

liability companies, associated companies, private companies and big firms that conduct their own internal insurance. Surely nobody can suggest that those people are not doing business, that they are not business concerns. Many of the insurance businesses have been built up over very long periods and have accumulated great reserves, which enable them to face any disaster by spreading the risks. That is the great bulwark of commerce. Commerce cannot carry on without insurance. No bank would have anything to do with a venture that was uninsured. Whoever heard of a ship putting to sea unless adequately covered by insurance, or of any merchant sending goods by rail or by steamer unless protected by adequate insurance? I think I have shown that insurance is entirely a business and a trading concern. In fact, it is the life and soul of business. It would be quite idle to try to convince an intelligent public that State insurance was not State trading; unless indeed the one who essayed such a task was highly skilled in the art of dissimulation, or, to use the words of the Chief Secretary to-night, he was addressing a populace hopelessly prejudiced and not willing to accept the facts. I am sorry I cannot support the second reading.

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

*House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 29th November, 1927.*

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

## QUESTIONS (3)—ROADMAKING.

### *Surface-dressing.*

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has he noted the remarks of the Chairman of the Main Roads Board that to keep maintenance costs within reasonable limits, water bound macadam and gravel roads must be surfaced with material that will withstand the pulverising and abrading action of fast moving vehicles? 2, Is he aware that deterioration by corrugation and otherwise has already set in on macadam and gravel roads constructed under the Federal Aid Roads Act? 3, Is it proposed that future contracts and operations under the Act shall include surface dressing by tar, bitumen, or other suitable material?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, Every project will be considered on its merits, having regard to traffic conditions.

### *Canning-Fremantle road.*

Hon. G. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Works: What amount of money was spent on the Canning-Fremantle road, from the 1st January to the 31st October, 1927, under the Federal Aid Roads Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Nil.

### *Perth-York road.*

Hon. G. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Works: What amount was spent on the Perth-York-road, from the 1st January to the 31st October, 1927, under the Federal Aid Roads Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: £20,627 14s. 5d.

## BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Dog Act Amendment.
  - 2, Bridgetown Lot 39A.
  - 3, Leighton-Robb's Jetty Railway.
- Transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

### *In Committee.*

Resumed from the 29th September. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 7, Sub-section 9:

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** When the Bill was previously before us, it was pointed out that the medical officer in charge of the laboratory at Kalgoorlie might not always be available to act as chairman of the board. The board might be required to sit in Murchison or North-West centres, or in the city, and the Commonwealth officer might not be at our disposal all the time. I move an amendment—

That the words "the medical officer in charge of the laboratory at Kalgoorlie" be struck out and the words "a duly qualified medical practitioner to be appointed by the Governor" inserted in lieu.

The amendment will make the section more flexible and allow of the exigencies of the case being considered.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL:** The amendment is an improvement and will make the working of the section simpler and more effective. It follows that if the Kalgoorlie laboratory officer is available, his services will be utilised. The amendment will leave the matter in the hands of the Minister so that the board may sit wherever convenient for the industry and workers in the industry. The board should sit as near to the seat of the trouble as possible on all occasions. I am glad that the Minister is altering the Bill to give the flexibility necessary if the Act is to be the success we hope it will be.

**HON. G. TAYLOR:** Does the amendment mean that a duly qualified medical practitioner will be appointed to travel around, or does it mean that a local doctor will be appointed to do the work?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The object is to appoint a man in the district.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of first schedule:

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL:** I hope the question of medical charges will be looked into during recess. The matter is important having regard to the unnecessary expenses to which companies are put under the section enacted last year. In many cases there is at least a doubt whether the charges made are absolutely fair. I hope they are always absolutely fair, but sometimes there is suspicion of unnecessarily heavy charges.

If the suspicion is well founded, the Act should be so amended as to obviate what is practically the taking of money not earned. There is a suspicion that some medical practitioners impose unduly high charges. If I were perfectly certain of such a case, I should not have the slightest hesitation in bringing it forward here. The law was passed to help the worker, who I hope has been helped; but the Act has made it possible for some other people to help themselves.

**HON. G. TAYLOR:** The member for Gascoyne brought forward some concrete and decisive figures bearing on this matter. In one case, after the charges had been disputed for some time, the medical practitioner accepted about half his original demand. The Minister would do the State a great service if he went into the matter.

**MR. SAMPSON:** There should be a conference with the British Medical Association to arrive at a reasonable scale of charges for medical services and hospital attention generally. From what I have heard, I believe there is justification for such action; and I hope the matter will receive consideration as suggested.

