly moved to report progress after Mr. Lovekin's amendment was carried. There had been no premeditation on my part, no previous consultation with Cabinet, for such a development had never been expected by me. It was fresh in my memory that Mr. Lovekin had moved the same amendment last year, when it was defeated on the voices, and treated almost as a joke. I expected that it would meet with a similar reception this year, and the result of the division came as a great shock to me. I could not bring myself to think that the Committee would, in all seriousness, have passed such an amendment; an amendment that clothed a single House of Parliament with power to decree that the basic wage fixed by the Arbitration Court should be disallowed. I could not believe that the Committee, in such numbers, would deliberately endorse a principle that no reasonable person could accept, no matter to which political party he might belong. I came to the conclusion that the Committee was recording its contempt for the Bill, and making it a subject for levity—which Mr. Nicholson denies. Anyhow, that was my impression, and I at once decided that I should not go one step further with the measure, and so I moved to report progress. Had I thought the Committee was serious I would still have acted similarly, for such an amendment was impossible of acceptance, or even of countenance. Every member must now agree with me on that point, for no one in this House has attempted to dispute it. There was another amendment moved by Mr. Lovekin and carried, one that confirmed Cabinet in the impression that the Legislative Council was in no mood to give the Bill fair treatment. I refer to that amendment inserted at the end of Subsection 1, and which read—

> The basic wage so determined shall operate and have force and effect from the first day of July in each year, and shall from time to time be substituted for the wages fixed by every industrial agreement or award made before or after the commencement of this Act, notwithstanding that any such industrial

agreement or award may prescribe a lesser or a greater wage.

Hon. A. Lovekin: On a point of order: I do not think the Minister intends, nor do I think he ought, to misrepresent that amendment. That is only half the amendment. No one dreamed of bringing the wages of skilled artisans back to the basic wage.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the Minister would willingly misrepresent the hon. member.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I resent the imputation. What I have said I have said on facts; I have more facts here, which the hon. member will not relish when I submit them. I gave the Committee my interpretation of Mr. Lovekin's amendment, pointing out that it would mean that the basic wage of, say, £4 per week would have to be substituted for the wages paid to higher classes of labour.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But that is nonsense.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: For example: A tradesman whose wages were £5 4s., would have to be reduced to the basic wage as declared. Mr. Lovekin characterised my contention as ridiculous, and evidently the Committee agreed with him, for they passed his amendment. I placed that amendment before the Solicitor General, and he was thoroughly in accord with the interpretation I had given it myself. I also submitted to Mr. Sayer the amendment to Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 102, an amendment moved by Mr. Harris. That also was dealing with the basic wage, and in my opinion its effect would be similar to that of the amendment moved by Mr. Lovekin. The Solicitor General agreed that that was so, and he added that Mr. Harris's amendment would place skilled tradesmen, such as carpenters, on the basic wage payable to workers who were only labourers. The Solicitor General's opinion was submitted to Cabinet, and in view of the attitude of the Committee on these two matters alone, it was definitely decided to drop the Bill. It was considered that with a Committee capable of doing the things to which I have referred, it was useless to have the Bill recommitted for the purpose of removing these objectionable additions.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: How can Cabinet drop a Bill that is before the House?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: After hearing Mr. Lovekin's speech, I am convinced that he was quite earnest in moving that the basic wage determination should be treated as a regulation.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He said he had made a slip, but he qualified the admission by stating that it was only for the purpose of this argument. Then he attempted to justify his attitude. He said—

> My object was to provide a safety valve by stipulating that when the report of the court on the basic wage was laid on the Table of the House it should be equivalent to a regulation under the Act, that the House might disallow. I proposed to go further than that by providing that, when either House had disallowed the regulation, it should be referred back to the court, who should reconsider it, and declare a new basic wage within fourteen days.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What is wrong with that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It shows that the hon. member intended that this amendment should be regarded as a regulation, which could be reviewed by this or the other House. This quotation from Mr. Lovekin's speech shows what was running in his mind. It is quite clear that he made no slip at all. What he did was done deliberately and with definite purpose.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I say that for the purpose of this argument it was a slip.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Lovekin occupies in the House a position similar to that of the Leader of the Opposition in another place.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: And it may be that other members were influenced by that fact in giving him support. Of course I cannot say, because I do not know; I have not made any investigations in that direction. But there is not the slightest doubt that Mr. Lovekin, by certain portions of his speech when moving the amendment now before the House did influence, and I might add, pervert, the course of the debate in an unfair manner. Through a failure to study his subject and so adhere to facts, he grossly misled the House. He led members to believe that the Labour Congress of July last passed a resolution urging the Parliamentary Labour Party to prepare a Bill making provision for a basic wage in accordance with the finding of the Piddington Commission appointed by the Federal Government. The Labour Congress passed no such resolution. Such a proposal was put up to Congress and defeated, an amendment to it having been moved by Mr. E. H. Barker, seconded by Miss Holman, and carried.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I did not see that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is very strange indeed. It shows that the hon. member did not give sufficient attention to his case. This was the amendment carried by the Congress—

> That the State Labour Government be requested to appoint the State Arbitration Court as a Basic Wage Commission, with a similar charter to that of the Federal Basic Wage Commission, the Government to pay the cost of presenting the case; and further that the Government be urged to do its utmost to make the findings apply to future Arbitration awards.

Miss M. Holman, M.L.A., seconded that amendment. She said that the timber workers were suffering under the present system of following Knibbs' statistics. She said Knibbs' statistics were based on twenty country towns, excluding Queensland, and that the conditions in those towns were not a fair reflex of actual living conditions in the South-West. As an amendment Mr. Brown (Kalgoorlie) moved to delete the words "Arbitration Court." He considered that there should be an independent commission appointed by the Government. In his opinion the workers had no faith in the present personnel of the State Arbitration Court. Mr. T. Fox seconded. Mr. H. Millington, M.L.A., opposed the amendment and said that if an independent commission were appointed the findings would be pigeonholed. On the other hand the findings of the State Arbitration Court, if it were appointed a commission, would be bound to be reflected in future awards of the court. Both motion and amendment gave rise to considerable debate. The amendment moved by Mr. E. Brown was put to the vote and defeated, and the motion submitted by Mr. E. H. Barker was carried. The amendment that was accepted by Congress asked that the Arbitration Court should be appointed a Royal Commission to fix the basic wage.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Is it intended to do that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Congress was right. The Arbitration Court is the proper tribunal to determine the basic wage.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And the hours of work.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The proposal that Parliament should dabble in the business was turned down by the delegates, who represented the whole of the trade unions of Western Australia. I cannot understand why Mr. Lovekin did not give this information to the House.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I did not get it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Barker's amendment, together with the report of the discussion, appears in the very same column of the "Worker" from which Mr. Lovekin read. More than one member was deceived by Mr. Lovekin's blunder. Mr. Holmes harped on the subject. He does not take the "Worker," I suppose, and does not read it, and he was misled. Mr. Dodd interjected that the action of congress was "revolution with a move on." Mr. Lovekin replied, in all innocence, that the interjection was very apt. Even if it had been founded on fact, it is questionable whether the interjection was very apt. But it was not founded on fact. It was founded on gross error due to the inexcusable carelessness on the part of Mr. Lovekin. Mr. Lovekin proposes to attempt to take the business of the House out of the hands of the Leader. He quotes as a precedent something that happened in South Australia in 1877, when the Government decided to build new Houses of Parliament without consulting members of the Council. The inference is that I have been guilty of something equally reprehensible in moving that the Arbitration Bill be discharged from the Notice Paper. Could there be anything more ridiculous? In the South Australian case, the Legislative Council was treated with contempt, in a matter upon which, apart from the constitutional aspect, it had a right to be consulted, and the Leader should have insisted on the House being recognised. Apparently he failed in his duty, and the Council had good ground for resentment and for taking the action it did. Here, however, the boot is on the other foot; it is the Government that have reason to complain. To one of their important Bills a Committee of this House attaches an amendment which not two members will attempt to justify and which, it is freely admitted, should be removed from the Bill without any unnecessary delay. My part in the business was to report progress and consult Cabinet, and Cabinet decided that the Bill should be withdrawn. That was the only criminal part that I played in the proceedings. In moving that the Bill be withdrawn I am not aware that I was guilty of any breach of constitutional principle, or of correct Parliamentary procedure. It is no new thing for a Government to withdraw or abandon a Bill when some of its vital clauses have been amended so as to render them unacceptable.

We have a fairly up-to-date instance in the Closer Settlement Bill, which another place discharged from the Notice Paper without a division on the motion of the Minister for Lands. Mr. Angwin could have asked for a conference of managers of both Houses, but he said it was not worth while wasting any further time over the Bill.

Hon. H. Stewart: That Bill had passed through its first reading, had been through Committee, and was the considered opinion of the Council.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Minister went on to say that an almost identical measure had been before the Council on two previous occasions, and had been rendered unacceptable to the Government of the day.

Hon. H. Stewart: It is not a parallel case.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It should be patent to anyone that it is purely the responsibility of the Government which originated it to say whether a Bill should be proceeded with or not. If the Government conclude that the temper of the Committee is such that no good purpose could be served by taking up time with the measure, I do not know why the House should insist on appointing another Leader, pro tem, for the purpose of putting the Bill through its several stages.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What are we here for?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have not troubled to look up possible precedents, but it seems to me it creates a unique situation. Last session, Dr. Saw, in commenting on the declared policy of the Minister for Lands in reference to the settlement of resumed estates, remarked that, "Wonders never cease." If Mr. Lovekin persists in his attitude, and is supported by a majority of the House, we shall have the remarkable spectacle of the Legislative Council, which has shown so much hostility towards the Arbitration Bill, so recognising the necessity for legislation of that kind as to take up the Bill dropped by the Government and endeavour to place it on the statute-book. Already, I think, over 40 amendments have been submitted by members.

Hon. J. R. Brown: And take it up after it is dead.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Holmes has made a futile effort to show that what the Committee wanted to do with the basic wage was only what the Government sought to do with the 44-hour clause in the Arbitration Bill last year, and the Day Baking Bill submitted this session, namely, to have the matter decided by Parliament. He knows perfectly well that there is no analogy between what the Committee did, and what the Government have done, in connection with the measures referred to by him. In one case there was an attempt to enable one House of Parliament to review, and, if it thought fit, to cancel the determination of the judicial tribunal; and in the second, Bills were presented to which both Houses of Parliament would have to consent before they became law. The principles in the Bills introduced by the Government are similar to to those in the Early Closing Act, which was not originated by a Labour Government. In every Arbitration Bill, principles are laid down for the guidance of the court, but nowhere in any part of the British dominions is there provision for a body of politicians to debate or annul the judgment of a court of law.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No one suggested that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We all know that Mr. Holmes is opposed to arbitration. He says that the electors of the Legislative Council are fed up with it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I am not far out, either.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He also said that he personally would abolish it. The logical course for him to follow would be for him to support my motion.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I am not like Mr. McCallum, and do not say, if I cannot get what I want I will not have anything.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Instead of stating that he intends to support my motion, he urges that the Bill should be proceeded with, finalised, and returned to another place, leaving the Government to take the responsibility of its abandonment. He says that this course should be followed rather than that the Minister for Labour should be allowed to discredit this Chamber in the eyes of the public by saying that he tried to put the Bill through, but was prevented from doing so by hon. members here. There we have a bundle of inconsistencies, for which it would be difficult to find a parallel anywhere. It is hard to follow arguments that twist and change like the small pieces of coloured glass in a revolving kaleidoscope.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Are you referring to me?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Nicholson says that the Minister was not justified

in pressing the motion, but I claim that I am justified by the Standing Orders. Similar action has been taken before by the Parliament of the country. I could give several instances, but I have not had time to look them up.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Before the Bill had completed the Committee stage?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: At various stages of the Bill. I cannot recall to mind many instances that occurred in this Chamber, but I know of several that occurred in the Legislative Assembly. There was no necessity for Mr. Nicholson to quote the Standing Orders, and to take up a quarter of an hour of the time of the House in endeavouring to convince me that the Bill was in the possession of the House. I was well aware of that. The action I took was to ask the House to grant me permission to withdraw the Bill. Surely there was nothing irregular in that.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You were quite right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I was not taking the Bill out of the possession of the House. The hon. member I referred to says, "The Chief Secretary is moving to take the Bill out of the hands of the House." If I wished to do that, what other course could I adopt but to ask for the consent of the House to the discharge of the Order of the Day. Why create the impression that I am taking some irregular action in order to accomplish my end?