**MR. SLEEMAN:** The meaning of the Act is quite simple and plain, but companies are disputing its meaning and are refusing to pay hospital charges and chemists' accounts for requisites in accident cases. Therefore I move an amendment—

That after "maintenance," in line 2, there be inserted "including fees for chemists' requisites."

In different cases of which I have the accounts here, companies have refused to pay for such requisites as bandages, drops for eyes, liniments, lotions, and oiled silk.

**HON. G. TAYLOR:** Does the amendment mean that any person will be able to go to a chemist and obtain prescriptions off his own bat, or only things prescribed by a medical practitioner?

**MR. SLEEMAN:** The latter.

**HON. G. TAYLOR:** In that case I do not oppose the amendment. The other interpretation, however, would be objectionable.

**MR. SLEEMAN:** The amendment clearly applies only to workers' compensation cases where the patient is not in hospital but is under treatment by a doctor and goes to a chemist for liniments, lotions and so forth.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I regret I was not consulted as to this amendment

and had no intimation of it. Not one single complaint of the nature indicated has reached me. If such refusals occurred to any extent, I think complaints would have been made to the department. The £100 provided was certainly intended to include such things as liniments, lotions, bandages and so on. I regret not having been afforded an opportunity of obtaining concrete evidence regarding the complaints.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you think there is any necessity for the amendment?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know; I can only repeat that no complaint has yet reached me. Of course, such cases might occur without coming to my knowledge.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You ought to have the complaints looked into in order to ascertain that these things were ordered by doctors.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will have inquiry made.

Hon. G. Taylor: And recommit the Bill to-morrow.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I give the member for Fremantle an assurance that if it is found payment has been refused as stated, the Bill will be recommitted to-morrow to allow him to move his amendment, which in the meantime, I suggest, be withdrawn.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

### LOAN ESTIMATES, 1927-28.

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1927-28 and recommending appropriation.

#### *In Committee of Supply.*

The House resolved into Committee of Supply for the purpose of considering the Loan Estimates; Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

*Vote—Departmental, £174,617:*

**THE PREMIER AND TREASURER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [5.2]: In presenting these Estimates, I can assure hon. members that everything possible has been

done to keep the amount asked for as low as possible. The authorisation of loan expenditure during each of the last few years has not varied greatly. It has ranged between £4,500,000 and £4,750,000, while the expenditure has been mostly just under £4,000,000 or slightly over £4,000,000. It will be admitted that it is undesirable that we should spend an excessive amount of loan funds, but fortunately our rate of production at present is very high and shows signs of rapidly increasing. The amount asked for this year is slightly less than that covered by last year's Loan Estimates, but is slightly more than was actually spent. It will be seen that the estimate this year includes £592,542 on account of last year's Loan Suspense Account. This represents money actually spent last year but brought forward to this year for adjustment on account of insufficient provision having been made under a Loan Bill. That is the usual practice adopted year by year and it renders exact comparison between years very difficult. Provision has been made this year for works in hand and those that have already been decided upon, and nothing is provided for in respect of works apart from those. I have previously referred to the amount of work that has to be done in this State and has to be regarded as urgent on account of our progress. One has only to sit in this Chamber during a discussion on the Budget, or at almost any time when consideration is being given to matters of importance, to be impressed—I believe one is justified in accepting the views expressed by members from different parts of the State—by the need for expenditure of very considerable sums of loan money in various undertakings that are so essential to the life of the community and the development of the country. Railways are asked for by shoals. In fact, I suppose that if we were able to meet the desires of hon. members regarding railway construction, the total amount provided in the Estimates for all purposes would not be sufficient to enable us to carry out the railway construction programme. There are harbours to be improved and water supplies to be provided both in the country and the metropolitan districts. Road work has to be carried on throughout the length and breadth of the State, and innumerable other matters require the expenditure of loan moneys. Having regard to these facts makes the curtailment of the Loan Estimates very

difficult. I would hesitate to take hon. members into my confidence as to the exact amount that was covered by the first draft of the Loan Estimates as I received them from the different departments. It was not a matter of pruning off hundreds of thousands of pounds, but of much more than that. I mention this as a sort of consolation or explanation in advance if some hon. members feel disappointed in not finding various items provided for in the Loan Estimates.

Mr. Stubbs: Many will be disappointed.