Hon. A. Lovekin: No one has suggested that. You are absolutely right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member's statement will have a wide circulation, and my reply will have a circulation in one newspaper only in the metropolitan area.

Member: "The Worker"?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. There has been no attempt to combat my arguments, but all sorts of side issues have been brought in. There have been quotations from "Todd" in reference to an offending Upper House Leader; there has been misrepresentation of the Labour Conference; there have been accusations of cowardice, of skying the towel, and showing the white feather, while the Bread Bill, the 44-hours clause, and the Eight Hours Bill, the Factories and Shops Bill, and the Licensing Bill have been dragged into the discussion. All sorts of foreign matter have been imported into the debate.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And you are dragging in party politics.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A whirlwind of dust has been created in order to cloud the main issue.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You dragged in the "Worker."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The House would be acting wisely in rejecting the amendment moved by Mr. Lovekin. It will, I am certain, be adopting an injudicious course if it takes the measure out of my hands, and puts it through all stages against the will of the Government. I would remind the House that no practical results could follow such tactics, so far as I can see. A Leader may be found here to take charge of the Bill, but a new Leader would be required in another place, and he could not be found except the Government be displaced. Further than that, an account of the whole proceedings may be telegraphed to the Press throughout the Commonwealth, and even be cabled to England. In that case it would provide good copy for the newspapers, but not a good testimonial for this House.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It would show that we had some backbone.

HON. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban [5.45]: Those who have followed this debate will probably agree that it has been free from any spirit of antagonism to the Leader of the House or any other member of the Government. Every argument levelled against the motion has been brought forward after full consideration and without any personal hostility. The Chief Secretary has failed ignominiously to justify his action in moving the discharge of the Bill from the Notice Paper. Although the question has been debated from the Constitutional aspect as well as with reference to the clause from which the trouble is said to have arisen, the main reason for the Chief Secretary's motion has not been mentioned. Clause 57 was dealt with at length when the Bill was before us last session. Many amendments were made to the clause, with regard to which we hold different opinions. Seven or eight amendments were made to this clause last session, and if the provision had been permitted to receive full consideration, further amendments would doubtless have been carried. I do not say, however, that the clause would have been obliterated. I believe that the clause as amended would have been accepted by the Government. The Arbitration Act undoubtedly needs amendment.

Last session's Bill proposed 65 amendments. The amendments made by this Council are such as would have reduced the total number of amendments, and not increased it. If the Council had adhered to the amendments made last session and gone no further, those amendments would have been accepted by the Government.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: What authority have you for saying that?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: My authority is brief but pungent. One of the amendments made here on the 5th of the present month referred to Clause 56. It was moved by Mr. Harris. I am pretty sure it is that amendment which has caused all the trouble. In the Press the Minister for Labour has stated that the Council has no consideration for the workers, or words to that effect.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Quite right, too.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I do not think the hon. member is in order in making that reflection upon members, and I ask him to desist.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: Thank you, Mr. President. At the same time I have no objection to the hon. member expressing his views, to which he is entitled just as much as I am entitled to mine. I say that this Council has greater consideration for the workers than Ministers who are in power to-day. I was contending that the real trouble arose not from Clause 57, but from the amendment to Clause 56. The fact that this House has the interests of the workers at heart is proved by an amendment to Clause 56, providing that before a strike can take place, before women and children can be called upon to suffer as they have suffered times out of number during recent years, and more particularly when there happens to be a Labour Government in power, a secret ballot of the workers affected shall be taken. When all is said and done, it is the women and children who suffer great hardships from a prolonged strike. A recent experience of that kind was in connection with the shipping strike, when Australia was made the cockpit of a strike of British seamen.

Hon. T. Moore: Women and children suffered all over the world.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I refer to the wives and children of men who were made to suffer by the nuclei here of foreign self-appointed dictators. I suppose those persons who are operating from their seat of government in Russia may be classed as dictators. They have been the people behind Ministers of the Crown and behind those who are acting as emissaries and organisers and agitators for the trade unions of Western Australia. They are the people who bring misery to women and children as the result of their activities in initiating strikes. The amendment to Clause 56 provides that before a strike can take place, a secret ballot must be held of all the members of the union. Therein is the cause of the Chief Secretary's motion being launched. The cause is not the amendments to Clause 57, but that amendment to Clause 56 which calls for a secret ballot. I defy any member of the Labour Party to say that at present a secret ballot is taken.

Hon. T. Moore: Do not defy them too much!

Hon. J. DUFFELL: A secret ballot is not taken when an industrial dispute is under consideration.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I will prove that I do. I hold in my hand a membership ticket of the Australian Workers' Union.

The Honorary Minister: We have had this before.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I will give it again, in case it has been forgotten. Attached to the ticket are a number of slips, lettered "A," "B," "C," "D," and "E." When a member records a vote on an industrial matter, say, as to whether there shall be a strike or not, he is required to attach one of these slips to his voting paper. That speaks for itself. The slips are numbered in the same way as the membership ticket is numbered. The result is that no secrecy of ballot exists. We know that to-day in Western Australia there are large numbers of workers who would rather suffer a very great deal, who would rather permit their wives and children to suffer, than be called scabs or blacklegs; and thereby hangs a tale. There are certain people who pose as friends of the workers. Agitators are going round the country to-day, and it is they who initiate the spectacular legislation which has been brought before us. They are doing more harm in stamping out secondary industries than is being done by any other section of the community.

Hon. T. Moore: I thought something from the East did that here.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The emissaries of certain people in the East are the persons to whom I refer as agitators. They are going round this country white-anting the unions while purporting to be the advisers and leaders of the workers, and out to advance the interests of the workers. Time and again have different secondary industries here been forced into the hands of the Official Receiver. Very few secondary industries are flourishing in Western Australia to-day. They have no hope of flourishing so long as they are called upon to contend against such conditions as I have described. At the present time I have before me a request that I should do something to prevent an industry employing numerous workers in this State from having to undergo the same fate as its predecessors.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do you blame the workers for that?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: No; I blame the agitators, those who go about sowing discontent, making the workers believe that they have grievances. They know full well that the moment they can convince the workers that they have grievances, they can do anything they like with those workers. That is the cause of the trouble, and that is what this House is seeking to avoid by the amendment made to the Bill here. That is what has caused the Minister to ask for the discharge of the measure from the notice paper. There are other features which the Government know they will have to deal with if we pass the Bill and send it back to the other House. That is why they want to get rid of the measure. For instance, there is the question of stop-work meetings. The adoption of the amendment on the Notice Paper will do a great deal of good. Mr. Holmes's new clause proposes—

(1) It shall be the duty of the registrar whenever a total or partial cessation of work occurs in or in connection with any industry to make immediate inquiry into the cause thereof, and to take legal action to enforce against any person found, on such inquiry, to be committing any breach of this Act or of any industrial agreement or award of the court all or any of the remedies provided by this Act, which he may deem applicable to the case. (2) In the carrying out and discharge of his duties under this section, the registrar shall be entitled to the assistance of all industrial inspectors and officers of the court.

Section 95 of the principal Act provides—

The Sheriff of Western Australia, the bailiffs of local courts, and all officers of police shall be deemed to be officers of the court, and shall exercise the powers and perform the duties prescribed by any rules of court made under this Act; and for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act and in relation to any proceedings before the court or the president and in relation to the making, carrying out and enforcing of any award, order, conviction, or direction of the court or the president shall, except where provided in any rules made as aforesaid, exercise the same powers and perform the same duties as they may exercise and perform in relation to any judgment, order, conviction, or direction of the Supreme Court or any local court or court of summary jurisdiction.

Another amendment on the Notice Paper proposes that the Acting President of the Court shall have power to enforce his awards. Quite recently we had an instance of the flouting of an order. The tea room girls went on strike, and the Acting President made an order for their return to work. Did they obey that order?

Hon. J. R. Brown: There was no power to order it.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The amendment will give the Acting President power to enforce the section in question. A whirlwind of dust, to use the phrase of the Leader of the House, has been raised on Clause 57 in order to camouflage Clause 56. That clause, and the amendments which I have mentioned, are the reasons which impelled the Minister for Labour to make himself heard with no uncertain sound in what is termed the capitalistic Press, the Press in which the Minister asserts the workers cannot be heard. No Press in any part of the world could be fairer than the Press of Western Australia is in all matters, not alone this matter, affecting the workers of Western Australia. If further evidence of that fact were required, it could be found in the remarks published a day or two ago as emanating from the Minister for Labour. I fully intended when the motion was first launched to support the Leader of the House out of the respect and high esteem in which I hold him. Without fear of contradiction. I claim that no one has a greater admiration for Mr. Drew than I have. However, the references made by the Minister for Labour in the Press, in order to deal with the position for the workers from his point of view, were such as to indicate that he only was right, that he was the dictator, that he would have nothing but his policy, that he would have no amendment whatever, and would have no criticism. According to him, the Legislative Council is only playing with law-making.

When such statements emanate from a Minister of the Crown with whom my esteemed friend, the Chief Secretary, is associated, I have no alternative but to vote against the motion, and I intend to do so.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I move—

That the debate be adjourned and be made the first Order of the Day for Thursday next.

Motion passed.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 10th November.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [6.2]: After the speech of the Minister, I rise to discuss the Bill with some degree of hesitancy, because I may get into similar trouble over this measure. I hope that I and other members may be able to discuss this very important Bill without any feeling and for the good of the people of the State. The Bill proposes to increase the water rate in the metropolitan area from 1s. to 2s. in the pound and the storm water and sewerage rate from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 11d. in the pound. I would draw the attention of hon. members to the report of the select committee of this Chamber that investigated the condition of the department and its operations last year. Therein they will find one or two passages that will indicate what this increase of water rates really means. The increase is based upon an accretion to the annual assessments of 3 per cent. per annum. If the assessments are increased at that rate annually, the water rate will be considerably more than double when raised to 2s., and likewise with regard to the sewerage and storm water rate. Before hon. members commit themselves regarding the Bill, I think it right and fair to the community that they should not only read the report of the select committee but the evidence as well. They will be able to find out exactly what is going on and be able to appreciate the fact that there is really no need for the Bill at all. It will be ascertained on investigation that in 17 years' time the proposal to increase the water rate from 1s. to 2s. will practically double the amount obtainable and on present valuations will really make it 4s. in the pound. If members look at the report they will find this increase from 1s. to 2s. is really only the first instalment because, by 1936, according to the returns furnished to the select committee by the department, the rate must be something like 3s. in the pound in order to cover the expenditure. Thus, by that year, we will have a rate of 3s. in the pound plus an increase in the assessment value to the extent of 3 per cent. per annum. That represents an increase of 30 per cent., roughly, without any compounding, on the assessed values. The 3s. rate, taken on present values, would represent 4s. 6d. in the pound for water only and 2s. 10½d. for sewerage and storm water rates, making a total of 7s. 4½d. in the pound on the present values as against the present rate of 2s. 6d in the pound. That is based on the assumption that the estimate of the expenditure on the works now in progress will not be exceeded. If the estimates are exceeded, and there is no doubt that they will be exceeded from what we know of the position, the rate must be still higher in the metropolitan area. If we take Subiaco alone and calculate the water rate there at 3s. in the pound, and the storm water and sewerage rate on its own basis, we will find that the people there will have to pay up to 13s. 6d. in the pound. When we come to such rates we approach an almost impossible position. On present values, 8s. 6d. in the pound is my estimate of what the rate will be in 1936 in the metropolitan area, and 13s. 6d. in Subiaco, including storm water and sewerage rates. As to whether the works in progress will be completed in accordance with the estimated expenditure, we already know that there have been quite a number of blunders. To-day there was placed upon the Table of the House the departmental report for the financial year ended 30th June last. I have just been turning over the pages of the report to see what was being done with regard to the Churchman's Brook dam. I find that as at the 30th June last, "the excavation in core trench amounted to 4,700 cubic yards and filling main bank amounted to 15,000 yards. The cost to 30th June was £61,958." Some little time ago the members of the select committee saw fit to go to Churchman's Brook in order to ascertain how the work was progressing. When we got there we found that some 400 men were employed, many of the unemployed being engaged there. They had a traction car and a traction roller, but had discarded them and were using horses and scoops. By the use

of the horse-drawn scoops one-seventh of a cubic yard of earth was taken away at a time. The earth was hauled out of the excavation by buckets from the trench, put into trucks, hauled along and tipped out, and then the scoop came along and took away one-seventh of a yard of earth each trip. It was taken 200 or 300 yards away where it was dumped and then the return journey was made. Four hundred men were employed on the work and there were a score of men with scoops and other implements.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Were the men not doing the job properly?