The PREMIER: On the whole, I think it will be found that not all the works that are necessary are included, but that the works included are necessary. Then again, there is difficulty in obtaining money and this will prevent some important work being undertaken at the stage that it was perhaps anticipated. The Loan Estimates last year were slightly greater than the amount now asked for. They totalled £4,832,347. The expenditure was much below that; that is to say, the actual expenditure was below the authority of the Government to spend. The actual expenditure amounted to £4,113,054, so that there was a saving of expenditure on the Estimates of £719,293.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is not much saving in that.

The PREMIER: Of course, that is not a saving in the true sense of the word. What I mean by that is that the expenditure was less to the extent of £719,293, as compared with the authority given by Parliament to the Government. That is not an unusual experience because frequently the actual expenditure does not reach the loan authorisations.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Ten thousand pounds was provided for the Lake Grace-Kalgarin railway, but nothing was spent.

The PREMIER: That amount probably helps to make up the £719,293 I have already mentioned. There are other items and unforeseen circumstances may arise that prevent the expenditure of money for which authority has been given. That is inevitable, as the year proceeds. I hope there has been no slackening in connection with various works because the total amount estimated has not been spent. It will be seen that saving, if I may call it that, has been dis-

tributed over all the divisions. The actual expenditure under the various divisions compared with the Estimates was—

	Estimated Expenditure.	Actual Expenditure.
	£	£
Departmental ..	140,034	142,884
Railways and Tramways, etc. ..	1,052,223	749,811
Harbours and Rivers ..	233,265	178,652
Water Supplies ..	589,060	417,188
Development of Goldfields ..	105,175	86,407
Development of Agriculture ..	2,123,750	1,969,204
Roads and Bridges, etc. ..	329,300	305,266
Other Undertakings ..	259,500	263,642
Total ..	£4,832,347	£4,113,064

The amount asked for this year is £4,829,409. That is made up as follows—new money, £4,236,867; recoup to Loan Suspense Account on account of last year's expenditure, £592,542. This, compared with the returns for last year, shows a decrease below the total amount shown in the Estimates. It follows largely upon the lines pursued last year. The great bulk of the expenditure, as reference to the Estimates will show, is due to the expansion of rural development. Provision has been made for water supplies and sewerage operations in the metropolitan area and for extensions of the tramways and electricity supply. There are comparatively small sums that appear every year for capital for the trading concerns. These are the only items that are not to be expended directly upon the further development of primary industries.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is one item of £121,000 alone.

The PREMIER: But that is for one road and a very good road, too.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The object is a very good one.

The PREMIER: With a few exceptions, there are no great variations compared with last year's expenditure. The amount applied for in the various divisions and the amounts spent will be seen in the columns of the Loan Estimates, and I do not wish to weary members by reciting them here. Under the heading of Departmental there is rather more provided this year than last year. This charge is based largely upon actual expenditure on works and if the outgoings are not so great as anticipated, the Vote will not be fully drawn upon to that

extent. There is slightly more set down for the Main Roads Board because work in that direction is increasing. In the division dealing with railways and tramways I am asking for an additional £100,000. That will not nearly meet the amount we could profitably utilise in that direction, although it is a substantial increase.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: This is enough for two railways, or for the Yarramony railway for instance.

The PREMIER: We provide for four railways. One is the Ejjanding Northwards railway, and that should be completed towards the latter end of next year. The Kalkalling-Bullfinch railway has been commenced, and work on the Albany-Denmark line, which is the extension to Nornalup, will be continued and should be completed early next year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The other is a sort of God bless you.

The PREMIER: In that respect they are not in any way new. It may be God bless you, or it may be Kathleen Mavourneen; they may be there this year, or we may have to wait for them forever. But similar items have appeared on the Estimates of other years.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Lake Grace-Kalgarin item was on last year's Estimates, but has now disappeared.

The PREMIER: Its place has been taken by another item, for the survey of that line, a necessary preliminary. In any case the House does realise that it is impossible to carry on the construction of a great number of lines simultaneously. We have now three under consideration.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Minister closed three others the other day.

The PREMIER: He did not; he was not permitted by another place. But there is a mighty difference between the three it was proposed to pull up and the three we are putting down.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That was a record of pulling up.

The PREMIER: It was because there were so many that another place was scared.

Hon. G. Taylor: It was the Bunbury line that wrecked the Bill.