Hon. H. Stewart: You want a steam navvy on a job like that.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I noted the time it took a man to get one scoop full of earth, haul it away and return for another scoopful. It took 13 minutes. We were told that it took only one-seventh of a yard of earth at a time. Mr. Gray desires to know whether the men were doing the work properly. Possibly they were, from the point of view of the men themselves, although I think they were probably a little bit on the slow side.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Have you ever done any work like that?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The traction cars were scrapped, and we were told that the present method of working was by means of horses and drays rather than by means of traction. Obviously this means that the work will cost a lot more than should be the case.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Who was really responsible for that position?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: My view is that this work at Churchman's Brook has been kept as the dumping ground for the unemployed.

Hon. H. Stewart: That is your view, but what are the facts?

Hon. E. H. Gray: Yes, we want the facts.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: When I mentioned that the work was progressing slowly, and I suggested that the cost per yard would be very high, the reply I got was, "Well, you can't sack the unemployed."

Hon. E. H Gray: Who told you that?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I will not mention any names because I do not want to drag any people in. That was told me by someone in authority.

Hon. T. Moore: You cannot sack one who is unemployed because he is not working.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: But the unemployed were employed up there. The unemployed were sent to Churchman's Brook and I noticed that as soon as they got there they formed a union.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That was a good idea.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: A very good idea, but it was soon seen that the ordinary wage was not sufficient once a union was established, and it was decided that they must have an increase. They got a secretary and made a demand. We saw the spectacle of the Government as the employer on the one hand and the unemployed employees on the other hand agreeing to the appointment of an arbitrator, Mr. Walsh. Apparently there was no way of resisting an increase in wages on the ground that it is labouring work which should be satisfied with the basic wage. However, it was referred to Mr. Walsh.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Which Walsh?

Member: Tom Walsh.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I notice that the award—it did not take eight months for the award to be issued, but it came out promptly—provided for an increase of 1s. a day here and 6d. a day there.

Hon. T. Moore: What are the wages paid there?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: All this means increasing the cost of the Churchman's Brook work which the unfortunate people will have to pay for. If members will turn to the evidence of the Engineer-in-Chief they will see that the cost of storage is 1s. 5d. per 1,000 gallons to get 2,000,000 gallons a day, and hon. members can readily realise what price the people will have to pay, especially if the cost of the work continues to increase as I have indicated.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Before tea I had digressed somewhat from the subject, and I think I was misunderstood by some members. I referred to the work at Churchman's Brook. I had no intention whatever of reflecting upon the workmen, who were doing their work as well as they could. They were walking as fast as the horses walked, and they could not very well run ahead of them. My complaint was against the system that supplanted the big traction wagons and traction rollers and put horses, men and scoops in their place, which obviously is much more costly when large quantities of earth have to be removed. I might also say that there

seemed to me to be great waste, which has all to be paid for, in bringing earth out of the deep trench, which later on is to contain the core, whipping it up in buckets, putting it in trucks, wheeling it along a little ramp, tipping it over and having men to scoop it up from there and take it away, when the embankment on which the trucks run is ultimately to be filled up again so that the material will have to be handled twice over. We were told that the object was that the spoil might be better consolidated by spreading it 9 inches thick and tramping it down by horses, but if members saw the men picking it up before they could get a scoop full, they would say it would consolidate sufficiently without any tramping in by horses. A more economical way would have been to carry the earth, when it was in the trucks, along the bank, gradually tip it over, and thus save the double handling. I am not complaining of the work as done by the men, because they were doing as much as it was possible for them to do under the conditions. Referring to the effect of this Bill and the burden it would ultimately impose upon the people, I pointed out that the rate at present values, by the time the works in the hills were completed, would involve 8s. 6d. in the pound to the people of the metropolitan area, and if the Subiaco sewerage and storm water works were completed, and the rate spread over the whole of the area, it would increase the 8s. 6d. If it were not spread over the whole of the area it would mulct Subiaco in 13s. 6d. in the pound. That position was pointed out by the select committee at a very early stage, and the Minister stopped the storm water works at Subiaco, which alone involved a rate of 6s. 6d. in the pound. I do not wish to take up the time of the House in reading the report of the select committee on that point. Members can find the reference in paragraph 109 of the report. The Minister presented this Bill to the House in a rather airy fashion. He said the department had for years been making deficits and it was necessary that the deficits should be made good, and the only suggestion he had to offer in behalf of the department was that there should be more taxation. Not a word was said by the Minister or by the department as to doing anything to economise or to gain extra revenue, or to reduce interest, sinking fund and other charges in order to make ends meet and put the scheme on a proper basis. The position of the Metropolitan Water Supply is unique. I have never heard of its like in the commercial world or in a Government department, where revenue year by year is going up, where the rateable values year by year are going up, where the capital expenditure year by year is going up, where the sale of the commodity is increasing, and yet year by year the loss is also increasing.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I think they will have to join the Flying Corps.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I cannot understand it at all. If members turn to page 26 of the report they will see some of the returns supplied by the department, and the figures there given are quite illuminating. In 1923-24 the capital expenditure on the works was £1,600,000, and the deficit was £17,547. The return proceeds year by year until 1936 is reached, when the three works in the hills are supposed to be completed. I say "supposed" advisedly, because I do not think there is the remotest chance of anything of the kind happening. At the same time I think it will be found that the money will be required, although the works will not be there. In 1936, when the works are supposed to be completed, there is to be a capital expenditure of £6,297,000, and the deficit will have jumped to £247,000. The department set out that while they want a rate this year of 1s. 2d., in 1936 or 10 years hence, they will want a rate of 2s. 11.17d. in order to make good the deficit. That is a most alarming state of affairs. There is to be a jump in the capital from £1,600,000 to £6,000,000 odd, most of which is not wanted at all. I say that advisedly; it is money that could far better be spent on works in the country that will produce returns rather than be wasted and frittered away as is being done here. The Minister failed to give us any reasons why the deficit was occurring. Having investigated this matter as one of the select committee, I can perhaps supply a few of the reasons, and when I give them it will show that this Bill ought to be consigned to the waste paper basket. The department for years have been taking advantage of the opportunity to pay off debenture bonds which were issued by the Savings Bank, bearing interest at 4 per cent. In order to redeem them and find extra money for works, they have been borrowing at 6¼ per cent., so that on the half million of debenture bonds, 2¼ per cent. is being

paid which need not have been paid if the department had looked after their finances properly. This is only a small matter, but members will find that small matters would soon make up the £24,000 to £30,000 required. The department buy water meters from the State Implement Works at £3 10s. apiece, and the meters cost the State Implement Works £4 17s. 6d. apiece to make. Thus the Implement Works are losing money and that is a loss to the taxpayers. When the select committee visited the State Implement Works, we found that the average quantity of water one of these meters could pass was 25,000 gallons. So bad was the quality of the water and so saturated with chemicals was it that it disintegrated the metal portions of the works, and the meters, after passing 25,000 gallons, were of very little use. Twenty-five thousand gallons of water is worth at excess rates 25s., and the cost of the meter to pass through that quantity is £3 10s. These are facts borne out by the evidence of the engineers and others connected with the department. In fact, the engineers complained of this. The secretary of the department, replying to question No. 217, said—

> The average revenue from a domestic meter is about 10s. 6d. The average expenditure per annum on that meter is 20s. Consequently, if it were not, from an engineering point of view, the desire to control and restrict the supply, it would not pay to put meters on. But meters are not intended in any water supply to be viewed from a revenue standpoint.

The department had 23,000 odd meters, according to the return, and on them, judging by the secretary's evidence, the department were losing 10s. per meter for maintenance and interest alone. That would be a good sum towards the £24,000 deficit. The committee saw the need for making a change and they obtained the Sydney Water Works Board's report and found there that they had a system of supplying water to the small consumers, not through meters but on a space area. That was profitable, where the system in this State was a loss. The committee recommended that to the department, but, as is usual when such recommendations are made, nothing has been done. The loss is continuing, and the only solution that the Government can arrive at is to come to the House and ask for more taxation.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why not increase the charge for meters?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: There is no charge for meters. There was an outcry some years ago for the abolition of the charge of 5s. for meters. Now the department have involved themselves in a loss of 10s. for every meter they have, and only half the area is metered. I shall show that on that half there is an enormous loss which might have been obviated if the suggestion of the committee had been adopted. Then there is the costly method of collecting the rates. No less than £3,000 is the cost, though most of the rates are paid into the office. People are compelled to go to the office and pay their rates there. The committee went into that and suggested that some arrangement should be made with the municipalities and road boards because it was found that the cost to those bodies of collecting was as low as .6 per cent., whilst the Department's cost was 1½ per cent. Mr. Long, accountant of the department, said that if the municipalities and the Water and Sewerage Department were under one control, there would be a considerable saving in the collection of the rates. There is another way by which money might be saved. It was shown to the committee that the output of water in the year was 3,089 million gallons. The committee looked into the question to see where the money went and found that the department had explained it in this way: they said, "We sell 1,044,800,000 gallons at 1s. 6d." We know, of course, that all the big houses in Hay-street use very little water, but still pay, with the others, 1s. 6d. Giving the department credit for that, we found that they sold in excess water 561 million gallons at 1s. a thousand, and gave away free of charge 21 million gallons. That left them a deficit to account for of 1,462 million gallons. This is what the department paid for water to put into the reservoir for which they got nothing in return. The committee said, "Knock off the 462 million gallons and say no more about it, and there will still remain 1,000 million gallons of water which you do not account for, and which might be sold for at least 1s. a thousand gallons." That would give £50,000 a year. So there is that amount of leakage that no one can account for. The department say it is brought about by having so many unmetered services. They admitted that this was controllable, but they do not attempt to control it; they let the money go

and then the Government come to the House with a Bill like this, and declare "Never mind about the loss; we have a deficit, the quickest way out of it is to double the rates."

Hon. H. Stewart: The people in the metropolitan area have been spoon-fed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I call it pumped dry. I do not stand here as a representative of the Metropolitan Province alone, although I represent it. I am not here in any parochial way. This money instead of being wasted could be better spent in developing the back country, in helping the mining industry. No less than six millions of money is going into the metropolitan water supply and sewerage scheme and I appeal to country members, as well as to metropolitan members, to try in the general interests, to save the waste that is going on.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Has not the Treasurer offered you city people a board of control?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not know anything about it. That is what the committee advocate in the report, but the Government have taken no notice of it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It is up to the city members to take action.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I shall come to that in a moment. In paragraph 132 of the report the committee suggest that there should be a trust appointed, but there are difficulties in the way. Each little municipality will want its own elected members. It is not good to have an elected board of control during the period of construction. What I suggest is that there should be a board of three capable men who know the business, and they should take things in hand, put everything on a proper basis and then turn the undertaking over to the municipalities. I have shown that £50,000 worth of water is unaccounted for and that we are asked to double the water rate. There is a good deal of extravagance in the management. I know something about it, because I have put in a lot of time with other members of this House in investigating the position. The Estimates this year show that £6,000 is being voted for sundries as against £5,000 last year. The department in 1912 comprised not only the metropolitan supply, but the goldfields supply, and it was contended by the then Minister that it was necessary to separate the departments because at some time or other the metropolitan water supply would be taken over by a board and it was desired that all records and correspondence should be kept separate from those of the goldfields water supply. That was the stunt —if I may use the word—put up to separate the two departments. The real fact was that there were two engineers in the department who occasionally fought like Kilkenny cats and it was necessary to separate them. That was the reason for which they were separated. Each little cock was given his own dunghill on which to fight. The public came in between and paid the piper by having two Under Secretaries, two sets of clerks and two sets of everything. That is where some of the increased expenditure has gone.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Was that done by the present Government?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No, it was done in 1912. I forget which Government was in power at that time. There is interest added to the accounts from year to year which is what I may call interest on waste. Turn to paragraph 112 of the report and members will get some information there which shows lost capital. There is £439,325 which is all lost money for bores and pipes, etc., which have been put down and pulled up again and which are now useless. There is interest on that and sinking fund amounting to £30,753. I do not intend to refer to such things as the loss on the filter beds and the pipes which have been lying on the ground for years earning nothing, rotting, if I might say so, for want of use. It is a very curious thing Mr. Thompson, the ex-Engineer-in-Chief, when before the committee, said that the Churchman's Brook project could not pay, that it was an impossible proposition. And in order that on paper the cost might be reduced, and the minimum rate reduced, he said, "We are only going to charge up Churchman's Brook with two twenty-sixths of the total cost. We reckon that Canning will produce 16 million gallons, Wongong Brook 8 million gallons, and Churchman's Brook 2 million gallons, or in all 26 million gallons; and as Churchman's Brook will produce only two million gallons, we will charge up to it only two twenty-sixths of the expenditure." The committee said, "Yes, but you are going to spend more money than that, even on Churchman's Brook." Mr. Thompson said, "Yes, but we are going to debit that to Canning and Wongong for the present." So, Canning and Wongong, when they are constructed, will start off with a dead loss, part of the expenditure on Churchman's Brook, in order that to-day the cost

might appear less. "But," said Mr. Thompson, "we are going to minimise this, because we are not going to put down the pipes in those other works, and so we shall save that expenditure." But what do we find to-day? With no conservation in either place, the pipes are in and are eating their heads off in interest. There is no water, no conservation of water, and what is going to run down those pipes next summer I do not know. The pipes are there and the engineers say, "We will turn the creeks into the pipes." Mr. McCallum says he expects to get four million gallons per day from Churchman's Brook. We might get it in winter time, when no water is wanted, but I am certain we shall get no four million gallons in summer time. When we were there the creek was certainly not running half a million gallons per day. Yet the pipes have been put in and the interest charge is going on, although no revenue can be earned, because there is nothing to sell. Now I come to this large matter which involves a big sum in interest on these works. Unfortunately, we have started Churchman's Brook, and a good deal of money has been spent there, but absolutely to no purpose. We are told that we shall have water from Churchman's Brook this summer.

Hon. H. Seddon: They said we should have it in October of this year.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes, but there is no dam there. There is the creek. Anyone can turn a creek into a pipe line, but there is no dam there. How on earth are we to get any water from Churchman's Brook this summer without a dam? Moreover, I believe they will not get it in the following summer, for I am satisfied they have not anywhere near the locality the right clay with which to make a pug dam. On that point I have the opinion of a skilled engineer, who says that the clay they are going to use is too friable for the purpose. I want to show how this scheme was conceived. You will see with what little consideration large sums of money are spent. It appears that after the meeting at North Perth in March, 1923, when people were howling for water, the Premier summoned the Engineer for Water Supply, the late Mr. Lawson, and the then Engineer-in-Chief to his office. At a hurried conference Mr. Lawson put up a scheme, part of which was to build extra reservoirs at King's Park and Fremantle and at Mt. Hawthorn at a cost of £318,000. Those works have been carried out, one by contract and the other by day labour. The contract one gives three million odd gallons of water per day more for the same money as was spent on the day labour reservoir. If all had been carried out by contract, probably the scheme would not have been debited with so much money. In addition they proposed to construct a dam at Churchman's Brook at a cost of £477,000, another at Wongong at a cost of £522,000, and the third on the Canning River at a cost of £1,622,000, or a total of £2,652,000. And they proposed to add the interest on to the capital until the works were completed, an item of £382,000, making a total of £3,034,000 for those dams and pipe lines, and £380,000 for the reservoirs and so on. Also, there were other schemes for sewerage and storm water at Subiaco, but I will not refer to them now. How ill considered were those three schemes costing £3,034,000 appears from the evidence obtained by the committee, to which I will make brief reference. Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the committee's report read as follows:—

> The engineer about to be charged with the designing and carrying out of these works of magnitude, involving an expenditure approximating £4,000,000 had not, of his own admission, ever designed such works, nor had he been actively connected with the construction of such works. Beyond some knowledge gained in New South Wales as a draftsman, his sole qualification for the task to be imposed upon him was the experience he had been able to acquire in this State, where no large works of this description have been undertaken since he joined the service. No complete plans had been prepared. No sufficient investigations had been made as to the suitability of the sites for the construction of the dams. A mere rough estimate of probable expenditure had been prepared.

And on that it was decided that those works should be proceeded with. When we came to examine Mr. Thompson, the Engineer-in-Chief, he admitted that at that time he had never seen the plans of those proposed works, had never gone into any estimate; but he said he thought such a scheme could be carried out. His evidence will be found in full in the committee's report. Such was the way in which that three million odd pounds was agreed to be spent. And the engineers got to work and started to put down a dam. They collected a good deal of earth. Then they thought something ought to be done to ensure stability of the wall, which they originally proposed

should be a concrete core wall. They put down some borings to see what sort of a bottom they could get, but they could find no solid bottom until they reached 70 feet. After the committee had met and pointed out the position, declaring that it was impossible to put a concrete core down on an unstable bottom, Mr. Thompson took a hand, went into the project and said, "This concrete core is not a possible proposition. We will trench and see if we cannot put up a clay dam with a lot of banking behind it."

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: They would want some banking behind it.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes. They started out and sank a cutting 70 feet deep in some places, and right across the gully. When we went up to see it they were getting the earth out of this cutting, hoisting it up a bucketful at a time and tipping it over into a little trolley. When the trolley was full it was wheeled along a tramway to the end. The trolley was then tipped and taken back, and scores of men with their little scoops and their horses came along and shovelled up the earth and deposited it on the other side nine inches thick, in order that it might be trampled down and made solid. This was a tremendous mass, 200 or 300 yards wide. So, it will be seen what a vast amount of stuff would have to be handled before the dam was safe to hold water. All this was being done in the most costly way, namely, by a man and a horse carting it over a long distance, whereas on the very spot they were previously using a trolley and traction. The engineer in charge told us that the new man there believed in the horse-and-dray method and did not believe in the steam traction, the reason being that the horses could trample the earth down better than the steam roller would do. Also, he said that next year, in order the better to trample it in, probably they would get a team of bullocks there. It lends some colour to what I have read out just now from page 43 of this report dealing with excavation and its cost. I have also shown that not only is this expenditure going on at this rate, which has all to be paid for, but a number of these works are being used for absorbing the unemployed, or employing the unemployed, who, as soon as they get on the works, form a union. The Government being their employers agree with the union that a case has been made out for additional wages, and by common consent appoint Mr. Walsh as arbitrator, and get a quick decision and a quick increase in wages.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What do they get now?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I think it is 15s. a day or thereabouts. I believe the basic wage was 14s. 4d. and that they got in some cases 1s. and in other cases 6d. a day more for various reasons which I do not regard as sound. If it were a 1s. a day increase for 400 men who would be kept going for a year or two, it would mean a good deal of money. All of this is going on to the capital cost, and will have its interest and sinking fund provided at the expense of the ratepayers.

Hon. H A. Stephenson: And still no water.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Not up to the present. Before we suggest more taxation the Government should try to eliminate the waste, and economise, and put the scheme on a better footing. After what I have shown I think the House ought to say to the Government, "Here are opportunities for you to economise and make this proposition pay handsomely as it should do"—if it were mine it would pay even on the present basis —"before we will consent to the ratepayers having their rates increased." It will be suggested, as has been suggested before by the Minister, that all I have said is in the nature of destructive criticism. I want if I can to do some constructive work, and save if possible what appears to me to be an appalling and disastrous position ahead of us. I suggest, in view of the fact that it is difficult to get all the local authorities to elect a trust, that the Government should appoint three trustees. I have authority for saying that three trustees could be obtained to supervise this business for the present without any fee. They would be men used to constructive work, to engineering work and business work. They would give their services for the benefit of the country. When they have carried out what is necessary for the moment and put the water supply on a proper financial basis, they could hand it over to the local authorities who, on their cost of working and with their rates and valuations, could run the business better than the metropolitan water supply people. It seems an absolutely drastic thing to do to suggest stopping the Churchman's Brook and the Wongong Brook schemes at this juncture. A lot of money has been spent,

but it is better to lose £1 than £10. I am satisfied from the clay I saw, and I am advised by an engineer who knows something about it, that the clay it is proposed to put the core in with is too friable to withstand the water, and the chances are it will ultimately give way. When we have done the work we shall only get 2,000,000 gallons a day from it, and we can get this quantity much cheaper and with much greater advantage to the country from another source.

Hon. H. Stewart: We could catch rain water for less than that.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The metropolitan area requires only a temporary supply during a limited period of the summer. If the Government were to take in hand the Canning scheme, in connection with which trials have been made, we could build a dam there. The Canning dam when filled would give Perth 16,000,000 gallons a day, whereas the other two will give only 10,000,000 gallons a day. The Canning scheme would cost only about the same as the other two and, according to the engineers, would take the same time to construct. The cost per 1,000 gallons at Churchman's Brook is 1s. 5d. and I think at Wongong would be a little less, whereas the cost of the water from the Canning would be only 5d. It can be seen how advantageous that would ultimately be to the community.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is that not rather an extravagant estimate for the Canning?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I cannot question the engineer's estimate. It is that the £1,622,000 includes big pipe lines in order to carry the 16,000,000 gallons of water a day. It seems rather drastic to suggest stopping the Churchman's Brook work. If it were my business I would stop it and say the first loss was the cheapest.

[*The Deputy President took the Chair.*]

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What section will they have ready to open on the 7th of next month?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: They are going to open a section of the pipe line which is carrying water from the creek. The water is now turned into the pipe line. There is a dam built across the creek, and the water is diverted to run into the pipes. How much water this will give during the summer remains to be seen. Members may say, "What do you propose to do in the meantime, knowing there has been a shortage of water from year to year in Perth?" Experience has shown that we want only two to three million gallons a day as a fill up during about 30 or 40 of the hot days of the year. We can get that water quite easily from Mundaring. The engineer who is in charge of Mundaring practically admits that we can get it if we have the pipe lines. I am rather chary about mentioning Mundaring. I have been fined a farthing, and had to pay £1,065 in costs for expressing my opinion on the Mundaring control. I suggested on the evidence of the engineer, Mr. O'Brien, that he was perverse, that he reasoned unsoundly and prevaricated. That is what I was fined for. I am satisfied these statements were quite true. If members will read the evidence with an unbiassed mind I think they will agree with me. I do not want to hide anything. It is true the Chief Justice said that they were defamatory words and that I must pay the costs. I must bow to that, The Chief Justice, however, did not appreciate the evidence. He said, "How would you like to have this said of you? No one would like such said of them and if you would not like it, you pay the £1,000 costs." That was not the question. The question was whether these works were warranted by the evidence.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The jury said it was not fair comment.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I am not responsible for the jury. The jury were like George Reid. They said, "Yes, no."

Hon. H. Stewart: You had £1,000 worth of fun.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I would not call it fun. As in this case, I think I could have done better with the money. This engineer knows that we can get that water from Mundaring without any trouble. It was probably because of the particular events at the time that he may have refused to help us to get that water. He himself began by saying that when all this inquiry was going on he could not be expected to butt into another man's department and help the committee. When we came to get into the facts he said, "We give you 800,000 gallons a day from Mundaring now and I think we could give you another million a day." That would be an extra 365,000,000 a year. If we took 3,000,000 a day for 40 days we would only take 120,000,000 gallons, and Mr. O'Brien admitted that he could give us 365,000,000. I refer members to Questions 2417 and 2497. Mr. O'Brien said,

"This will involve another conduit or pipe, which will cost £144,000 to give you the water." He referred to another pipe line. The committee were very thankful to find this way out. When we advanced a little further we found that Mr. O'Brien was not quite sincere about the million gallons a day. We said, "Give us another million a day and the overflow." There are 133 days in the year when the Mundaring Weir overflows. During that time we are pumping bore water. Cannot we put a pipe line into Mundaring to take the overflow for 133 days?"

Hon. C. F. Baxter: We did not get that this year.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The weir was not overflowing many days this year. That is the average overflow over 20 years. Mr. O'Brien said, "I do not mind you having the overflow of water but not another pipe line there." We asked why and he replied, "If I allow you to put in a pipe line to take the overflow you will use it when there is no overflow." If he would not allow the pipe line it was impossible to get the extra million gallons a day because the present pipe would not carry it. The committee say, "That is the place to get this water from." We only want 2,000,000 gallons a day at most during the hottest days. Give us the pipe line to use it, and the cost of the pipe line will be practically the same as the cost of the pipe from Churchman's Brook. Then we can get the overflow during a third of the year, and save all the millions of money which, as I have pointed out, can be far better expended in developing either the agricultural or the mining industry.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Is not all expert advice opposed to drawing on Mundaring?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It has been said that no engineer will recommend it, but Mr. O'Brien, the engineer in charge, in the course of his answers to Questions 2417 and 2479, stated that he could give us another million gallons per day, but that this would involve a conduit pipe at a cost of £140,000. He admitted that we could have the water. Mr. Leslie also admitted it, and so did the late Professor Tomlinson, and the ex-Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Thompson said that to bring the water from Mundaring would require larger-size pipes than to bring it from Churchman's Brook, because there was only 320 feet of head in the former case as against 400 feet of head from Churchman's. I have spoken longer than I intended on this question; but it is a vital question to the metropolitan area and to the whole State. If two or three millions sterling are spent on this water supply which ought not to be spent, there will be increased pressure on the taxpayers to meet interest and sinking fund. The only way to stop this waste is to say to the Government, "We cannot pass this Bill and double the rates until you have made some attempt to economise in the Water Supply Department, and have organised it so as to sell the water that you have, until you have saved interest where you can, and saved money in collecting rates. If you economise in these respects and then want more rates, come along; but at present an increased rate is not warranted on the facts."