The PREMIER: Another place said we were rather too ambitious in the policy of tearing up railways. We have three lines under construction at present, and as those that are now being carried on are completed, other lines, already authorised or that may

be authorised, will be commenced. It has not been unknown in the history of the State that many railways have to wait long years after authorisation before the construction has been possible. It has generally been the case throughout the years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But not many of those set down here will have to wait.

The PREMIER: No, I think on close examination it will be found that the railways for which money has been provided on these Estimates are not only needed, but on actual merit are entitled to take precedence. I agree that it is a pity they were not built years ago, and many others as well. There is no doubt the policy of building railways to open up new areas is a sound one. It is only by that means we shall be able to expand settlement and further the development of the country. We have in hand surveys for the Mount Barker-Manjimup line, the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line, and the Brookton-Dale line. Now my friend from Pingelly will understand why we have not been able to start that line. It is because the survey has not yet been completed.

Mr. Brown: They are taking a jolly long time over it.

The PREMIER: But there are considerable engineering difficulties on that route. Had it been confined to the section authorised, the difficulties perhaps would not have been so great; but we require to have regard to the ultimate continuation of the line through the ranges to Armadale.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You propose to make an early start with the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line.

The PREMIER: That is being surveyed. It is still under survey. That, too, is a very necessary line, and it is quite probable that we shall be able to promote a great deal of closer settlement in the areas traversed by that line. The survey of the Ejjanding-Northward line is proceeding and so, too, is the survey of the Lake Grace-Southern Cross line. The note given me refers to the Lake Grace-Bullfinch line, but perhaps I had better say Lake Grace-Southern Cross.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Is that line going in?

The PREMIER: Yes, it will go right up to Southern Cross, and eventually on to Bullfinch.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You require to be very careful of the route to be taken by that line.

The PREMIER: There is no proposed route yet. Nobody suggests that if that line goes from Lake Grace to Southern Cross it will be the extreme limit of our advance in an easterly direction.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It should go from Lake Grace due east.

The PREMIER: That would be heading direct for Salmon Gums. Reference to the map will show that both the direct line and this one, which is in the nature of a loop line, will have to be considered. That will leave a large area of country still unserved by railway communication. That proposition has not been definitely decided yet.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I thought it had.

The PREMIER: No, the country is being examined.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We require proper plans for the opening up of that country.

The PREMIER: The whole of that country through to Salmon Gums, and a comprehensive plan of railway construction, ought to be decided upon before we embark upon a line here and a line there. But to enable us to do that, examinations by surveys and classifications are necessary. That is where a number of our surveyors are engaged at present. We have not yet all the information that we should have before any final decision is come to on the matter. But it is generally believed that all the country going south from Southern Cross direct to a line eastward to Salmon Gums, and another line down through Ravensthorpe—all that country will be suitable for settlement, and much of it is good country. It will be possible and even probable that the line now running from Hopetoun to Ravensthorpe will be linked up with any new system that will be constructed out in that direction. Leaving out the more northerly portion from Southern Cross to the goldfields areas, from the centre down to the coast most of that country no doubt will be settled within a very few years.

Mr. Brown: When will that great settlement at Kalgarin have its railway?

The PREMIER: I think Kalgarin is involved in the question I have been discussing.

Mr. Brown: But those people have been waiting for years. It is a matter of urgency.

The PREMIER: Unfortunately there are many places waiting.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, Yarramony is waiting, and so is the Dale River.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: But the claims of Kalgarin certainly cannot be overlooked.

The PREMIER: It is a comparatively new settlement. Certainly Kalgarin does need a railway, wherever that railway may come from.

Mr. Brown: They are growing wheat there 40 miles from a railway.

The PREMIER: It shows what a fine country it is. I do not know that they are growing very much of it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Yes, a tremendous quantity.

The PREMIER: Well, in other parts of the State wheat is being grown 20 miles or more from a railway.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: For the last three years settlers at Kalgarin have been growing wheat 35 miles from a railway.

The PREMIER: Well, I hope they will not have to wait much longer for their railway. The Bill to authorise the line will be brought down next session. It could have been introduced this session, but it would not have been of advantage to the people of the district, because it would not have been possible to begin the construction next year, having regard to the number of railways already in hand. So the people of that district do not stand to lose anything by reason of their railway Bill not having been introduced this session.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Would it be possible for the railway to be built in time for the next harvest?

The PREMIER: It might be possible to build so much of it as would serve their most urgent needs.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, of course, all things are possible. Your party might be turned out at any moment.