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

BILL—LAND DRAINAGE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 10th November.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [8.37]: This Bill, considered alongside the Bill on which the debate has just been adjourned, causes one to wonder whether there is a need to limit taxation. The burdens which land is asked to bear seem to be increasing very largely. On ordinary country land, which will be affected by this Bill, there are now road board rates, land tax, vermin rates, and various other charges; and on top of all those things there is a proposal to carry out works involving further taxation or rating. I freely recognise that these works cannot be carried out without money. It was suggested by some hon. member that the scheme of land drainage should be a national work, and that everyone should bear the burden proportionately. But to that course there are certain objections. Assuming that a certain area is brought within a drainage district, then the position would be that the lands benefited would be the lands drained, and that the lands outside the particular area actually drained would receive no benefit whatever. If the scheme were a national one, everybody would be paying for work from which many would be receiving no direct benefit. The fairest method is that contemplated by the Bill, namely, to impose the rate on the

lands within the particular district under the jurisdiction of the drainage board.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: On the lands improved by the scheme.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not see very well how one could confine the rating to the land improved by the scheme. But there might be some method of rating by which land greatly improved by the scheme should bear a bigger proportion than the land beyond the actual boundary of the drains, land therefore receiving no direct benefit from the drainage. It seems inequitable that certain lands receiving no direct benefit from the scheme should be taxed to the same extent as a particular area drained under the scheme and therefore greatly benefited by being made arable. That aspect is well worthy of consideration. I acknowledge that in preparing such a Bill as this it is difficult to know what is best to be done. I believe that in the South-West the Bill would do a considerable amount of good. Mr. Rose, Mr. Burvill, and other members have spoken of the advantages which will result from the Bill in their particular provinces; but those hon. members should also bear in mind the provisions of Clause 88—

(1) The board, after making such estimate and statement and ascertaining the sum that will be required to make up the deficiency found to exist on comparing the sum required with the estimated revenue of the board independently of rates, shall forthwith impose rates, to be called "drainage rates," in respect of all rateable land within the district. (2) No drainage rates imposed in any one year shall—(a) exceed two shillings in the pound on the unimproved value of rateable land in cases in which the rates are assessed on that value; (b) exceed five shillings per acre in cases in which the rates are assessed on the area.

Take, for example, a holding of 1,000 acres of the unimproved value of £1 per acre. If the owner is rated at 2s. in the pound to begin with, the cost to him is going to be heavy, amounting to £50 per annum. And probably in course of time it will be necessary, as in connection with metropolitan water supply, to impose the maximum rate, and then to come to the Legislature, and ask for power to impose a greater maximum. The rate of £50 per annum would represent a capital burden of £1,000 at 5 per cent., which is a reasonable rate of interest. The owner's property is therefore depreciated by £1,000, and the question is whether the drainage scheme would so improve the property as to provide for that added charge or more. But if the owner happened to be rated on the alternative basis at 5s., he would find himself in a very serious position. He would need to be fortunately circumstanced in order to be able to pay. A rate of 5s. per acre would mean £250 per annum. I do not know whether members who have spoken on the Bill—for instance, Mr. Burvill, who seemed so keen on the Bill, and who unfortunately is not here to-night—have given that aspect due consideration. There may be some answer to what I have urged, but at present I am without knowledge of it.

Hon. H. Stewart: Perhaps Mr. Burvill's many amendments will drastically alter the Bill.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: They may. I can readily see that much of the land within those particular areas will be seriously affected. Mr. Lovekin is interested in parks. I would like to draw his attention to the fact that Clause 72 contains a provision for all lands to be regarded as rateable property within the meaning of the Act, the only two exceptions being land declared by the Minister to be exempt, and land the property of the Crown and used for public purposes. On comparing the clause with Section 212 of the Road Districts Act relating to rateable property and exemptions, I observe that many exemptions are provided for that are not included in the Bill. Those exemptions include parks and reserves. Probably some large areas will be reserved in the South-Western areas for the purposes of recreation, parks, and so forth. In the Nornalup district, for instance, the area there is likely to come within the scope of a drainage board. Some land will be made available there or elsewhere for a national park, as in South Australia and other parts of the world. I desire to enter a plea on behalf of such institutions as are exempted under the Road Districts Act because they are not carrying on business in the ordinary way for profit. I ask the Leader of the House to consider the advisability of including the exemptions embodied in the Road Districts Act, in the Bill. It would be only fair and reasonable if that were done. There is one other point I wish to allude to. While I know that it is intended to confer powers upon drainage boards appointed under the Bill, I find that under Clause 62 provision is made for the Minister to override the boards. If the

boards are to have conferred upon them the powers outlined, I hardly see the necessity for the provision in favour of the Minister, certainly not such overriding powers as are included in Clause 62. If there is necessity for that, it might be better to refrain from creating boards and thus leave the Bill as a Government measure to be carried out by the Minister. I can readily understand that circumstances may arise where a Minister may be requested to override a board. There is one important matter to which Mr. Burvill referred when he gave an instance of a private owner in his district, who had carried out certain drainage works effectively and cheaply. He informed the House that it would be a good thing if some arrangement could be made whereby work of that description could be carried out by private landowners. Clause 64 apparently contemplates giving power to a board, on the application of adjoining owners, to authorise them to construct branch drains. Whether that clause would be sufficiently wide to meet Mr. Burvill's suggestion, I cannot say. It is a matter worthy of consideration because the suggestion seems to be a good one. If the cost of carrying out drainage work can be cut down, it will mean a saving in taxation. I consider that the lighter we make the burden on the men on the land, the more contented they will be to carry on the work of making a success of their holdings. No doubt the Government often find themselves in a difficulty when confronted with the necessity for providing the capital required to carry out the many works that the public require. Thus, if something can be done that will enable people to assist themselves and so make their work on the land more profitable, it will save additional taxation from which the public can be relieved. Anything done in that direction will act as an inducement to keep the people on the land. The work of clearing holdings, settling down and finally making a success there, is sufficiently difficult and costly without adding to the burden of taxation. I do not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but merely desire to draw attention to some phases of it. There may be something to be said regarding the relative position of owners and occupiers. The definition of an owner is fairly wide, but I would draw attention to Subclause 11 of Clause 64 which gives to the occupier of the land, who is not the owner, the power to make or carry out drainage works under an agreement. I would hesitate to give the occupier power to enter into such an agreement without letting the owner have a say in the matter. It is true that the occupier must have the approval of the Minister, but I question whether such a power should be included in the Bill. Any such agreement should be made with the owner because the person who is liable for all the work carried out by the board on the property and for the rating, is the owner. One must recall the comments of Mr. Lovekin regarding the expenditure that is taking place in connection with the metropolitan water supply scheme, and that again forces one to consider the great expenditure that took place in connection with the drainage of Herdsman's Lake. That work was to be carried out by the Government at an expenditure of £20,000 or £25,000.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Why not deal with the Peel Estate, where they made a success of it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am referring to Herdsman's Lake.

Hon. V. Hamersley: That should be enough to scare anyone else off it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I think the expenditure has run into something like £125,000. Then again, I believe that in the course of the work it was found that by draining too heavily or deeply in certain parts, some of the land was rendered useless for summer cultivation.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Where was that?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I think near Herdsman's Lake. It was found necessary to dam back a certain proportion of the water so that the moisture might be retained and allow of summer cultivation.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That will have to be done in connection with any drainage scheme.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: One can readily realise that if a drainage scheme is carried to too drastic an extent, instead of benefiting it can easily prove to be the reverse. Certain areas can be made useful and beneficial in the summer time. At any rate it is one of the things that should be borne in mind. We have an instance of Herdsman's Lake which was to have cost £20,000 odd, whereas the actual cost has been considerably over £100,000.

Hon. E. H. Gray: In the Peel Estate the swamp lands will be flooded at any time.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That depends upon the situation of the land. I recognise that it requires an expert engineer to consider the many points that must present themselves in the drainage of any big area. It must be a great problem, and mistakes will arise. We all make mistakes, and one need not blame a man if he makes a mistake. The thing is to try to avoid mistakes. We should see that the people situated in areas where drainage boards are likely to be set up understand the burden that they will be taking upon themselves. I hope they themselves will consider the matter very carefully. In view of what members from the South-West districts have stated, I shall support the second reading, but may have something to say on the clauses in Committee.

On motion by Hon. W. T. Glasheen, debate adjourned.

BILL—DAY BAKING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th November.

HON. G. POTTER (West) [9.2]: This is a Bill through which members will endeavour to attain the objects sought. I believe the measure represents an earnest endeavour to ameliorate the conditions of the operatives in the baking industry. It is satisfactory to learn that the master bakers and the operatives have met and agreed in a spirit of compromise to a spread of hours from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. during which the baking of bread will be carried out. When we have masters agreeing with the operatives to compose their differences in a friendly spirit, it is indeed a matter for satisfaction. If a similar course could be adopted in other trades, it would make for a better condition of affairs all round.

Hon. J. Nicholson: And render the Arbitration Court unnecessary.

Hon. G. POTTER: Yes, except where a decision could not be reached. Sometimes we find that when such agreements are concluded, the great third party, the public, become the sufferers. Through a combination of circumstances the employers and employees might arrive at an agreement which might be tantamount to inflicting an injustice on the public through not considering them in the ultimate results. On this occasion I do not think we need worry about the public very much or even at all, because we have it on the most eminent medical advice that hot bread is not good for immediate consumption.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: When do the public get hot bread? They get it fresh, not hot.

Hon. G. POTTER: They get hot bread, and that is why some of the public are complaining about the Bill. Invariably, when the public get hot bread, they keep it themselves until it is a day old. It is idle to say that the public do not get hot bread.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Only to a very limited extent.

Hon. G. POTTER: Then there can be very little to complain about if day baking be enforced.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Let the medical opinion die out of it.

Hon. G. POTTER: I do not think it should be allowed to die out. After a long period of illness at the beginning of the year, I was not permitted to eat new bread. We have been told by Dr. Saw that preventive medicine is better than curative medicine. Therefore, the public are benefited by medical advice that they should not eat hot bread.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Some people advise us not to eat bread at all.

Hon. G. POTTER: I am not debating the question from that point of view. The medical profession advise the public not to eat hot bread. That effectively disposes of any complaint made in behalf of the public, but there is another aspect of the Bill that calls for support, and that is it will mean the elimination of night work in this industry. Night work should be abolished in all industries where reasonably possible. It is entirely unnatural to work by night, and if night work could be abolished, it would be in the interests of the present generation, as well as those who follow. It has been said that work underground is similar to night work. We know of coal miners who enjoy perfect health, but while sunshine may be excluded from underground, the periods of rest and recreation are given at a time suitable for human activity.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: How do you account for insurance companies not loading bakers while they load miners?

Hon. G. POTTER: There is all the difference in the world between the man working in a mine, where he is inhaling pernicious dust that adheres to the lungs, and a man working in a bakehouse. Perfect ventilation

can be provided in a bakehouse that cannot be provided for a man behind a drilling machine. Much has been said regarding the conditions laid down at the International Conference. If we argued the Bill on the material supplied by the International Labour Office, we would not do the Bill very much good, because the countries represented have such a different outlook. Their baking industry is not on the same basis as ours. I would rather content myself with examining local conditions to see how we can regulate the industry here to benefit the operatives and the public. It is a fact that owing to the immensity of Western Australia, it will be necessary to make some slight amendments to the Bill. It was said there were tropical and sub-tropical places in the State where it would be unfair to ask bakers to work by day.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They are working by day at present.

Hon. G. POTTER: Whether that is so or not, Clause 5 of the Bill relating to special exemptions might be enlarged to give inspectors authority to extend night baking to districts where it is essential through climatic conditions. There are places in the country districts where men must bake at night in order to be able to rail the bread away at specific hours. From some of these country centres, bread is sent out in large quantities to people in the bush If the arrival of a train once or twice a week precluded the possibility of day baking, we should grant an exemption. The exemptions, however, should be as few as possible; otherwise we shall have a hybrid Bill that will not give satisfaction to either party.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the man who does not employ labour at all?

Hon. J. R. Brown: He is the greatest menace of all to the community.