The PREMIER: Provision has been made for water supplies at Ejanding, Kulja, and Geelakin, and for a commencement to be made with the Lake Grace-Bullfinch supply. We are again providing for a continuance of the work of improving opened railways being carried on by the Railway Department. In this connection last year £114,000 was spent, and this year we are finding £150,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It would be better to build a new railway.

The PREMIER: It is a useful and necessary work. This re-grading, re-ballasting and the laying of heavier rails mean heavier loads and reduced working costs.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, it is a paying proposition, but new lines would pay still better.

The PREMIER: But without much of the re-grading and re-ballasting and laying of heavier rails we should have to incur much heavier expenditure for rolling stock. So the one proposition balances the other; except that, as the hon. member remarks, these established railways are already paying, and the money required for these improvements might be utilised for building railways in districts not now served. The work of re-modelling the Merredin and the Bunbury railway yards will come out of this Vote. These works have become very necessary.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The provision of more wheat for Bunbury would be better.

The PREMIER: If the station yards have not reached a stage at which they could handle the traffic without re-modelling, where would the wheat get to?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I should like a Rolls-Royce, but have to be content with my feet.

The PREMIER: There is not much of a Rolls-Royce proposition at Bunbury, for the yard, as it exists to-day, has the identical lay-out that it had 32 years ago when first the railway was built. If the yard was not more than sufficient to meet the requirements of the traffic 32 years ago, then having regard to the development that has taken place in that part of the State as well as in other parts, it will be realised that the money simply has to be found for re-arranging the yard. This represents a pretty considerable sum.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We must have marshalling yards if we are to have increased traffic. That is not so much.

The PREMIER: The amount is considerable. I think the estimated cost was £40,000 last year, but the money is not all being spent at once.

The Minister for Railways: It was £15,000 spread over a term.

The PREMIER: Such work is going on at Merredin and Bunbury will help to swell the total set down on these Estimates.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What about Northam; you have dropped that.

The PREMIER: The Minister for Railways brought that in. I did not mean to spend any money there.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I like to see the Northam yards full of traffic.

The PREMIER: Yes, because it shows that produce is rolling in from all quarters.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is the way I like it to be. I always tell the railway people I do not mind how much trouble they are put to. They have to get the goods out.

The Minister for Railways: Suppose a lot more is coming down and they cannot get it out. What is to happen then?

The PREMIER: Last year the amount spent on rolling stock was £111,157. The amount would have been greater but for the difficulty experienced in securing the material. This is practically now all on hand, and the work will proceed more rapidly. The present programme of rolling stock includes further expenditure on 15 Class P locomotives and 10 Garratt locomotives. The P class locomotives are for the express passenger traffic, and the Garratts are for the heavy goods traffic on steep grades and sharp curves. We have 355 steel wagons that are to be issued at the rate of 40 per month; 75 louvered vans, 15 brake vans, and 10 new two-berth sleeping coaches for the trans-Australian traffic. All these things involve a pretty heavy expenditure and mean that there will be considerable outlays for many years to come. The fact that we have to find a considerable sum of money year by year in the provision of rolling stock is evidence of the extent to which the State is expanding and the work is going on. We may anticipate having to find a considerable amount of money in this direction for many years to come. I do not think it is good policy to let our rolling stock fall into arrears. Probably before the harvest has been transported we shall have complaints in this direction. I hope, and the department hopes, that there will be no serious cause for complaint this year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We want 2,000 or 3,000 trucks.

The PREMIER: We can only keep on building them as fast as we can. The extensions of the tramway system previously approved were put in hand last year, and I am told will shortly be completed. That is the note given to me by the department. I cannot vouch for this myself. People who pass along the streets where these works are under construction will be glad to hear that it is anticipated the work will shortly be completed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What about the poles?

The PREMIER: That was all part of the policy to expedite the works once we were in a position to start them. The poles were got ready so that we could go ahead, instead of waiting for more material to be landed before making a commencement.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you waited for six months after the material had arrived.

The PREMIER: It was no fault of the department.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is never the fault of the department..

The PREMIER: It never is. The City Council have been unable to supply the metal for the roads, and the work has been held up.

Hon. G. Taylor: Have they not sold their quarries?

The PREMIER: I do not know. The City Council have been carrying on a big programme of road construction. I understand they cannot cope with the demand for material. The output has not met with the requirements of the City Council, the tramways, and in other directions. This also applies to the additions to the plant connected with the electricity supply. The bulk of the money asked for under the heading of electricity is for the fifth and final unit, which is nearly completed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We shall never reach the final unit.