Hon. G. POTTER: That difficulty arises in many industries governed by awards. Reference to the small man has been made before the Prices Royal Commission. The butchers told the Commission that the employee of to-day might be an employer tomorrow. He sets up in a small way when business is good, and when the market goes against him, he becomes an employee again. There must be some protection to the people who invest their money in extensive plants and provide work for so many operatives.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Make a monopoly of it?

Hon. G. POTTER: No; but put everyone engaged in the industry upon the same basis.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Why should not all compete on equal terms?

Hon. G. POTTER: Exactly. The large employer of labour is committed to considerable expenditure that the small man is not committed to. Moreover, the small man does not employ wages bands. He has sources of assistance that are denied the larger employer, who is not only governed by an award, but whose operations are carefully watched by the inspectors who police the award. Therefore, I do not see that it would be equitable to eliminate from the operation of the Bill the man who does not employ labour. There is not the slightest degree of logic that this will be the means of establishing two big unions; it will however establish a system of fair play, and if there is anything inimical in that I fail to see it. There is a matter that appeals to me to be somewhat of an anomaly. In paragraph (b) of Clause 3 it is set out that no person shall make bread—

> between 8 o'clock in the evening on the Monday next preceding the Wednesday to be observed as the bread carters' monthly holiday under the Bread Act Amendment Act, 1906, and 5 o'clock in the morning of that day.

It is obvious what set of circumstances that would bring about. The carters have a holiday on a certain Wednesday, and if the clause remains as it is we shall find that the bakers will not be allowed to bake bread on Tuesday, ostensibly because there will be no carters to deliver it on Wednesday. It means that the operatives will be granted a holiday that they are not expected to have under their award.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Does it not mean that the Arbitration Court will deal with the matter?

Hon. G. POTTER: There is great need for co-ordination between the awards governing the bakers and the carters. By virtue of the operations of the carters' award, the bakers will have another holiday thrust upon them, and in many cases it will be necessary for the master bakers to pay large sums for overtime. It was mentioned that it would be necessary in such circumstances to increase the price of the loaf by a half penny. I am afraid that there will be no option but for the master bakers to charge customers an extra amount per loaf. They would look upon a position of that kind much in the

same way as the tramways look upon the payment of their employees on a holiday when the public are asked to pay by way of increased fares. If the awards were made to synchronise there would be no necessity to call upon the public to pay more for their bread. The carters could start earlier and finish earlier, and it would be in the interests of all to have some such co-ordination. When Mr. Macfarlane was speaking the other evening he mentioned that a certain firm had expended £2,000 on a plant for the making of Vienna bread. I have made inquiries about the manufacture of this class of bread and have been informed by master bakers that it will be impossible to maintain the manufacture of Vienna and raisin bread with the starting hours at 5 o'clock. Perhaps the Leader of the House, when replying, will give us an assurance that the making of Vienna bread will not be brought within the operations of the Bill. In that event the position will be clarified so far as that bread is concerned. The master bakers have informed me that it is necessary to make a start with Vienna bread two hours earlier.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That concession has been granted in the Eastern States.

Hon. G. POTTER: In South Australia they have such an arrangement but there must be produced 250 rolls of Vienna bread before it is granted. In Western Australia many soldiers have taken up land in the Swan district for the production of raisins and currants. If the manufacture of Vienna bread and raisin bread is curtailed, those soldier settlers who are sufficiently hard-pressed for a market at the present time will find their trade further limited. I do not ask members to believe that an extensive trade is being conducted in raisin bread, but I do say that it is obtaining a footing and is rapidly expanding. If both Vienna and raisin bread are to come under the operations of the Bill I urgently plead that in Committee the two hours' extension be granted to those bakeries engaged in the manufacture of those two kinds of bread. I shall be content to make further comments during the Committee stage. I support the second reading.

Personal Explanation.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I would like your permission, Mr. Deputy President, to give a demonstration of the weight of bread.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The hon. member has already spoken on the second reading and he may not speak twice.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I have no desire to do that. What I wish to do is to give a demonstration of the weight of bread as a reply to a statement made by Mr. Baxter regarding weight. When he was speaking I interjected that he was wrong, and now I wish, by actual demonstration, to show that he was wrong.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I do not think that can be allowed. The hon. member has already spoken and there is no provision in the Standing Orders under which the hon. member may speak again, unless he wishes to make a personal explanation.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It may be regarded as a personal explanation.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Then it must be very brief.

Hon. E. H. Gray proceeded to the Table of the House and placed on it a pair of scales and two loaves of bread.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The hon. member's behaviour is very unseemly. I cannot allow him to proceed. I really cannot allow him to give any demonstration.

Hon. E. H. Gray returned to his seat and asked permission to make a personal explanation.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The hon. member may do that provided the explanation is brief.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I have here two loaves of bread that were baked on Sunday between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Mr. Baxter said the other night that most bakers would be compelled to increase the weight if day baking were started under the conditions proposed in the Bill. The two loaves I have here, at least 54 hours after having been drawn from the oven, now weigh 2lbs. 1oz. each. They were delivered in the ordinary way from a batch of bread which was scaled in at 2lbs. 4ozs. each, and have not been selected specially for this demonstration. Mr. Baxter said that with day baking the overweight would have to be increased from 4ozs. to 6ozs. and that, therefore, would mean an increase in the price of bread. That is why I have asked permission to make this explanation. Hon. members, if they care to do so, may have a demonstration outside the Chamber. I have witnesses who saw the bread weighed when baked.

Debate resumed.

HON. J. R. BROWN (North-East) [9.26]: I cannot understand the opposition to the Bill that is being advanced by members of this Chamber. They pretend to know everything about the conditions pertaining to the workers no matter what occupation they may follow, be they lawyers, doctors, sawyers, tinkers or anything else. We bring in measures from another place and members here slaughter those measures. They tell us this is wrong and that is wrong and then they suggest what they say is the right course to follow, these wiseacres of the Legislative Council. They say, "We know how far this is right," but instead of being friends of the toilers they are as wolves in sheep's clothing. They offer sympathy to the workers, but the workers do not require it. All they require is a fair crack of the whip. Night baking is a most unnatural work for any man to follow. How can a married man go to work on every night of the year? Mr. Lovekin's Divorce Bill will come before us shortly and we can form our own conclusions as to the result. Night work was first introduced by a Cousin Jenny in Cornwall, otherwise a Cornish woman. Her husband could not earn enough by working his mine two shifts a day and the old lady said, "What about the last core by night." Thus was she responsible for initiating the night shift. I repeat that it is unnatural for anybody to work at night. Take the goldfields. At Boulder we find little humble cottages, with dug-outs built in the yard with a little gable over the top and almost covered with earth. In those dug-outs, miners who while working overnight have inhaled dust and fumes go to sleep during the day and shut themselves up in order to keep out the flies. Those are the conditions under which miners exist in summer on the goldfields. They could not sleep in their houses. Mr. Holmes pointed out that day baking will injure the baker who does not employ labour. But the man who does not employ labour could cook in a camp oven all the bread that he can sell.

Hon. H. Stewart: That is nonsense.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: Day baking has proved thoroughly successful. In the metropolitan area we can get fresh bread at any time. Mr. Lovekin said he saw in the Bill nothing to quibble over, that there was nothing of a contentious nature in it. He said he liked hot bread, that he never suffers from dyspepsia, but that the rest of his family were always running to the doctor with indigestion. Still, Mr. Lovekin must be suffering from indigestion in some form or other, because we can never get him to the bar for a drink. Already we have day baking in the metropolitan area, in Kalgoorlie and all down the Great Southern. We want day baking because there are unscrupulous bakers who are out to injure the other fellow by producing a hot loaf in the morning. People like Mr. Lovekin must have their hot bread.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Then why interfere with Mr. Lovekin?

Hon. J. R. BROWN: The small butcher and grocer who employ no labour have to comply with the Factories and Shops Act; yet people have fresh meat. It might be a bit high, but that does not matter. I do not see any objection to the Bill. It is only to impose compulsion on those who will not fall in with the ordinary custom of the trade. There is a baker in Kalgoorlie who will insist upon baking by night, and on Sunday morning you can get hot loaves from him. All bakers should be put upon the one footing. If a baker who does not employ labour cannot make a living by day work, he will not make a living by night work. Someone spoke of a man being saddled by insurance. It is certain that the baker inhales flour dust, just as the miner inhales quartz dust in a mine. Instead of having miners' complaint the baker has bakers' complaint. Bakers are always washed-out looking, not robust, like people working in the fresh air. I do not see why the Council should waste any time over the Bill. It is a humanitarian measure and ought not to be objected to, but it seems to be the policy of this Chamber to have a chip at every Bill that comes forward. No matter what manner of Bill it may be, it is always wrong.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The hon. member must not proceed on those lines. It is distinctly contrary to the Standing Orders to cast any reflections on either House of the Legislature.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: But we are doing it every day.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You are.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: I say "we" are

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The hon. member is hardly correct in saying that. However, he has already gone beyond the Standing Orders, and I cannot allow him to proceed. He can indulge in fair comment.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: I reckon this is all fair comment.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member had better proceed with his speech.

Hon. J. R. BROWN: I am just about finished, now that I am pulled up. I want this measure to get the full support of the House. No one here wishes to see men working by night if they can work by day. If day baking can be carried on in the metropolitan area, it can be carried on in Broome. It is better for the people to eat bread baked on the previous day than to eat hot bread. I will support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. A. Stephenson, debate adjourned.

BILL—PRIMARY PPRODUCTS MARKETING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 10th November.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.38]: I have gone through the Bill, and the more I study it the less I like it. There are in it very many clauses to which I take exception. Certainly the Bill is not in the best interests of the State. In the definition of "fruitgrower" we find that it means a person by whom fresh fruit is grown or produced for market from an area of not less than two acres. That does not seem to be fair. Within 20 miles of Perth one could find areas of two or three acres that were planted with fruit trees years ago, but have been neglected and allowed to run wild, and so have now only a few trees, producing a little inferior fruit. Yet the owners of those neglected orchards will have just the same voting power as a bona fide grower who is making his living from his orchard. Then the definition of "primary products" covers nearly everything grown in the State, such as meat, butter, wool, wheat, hay, oats, barley, fruit, vegetables, timber—in fact everything. To me it seems altogether too far-reaching, while unnecessary and uncalled for. Worst of all, it will be the means of taking his product out of the hands of the producer. The Bill proposes that boards shall be formed for the marketing of products. Every class of product will have a separate board, and every one of those boards will have to be paid. With the Bill covering so many different products, one can understand what a cumbersome system it will be. We shall have an egg board, a fruit board, a lamb board, a potato board, and a dozen others. In Clause 6 it is provided that every such board may appoint such agents and other persons as may be necessary. Although boards will be appointed, they have the right to appoint selling agents, and will limit the present agents. The agent who will be fortunate enough to get the business will most likely be the agent who is "one of our Party." This will be equivalent to "spoils to the victors," and that sort of thing. I object very much to a clause of that kind. Clause 7, Subclause 1, says—

> Save as hereinafter provided, the whole of any controlled product grown, produced, or prepared in the State or in the district or districts affected, as the case may be, shall be delivered by the growers thereof to the board or its authorised agent within such times, at such places, and in such manner as the board may fix or as may be prescribed, and all the product so delivered shall be deemed to have been delivered to the board for sale by the board on behalf of the growers thereof.

It seems to me that will be almost impossible to carry into effect. Take the growers of soft stone fruits,, such as early peaches plums, pears, apricots, etc. How can they tell a man when he is to send in his fruit, and how much he is to send and how much to keep back? Every commonsense man knows that if he has an orchard of peaches, which are ripening, or plums, as soon as they are ready to pick they have to be picked, and put on the market within a certain time, or they become unsuitable for consumption and useless. The grower suffers accordingly. Another clause to which I take great exception is that with regard to contracts for the sale of products. Clause 14 says—

> Every contract which is made in or outside of Western Australia, whether before or after the extension of this Act to the product, so far as it relates to the sale of any of the product for delivery in or out of Western Australia, shall, when declared to be void by the board in a notice published in the *Gazette*, be and is hereby declared to have been void and of no effect as from the date upon which it was made, so far as such contract has not been completed by delivery at the date of such notice: Provided that for the purposes of this section any such contract shall be deemed to be severable and divisible as to its terms and contents. Any transaction or contract in so far as it relates to any product which is the subject matter of any contract or part of

a contract declared by this section to be void shall also be void and of no effect, and any money paid in respect of any contract or transaction or part of a contract or transaction hereby made void shall be repaid.

That means nothing but repudiation. How can the country carry on under such a Bill as this? To-day thousands of pounds worth of produce are sold for delivery, some of it for delivery 12 months hence, and some of it to go out of the State. What would be the result if this Bill came into force? Next month or the month after, various products that had been sold might be declared to be products under the Act. All the contracts that had been entered into would then be annulled. The contractor would not be recompensed in any way. This is a serious matter, and amounts to restriction of trade. It is at variance with the Federal Constitution. I never heard of such a thing. If I make a contract with a man for £5,000 or £10,000 worth of goods to be delivered some months hence and I pay him £1,000 on account I may resell those goods. If the Bill becomes law I would have no redress. I would get my money returned, but would have to deliver to the parties with whom I had made the contracts for sale, but would not get anything from the man from whom I had bought. It is an impossible position. Clause 15 dealing with transport, says—

The Commissioner of Railways, and any common carrier, and any owner, charterer, master or agent of any ship, may on the request of the board refuse (without incurring any liability for so doing) to carry any consignment or quantity of a controlled product (not being the subject of a proved bona fide interstate contract) from any place in Western Australia to any other place in Western Australia, or, except as prescribed, to deliver any of such product. This section shall have effect notwithstanding anything in the Government Railways Act, 1904, or the law relating to common carriers, or any agreement to the contrary, whether such agreement was made before or after the extension of this Act to the product.

I have never heard of anything of the kind. The railways are not to be allowed to carry anything from one part of the State to another, nor are motor wagons or anything else to be allowed to do so. They are exempt. If that is not restriction of trade and opposed to the Federal Constitution. I do not know what is. The greatest objection I have to the Bill is that it takes from the producer the control of his own products, and places them in the hands of boards who may not be as competent as he is to deal with them. There is no necessity for the Bill. The Chief Secretary, in his second reading speech, said that such a Bill was in existence in Queensland, where it was proving very satisfactory to the producers. I have a report of an address delivered by Mr. W. Ranger, of Queensland, at a meeting of the Australian Fruit Council, held in Melbourne between the 27th and 30th May, 1924. It deals with the Queensland Fruit Marketing Organisation. This organisation operates under a special Act of Parliament, passed in November, 1923. The people there thus had two years' trial of it. Mr. Ranger says—

In 1922, the Queensland Government initiated a scheme of agricultural organisation. For two years the scheme has been entirely financed by them (to the extent of £58,000) and for the next three years, they will finance £ for £. The amount raised by the producers themselves will be by means of a compulsory levy. This will be at the rate of ½d. on every £1 of produce sold, and will be collected by means of a special stamp. A Council of Agriculture was created, consisting of 19 producers' representatives and six Government nominees. The State was divided into 19 districts, each having a District Council, from each of which a representative was elected to the Council of Agriculture. These district councils were elected from smaller bodies, known as local producers' associations, which comprise the primary producers in any particular locality, irrespective of their particular industry. Thus dairymen, fruitgrowers, sugar-producers, general agriculturalists, etc., were linked up in the one organisation, and this paved the way for the sectional organisation. The Council of Agriculture was divided into committees. The Fruit Committee, after immediate problems of the industry had been dealt with, considered that a comprehensive review of the marketing of Queensland was necessary. To this end, a special committee was appointed. A delegation visited other Australian States, and the marketing methods of other countries were closely studied. The evidence so obtained was analysed and conclusions drawn. Concrete proposals were then made. The condensed evidence, conclusions and concrete proposals, were embodied in a special pamphlet, issued to every registered fruitgrower at the expense of the Council of Agriculture. Local associations were asked to call their fruit members together to discuss the findings of the committee, and to appoint a delegate to a special conference of fruitgrowers to finalise matters. This conference, which was one of the largest and most representative conferences of fruitgrowers ever held in the State of Queensland, was held on the 19th and 20th July, 1923, and the recommendations of the committee were adopted almost unanimously. A feature of the investigation of the conference was the whole-hearted support accorded the scheme by the Southern Queensland Fruitgrowers' Society, Ltd., a

body which had done invaluable work for the fruit industry, particularly in the matter of transport. They recognised their sphere of usefulness was limited, and that control of the commodity was essential for permanent results. The Government was then asked to give effect to the request of the conference, and in November "the Fruit Marketing Organisation Act of 1923" was placed on the statute book. *Provisions of the Act.*—1. The keynote of the Act is "control." The committee formed the opinion that even in highly organised countries such as California, reliance upon the voluntary principle has been demonstrated to be inadequate for fully efficient fruit-marketing organisation and distribution. In our own country the well-established Australian Dried Fruits' Association has become increasingly more embarrassed by the growers outside the association not exporting a reasonable quota. The Act, therefore, is designed to prevent minority frustration of the endeavours of the majority. 2. Complete control is vested in the Committee of Direction of 10 members. This body, although vested with full powers, is not an autocratic body. It is elected by various sectional councils provided for under the Act because of the problems attaching to the marketing of different classes of fruit varying so greatly. The banana, deciduous pineapple, citrus and other fruit councils have power of recall of their nominees, if the policy of the Committee of Direction is not in accord with the policy of the sectional committee. These sectional committees are fully representative of each fruitgrowing district, e.g., the banana committee has 41 members; the deciduous, 25; the pineapple, 20; the citrus 15, and the other fruits, 11; so that the growers completely control the situation. 3. The control extends even to the retailing, if necessary, as provided by a clause in the Act reading:—The Committee of Direction shall have the following powers:—"Prohibiting or regulating the use and management of fruitgrowers, fruit stalls at railway stations, and fruitgrowers' retail shops." *The Act in operation. No Government Interference.*—Although the Committee of Direction is vested with drastic powers, there are no Government nominees in this body. The fruit industry has been given complete control of its own affairs. *Finance.*—Apart from the assistance rendered by the Council of Agriculture in initiating the project, no Government assistance has been asked for. A bank overdraft was readily obtained, but the scheme has been self-supporting from the start, and, additionally, savings amounted to, at least, £15,000 per year have been announced to growers. The revenue is obtained from—(a) Agents' rebates; (b) Railway; (c) Barrow rentals; (d) Hawkers' licenses; (e) Profits from retail selling; (f) Profits from buying for country trade. Our policy of financing is to take as a source of revenue any savings effected by co-operative handling, and which would not be available to individual growers. When such savings are in excess of what is required, the excess amounts are refunded to growers by means or reductions in some particular way, e.g., reduction on rail freights. *Commission Agents.*—The policy of the committee is to frankly recognise the sphere of producer and distributor, and to make use of existing methods of distribution where such are efficient and economical. In pursuance of this policy, it was decided to limit the number of commission agents on the southern markets, and agreements were entered into with them. In Brisbane agreements are unnecessary, as regulations under the Act will suffice. Limitation of agents was not adopted as a means of obtaining rebates. These are incidental. It was adopted because we believe that markets are largely at the mercy of weak holders. Our policy has not eliminated competition; on the contrary, it has intensified it. Each week a circular is published for the growers showing:—(a) The quantity of their fruits sold by each individual agent; (b) The highest, lowest, and average price obtained This has resulted in each agent doing his utmost to maintain prices. The agents selected by us constitute an advisory committee under the chairmanship of our representative on that particular market. They meet weekly. Many helpful suggestions have been received. A feature of their deliberations is an estimate of quantities that their particular market can absorb, for four weeks ahead, at an approximate average. Our aim is to allocate supplies according to requirements as far as possible. Limitation has proved very successful, and prices have been well stabilised especially as regards bananas.

The Council of Direction comes into being with the idea of effecting in some way a saving to the producer. But then what do we find? The council simply appoint some of the agents already in business, the other agents having to go to the wall. What do the Council of Direction do for their money? They appoint as their agents the same agents as were doing the business for the growers direct.

The Honorary Minister: Some of those agents.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: The Council of Direction step in and appoint agents and say to them, "Come along each week and tell us what the position is." Then the members of the council sit around a table, and the agents say to them, "The position is so and so. We consider that we will want so many thousand cases of bananas per week for the next four weeks, and so many thousand cases of pineapples." Nothing else is sold under the Queensland Act. Bananas and pineapples are a very different proposition from the fruits grown in Western Australia. In fact, the Council of Direction are merely guided by the agents. If the existence of the council does not amount to the creation of a third party, I do not know what does. Bananas, the principal fruit of Queensland, have the Queensland market,

and in addition the markets of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. And yet we are told that a Bill suitable for Western Australian requirements has been drawn on the lines of the Queensland Act.

Sectional Activities.—To have attempted to radically alter the marketing of all fruits immediately would have been to court disaster, and when the scheme was first proposed, it was laid down that reforms would be brought about gradually. One section, however—the pineapple section—called for immediate attention. The pineapple is harvested all the year round, but the bulk of the crop is marketed in two main crops—(a) January to March; (b) June to August. During these periods supplies are much in excess of fresh fruit requirements, and fifty per cent. to sixty per cent. of the crop has to be canned. Individual canners made their arrangements with individual growers or centres, and the prices paid have been very unsatisfactory for a considerable period. Additionally, during each canning season there was a period in which supplies were so plentiful that canneries became congested, and consignments had to be stocked. As no means of effective storage for this subtropical fruit is known, the result was that the fresh fruit market used to break to ruinous prices, at which prices some canners used to operate and subsequently undercut the canned fruit prices. Canners used this undercutting as an argument against giving a better price to the grower. Many growers believed that the solution lay in more effective fresh fruit distribution.

The Committee decided:—(a) to control all cannery supplies—(i.) The canners were notified that all pineapples purchased by them must be purchased through the Committee of Direction; (ii.) Brisbane agents were instructed not to sell below 4s. per case, which was 6d. per case above factory prices. As a result 3s. 6d. per case was obtained from the canners. They had offered 3s. 2½d. (b) to endeavour to stimulate fresh fruit sales; (c) to advise allocations for southern markets; (d) control of factory supplies involved obtaining; (i) Estimates of crop from producing centres; (ii.) Canners' total weekly and daily requirements. As practically all the fruit is consigned by rail to the factory, the following procedure was adopted:—(i.) All supplies were sent through a loader appointed by the committee at each centre; (ii.) The loaders were in telephonic communication with head office daily, reported their loadings, and were instructed to which factory to send; (iii.) Supplies were allocated to the factories according to their capacity; (iv.) Growers were advised in what stage to pick their fruit and every effort was made to have the gardens kept well picked up in order to meet the inevitable glut period.

The speech then goes on to refer to the distribution of fresh fruits. In the way of apples and pears Queensland has but little, and up to the time of the delivery of this address only very few apples and pears were being put on the market. The Queensland Act has been in force for two years, and to show its working I wish to read a paragraph from the "Queenslander" of the 17th October last—

> The metropolitan banana growers met in conference at the Council of Agriculture's rooms on Friday week to consider: (1) The one-floor principle for the marketing of bananas; (2) the limitation of agents; (3) the formation of a fruit growers' association on similar lines to that in existence at Bowen.
>
> Conference declared its opposition to the one-floor principle and its belief in open competition, and decided to form a fruit growers' association in the metropolitan district.
>
> Mr. A. A. Brown, Chairman of the Metropolitan District Council, presided at the conference.
>
> Mr. F. M. Ruskin (Zillmere) said that growers had suffered acute pecuniary loss through the institution of the one-floor system. Many had not received the same prices that they received previous to the C.O.D. taking control. At the present time a ballot was being taken throughout the State on the question: "Are you in favour of the one-floor in Brisbane," That was unfair, because 75 per cent. of the banana growers in Queensland were not concerned in any shape or form with the Brisbane market.
>
> The Chairman: That ballot applies to the metropolitan suppliers only.
>
> Mr. F. M. Ruskin moved: "That this conference of metropolitan banana growers is opposed to the one-floor principle, believing that open competition is in the best interests of primary producers."
>
> Mr. O. Mohr seconded.
>
> Before the vote was taken, Mr. W. Ranger, manager of the C.O.D., was allowed two minutes in which to state the case for the one-floor principle.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That did not give him much time.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: It shows that these people did not want to waste much time over this.

Hon. T. Moore: But what sort of an authority is the "Queenslander"? Is it worth while?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: It is as good a paper as "The Worker," and perhaps a little better.

Hon. T. Moore: Yes, but what sort of an authority is it? Is it merely a "rag"?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: No. However, Mr. Ranger was allowed two minutes to state the case he had to put before the growers. Mr. Baxter read a report and the impression gained was that it would go a long way towards creating an opinion re-

garding the Bill in this Chamber. Hence my reason for quoting this report.

Hon. T. Moore: They are fighting the middlemen.

Hon. A. STEPHENSON: However, the report in "The Queenslander" proceeds—

He said that no constructive arguments had been brought forward and no figures had been produced by the advocates of open competition. He urged growers to study page 35 of the annual report. They had nothing to hide, and the outstanding fact was that the growers were much better served, in every way, by the C.O.D.

The motion, on being put to the conference, was carried with two dissentients.

Mr. S. Corbett moved: "That the limitation of agents is not conducive to the best interests of the producers."

Mr. O. Mohr seconded the motion.

Notwithstanding that the C.O.D. had been called into being to serve the producers, and to curtail the number of agents, here we find the growers themselves, after two years' experience, contending that the limitation of agents was not in the best interests of the producers. I assert that that will be the experience in this State, if the Bill be passed. Again the report proceeds—

Mr. W. Ranger, for the C.O.D., said that obviously the motion must apply to the agents in the southern markets. All the agents were sellers of green bananas, and they sold to ripeners. To-day the market was absolutely chaotic, and they had no hope of adjusting prices under existing conditions. "If you cannot get good prices for your bananas now, God help you when the summer comes," he concluded.

Hon. T. Moore: Perhaps he may be like the St. George's-terrace farmers, and has never grown a banana.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: The report shows that the motion was carried. Then the report continues—

Mr. F. M. Ruskin, in urging the formation of a co-operative fruit growers' association in Brisbane, said the Co-operative Fruit Growers' Society at Bowen had saved the growers £1,500 which otherwise would have been paid to the C.O.D. in the form of rebates, which would never have been refunded. He moved, "That a fruit growers' association be formed in the metropolitan district."

Mr. A. Hardy (Mt. Sampson) seconded the motion, which was carried.

Mr. E. H. Fabian (Mt. Cotton) moved: "That this conference ask the district council to write to the various newspapers asking them to publish in their market reports the number of bunches sold when they are under 10, irrespective of whether the sales are made through the agents or the C.O.D."

The motion was seconded by Mr. J. Hyman, and carried.

Mr. E. H. Fabian moved, and Mr. O. Mohr seconded: "That it be a recommendation to the district council to call conferences of two delegates from each L.P.A. quarterly, the first conference to be held before the end of November, such conferences to be under the auspices of the Q.P.A."

The motion was carried.

The point I want to make is this: The Chief Secretary stated that the Act in Queensland had worked very satisfactorily. I have advanced proof that the position is the reverse. The Queensland Act refers almost entirely to bananas and pineapples, but they are not perishable goods in the ordinary sense, because they will carry even as far as Western Australia. Often we can see them still green although they have been dispatched from the other side and have been displayed in shops in Perth. It is entirely a different propositon regarding our fruit.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about onions?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: They do not do much in Queensland regarding onions. It has been suggested that the Bill is necessary in the interests of the producers of the State. I would like to refer to a second reading speech delivered by the Federal Treasurer, Dr. Earle Page, in the House of Representatives, when dealing with the Commonwealth Bank (Rural Credits) Bill on the 20th August last. Much has been said about the necessity for the Bill before us now because it will be the means of creating pools and of enabling the producers to finance their business. Dr. Page's speech had some reference to the same sort of thing.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I think every farmer received a copy of that speech before the election.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: In the course of his speech Dr. Page, after referring to the Government's earlier action in extending the functions of the Commonwealth Bank, said—

This Bill proposes a further advance, the importance of which cannot be over-estimated. On the one hand, the measure may be described as the charter of the farmer. It aims to give the organised producer freedom to control his produce during the whole period of its distribution throughout the year. On the other hand, the Bill may be described as the insurance of the consumer. It provides a means whereby the consumers themselves may, if the producers neglect to do so, build up a reservoir of the necessaries of life and regulate their distribution at an even volume or pressure throughout the year.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: At the expense of the producer.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I think you are wrong. Dr. Page continued—

This will eliminate many avenues of waste, and lessen the spread between producer and consumer. The Bill makes this possible by installing for the first time in Australia financial machinery adapted to the special circumstances of agriculture. The Government will not operate that machinery—action and initiative on the part of the producer must set it in motion.

It does not look as if it is to be at the expense of the producer, in view of that statement.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Of course it does.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Again, Dr. Page said—

No Government aid will be sought or given; transactions will be on a strictly commercial basis.

This is the first time in the history of the Commonwealth or of the States that it has been proposed to deal with such matters on a strictly business basis. Then Dr. Page continued—

The individuality and enterprise of the producer, not the Government, in future will control the disposal of his produce. Agriculture is the foundation of our whole economic and business structure. If agriculture prospers, and the farmers and the others who derive their incomes from the land are able to purchase freely, all business is prosperous.

Later he said—

Even a cursory review of the position in Australia indicates that the basic business of the Commonwealth is the production of agricultural commodities and their distribution at home and abroad. Primary production last year accounted for nearly three-quarters of the total for Australia, namely, £270,670,000 out of a total of £382,208,000.

Hon. T. Moore: Just pleasing platitudes!

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Nothing of the sort. As Dr. Page pointed out—

In other words, primary products constituted 96 per cent. of the exports from Australia.

Hon. H. Stewart: That is good sound information.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: That is my object in bringing these matters before hon. members, particularly those representing primary producers.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the Bill before the House.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: I consider that this certainly refers to the Bill. For instance. Dr. Page said—

Thus there is no more suitable subject to which the Government can direct its attention than that of assuring that our agricultural industries—the main basis of our wealth—shall be properly financed. Every improvement in this direction will affect beneficially the whole field of industry. Two considerations indicate that a sound condition of agriculture is a matter of the first moment not merely to the agriculturist, but also to every section of the community, and to no section more than to persons employed in secondary industries and those engaged in transportation and distribution.

Then again—

Our processes of financing him, then, should adjust themselves to this natural process of production and distribution. We have reached the point where the need for the orderly marketing of agricultural products must be frankly recognised, and an effort made to provide the necessary financial machinery.

In a later part of his speech Dr. Page gives an illustration to emphasise his contentions and I hope hon. members will follow his words, which were—

The operation of the Bill is best seen by a practical illustration, and, therefore, I shall submit a statement showing exactly how last year's Victorian Voluntary Wheat Pool could have been handled under this scheme. The experience of the Victorian Wheat Pool shows that, in addition to the corporation's funds, assistance would have been required on the basis provided for in this Bill as follows:—For 7 months, £100,000. For 6½ months, £100,000; progressive total, £200,000. For 6 months, £150,000; progressive total, £350,000. For 4½ months, £250,000; progressive total, £600,000. For 4 months, £500,000; progressive total, £1,100,000. For 3½ months, £400,000; progressive total, £1,500,000. For 3 months, £250,000; progressive total, £1,700,000. For 2½ months, £250,000; progressive total, £2,000,000. For 2 months, £250,000; progressive total, £2,250,000. For 1½ months, £250,000; progressive total, £2,500,000. For 1 month, £250,000; progressive total, £2,750,000. As will be seen, the maximum provision required in Victoria would have been £2,750,000, and then only for one month, for handling 15,000,000 bushels.

The Bill before us provides for wheat, oats, and everything that is produced. Dr. Earle Page continued—

The objection to compulsory pools under Government control has always been that, if the Government makes the advance, it takes the right to fix prices and conditions for local sale. The present machinery will permit the farmer's ideal to be realised of complete control over export by the industry itself, without Government interference. He will be in this position, because he will be dealing with a financial institution on a commercial basis, and not with a Government asking for political favours. Advances may be made by the rural credits department, upon the security of primary produce placed under

the legal control of the bank, to the bank or other banks; to co-operative associations formed under the law of the Commonwealth, a State or a territory under the authority of the Commonwealth; and to such corporations or unincorporate bodies, formed under the law of the Commonwealth, a State or a territory under the authority of the Commonwealth as are specified by proclamation. Any organisation that likes to form itself into a body sufficiently substantial will be able to get these advances. I trust that my explanation of this Bill has manifested its necessity, and the nature of the help which the Government desires to afford our primary producers. I have tried to show that the principles that are involved in its constitution are not revolutionary, but are matters of course in many countries. Australian experience for the last ten years indicates urgency and necessity. The beneficial results of this legislation will not be sectional, but will be reflected throughout the entire community. It will tend to re-establish a proper balance between agriculture and other industries and to foster mutual interests. If the primary producers of this State take advantage of the Federal measure, I do not think they should want any more. The Commonwealth Government have had set aside for a considerable time half a million of money for this purpose, and whenever primary producers like to co-operate to finance their marketing, the money is there and no difficulty would be experienced in getting it.

Hon. T. Moore: Has anyone applied for it yet?

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: No.

Hon. T. Moore: I am afraid it is not there.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: It is there.

Hon. T. Moore: Through the other banks.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: The people here are too slow. The money is there and the Federal Government have invited the people to apply for it, but of course, they must apply in the proper way. The export trade of this State is well catered for. The most extraordinary feature is that everyone whom our Bill seeks to assist is absolutely opposed to it, more especially the fruitgrowers. I have spoken to quite a number of fruitgrowers and not one of them has had a good word to say for the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Those at Spearwood had.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: What is Spearwood? One hundred per cent. of the Bridgetown and Mt. Barker fruitgrowers are opposed to the Bill. They have their associations. The one at Mt. Barker is the biggest association of its kind in the State, and the fruitgrowers are perfectly satisfied with the conditions prevailing to-day.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: It would not operate in that case.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: They have their own association, and their own selling agents and are satisfied. It would be a great pity if this Bill came into force and the good work carried out by the exporters and agents were interfered with. They have exploited overseas markets at great expense and sent their representatives to various parts of the world; they have the latest information, and have increased the trade greatly. There is a market in the United Kingdom for apples and pears, and growers are perfectly satisfied with their conditions. We are in a difficult position as regards soft fruits, the reason being that there is over-production in good seasons, and only a small market to absorb it. After all, it resolves itself into a question of supply and demand. If there is too great a production of a perishable product and it is put on a market that cannot absorb it, it becomes almost valueless. What we require is some assistance to producers of soft fruits to get shipping facilities and refrigerator space to enable them to send their stuff to such markets as Colombo, Port Said, Java, Singapore, Japan and China. The markets are there, and all we want are ships with the necessary facilities. In that respect, too, the Federal Government are quite willing to assist. As a member of the Commonwealth Board of Trade, I know the Federal Government are giving great consideration and assistance in that direction, but we want help also from the State Government. Let me now give some idea of the quantities of fruit sent to various destinations during last year. The destinations were:—Port Said, Durban, Cape Town, Calcutta, Singapore, Batavia, Samarang, Sourabaya, Colombo, Mauritius, Tavoy, Banjoewangie. Some of those places took only small quantities, because the trade has just been opened up and it has not been possible to get the requisite amount of shipping space. The total quantity exported last year was 56,691 cases, so that members will see something is being done. Port Said and Colombo will take grapes, peaches and plums if they can be shipped at the right time. Those fruits will carry to Colombo and Port Said, but will not carry for the extra fortnight to reach the London market. I am opposed to

the Bill because I consider it will be a great mistake, and I hope it will never reach the statute-book.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Macfarlane, debate adjourned.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th November, 1925.

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

QUESTION—COAL MINING, ENGLISH CAPITAL.

Hon. G. TAYLOR asked the Premier: Have the Government any knowledge of an English company with a working capital of approximately £100,000 who are prepared to open up a new coal field in Western Australia, provided the Government will assure to them 25 per cent. of the Government coal consumption?

The PREMIER replied: No.

QUESTION—PERTH HOSPITAL, NURSES' HOURS.

Mr. PANTON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that reduction in the hours of nurses in the Perth Hospital is being delayed through want of extra accommodation? 2, Do the department intend to proceed with the extension of the building? 3, If so, when will the work be started?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2 and 3, The commencement of this work depends upon money being available, and is being considered in the framing of the Loan Estimates.

SELECT COMMITTEE—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Extension of time.

On motion by Mr. Davy, the time for bringing up the committee's report was extended to 1st December.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1925-26.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 5th November; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

Department of Chief Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew, Minister); Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Votes.

Vote—Chief Secretary, £16,282:

HON. S. W. MUNSIE (Honorary Minister—Hannans) [4.37]: The Chief Secretary's Department, as the home department, is responsible for the conduct of what might be termed the domestic affairs of the State. I may be pardoned for drawing attention to the varied and important character of its component parts. There is no other department in the State that has as many branch departments. There are the branch departments attending to the welfare of aborigines in the southern portion of the State, to fisheries and game, to registration of births, marriages and deaths, under which also come the registration of friendly societies and statistical and actuarial work; to prisons and prisoners, to harbour and lights, a sub-de-