The PREMIER: I hope it will be the final unit for a time. I know it will never be the last unit, but it should meet the requirements for a period. There has been heavy expenditure there every year for a long time past.

Hon. G. Taylor: A lot of money must have been spent there.

The PREMIER: A substantial increase is shown on the Estimates under the heading of Harbours and Rivers. An additional £20,000 has been set down for Fremantle. The proposed work covers reconstruction, the strengthening of the south and north quays, and dredging the entrance channel. The same amount is provided as was spent last year at Geraldton. There is an increase of slightly over £18,000 on improvements to harbours and rivers. This vote covers a variety of work, including expenditure on preserving the beach at South Fremantle, and improvements to the Swan River. We have further increases also. Water supplies

show an increase of £187,000 over last year. Of this the metropolitan water supply accounts for £38,000, sewerage £20,000, and the balance of £129,000 is spread over various country undertakings. We are bound to meet the requirements of the people in the metropolitan area in the matter of water supply. I hope this has been done. Water supplies in the country towns also show an increase in expenditure. The principal increase is shown under water supplies for agricultural areas, namely, £100,000. This includes many large country water supply schemes such as Barbalin, Kondinin, McPherson's Rock, and the Norseman and Esperance tanks and other places. It will be seen that a very substantial amount is provided for country water supplies. A considerable amount of this expenditure will be from funds provided under the Migration Agreement, cheap money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Are you going to charge up the works at one per cent.?

The PREMIER: I do not think that has been decided. The works that are being carried on under the Migration Agreement have not reached the stage when a charge can be set against them. They were approved only last year, and are under construction. It is a matter that will have to be dealt with.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is about £2,000,000 under that agreement, according to these figures.

The PREMIER: We are fortunate in being able to get approval for money for these works under the Migration Agreement. That would be one of the reasons why—if reasons should be required—we are justified in spending a considerable sum of loan money during the period we are now passing through. If a fair proportion of the money is to be cheap money, we ought, so far as it is justifiable, to take advantage of the opportunity, so as to save heavy interest charges to the people for practically all time.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is it correct to refer to it as cheap money? Ultimately it may not be so.

The PREMIER: It is cheap money for 10 years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If it is invested wisely, it will be reproductive.

The PREMIER: We know that many desirable works, which ultimately prove to be reproductive, are not so in the early years of their existence. This is cheap money for 10 years for the carrying out of these works, and suggests that they ought to be self-



supporting and reproductive to the State by the end of that time.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I do not like the term "cheap money." I do not think it is the correct term to employ. It would imply that we are getting special terms in regard to this money, whereas we are only getting them for a time.

The PREMIER: It is cheap money for a period.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is cheap money provided we spend it wisely.

The PREMIER: Of course. It would be dear money if it were unwisely spent. We have to assume that all expenditure on our public works is wise expenditure. Assuming that, it is cheap money for 10 years, not so cheap for the second five as for the first five years.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The circumstances under which public works were built previously do not apply to-day. There is now an outside driving force. Under the agreement certain conditions are dragged in.

The PREMIER: Yes. I do not know whether the hon. member has in mind that perhaps, because of the conditions laid down as to cheap money, the result may be that it will not be wisely spent.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We are to-day undoubtedly influenced by the Migration Agreement. It is not questioned that the development of the State is being influenced by that factor to-day. This may not prove to be cheap money.

The PREMIER: It may not be so, but that can only be so if, because the money is cheap, we were to embark on works we would not otherwise carry on. I do not think we ought to do anything like that. The work must be justified on its merits.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Quite so.

The PREMIER: Otherwise the money would be found to be dear. It must be work that we would actually carry out, regardless of the cheap money, and on its merits. If we merely embarked upon works and expenditure because the money is cheap, it would be a fatal policy to pursue.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We shall bring in a number of people, who will be good for us. If you cannot expend loan money without increasing the population, you must not spend it.

The PREMIER: If we keep on increasing our loan indebtedness year by year without securing any material increase in the popul-

lation, the country will soon be landed in difficulties.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: On the basis of this expenditure it should mean at least 25,000 more people to the State, I mean on the basis of our present loan expenditure as compared with our present population.

The PREMIER: That may be so. It will be necessary to increase our population in order to carry the burden of interest charges on our loan expenditure. That applies all over Australia. The position in the Commonwealth is rather important, if not serious. In the whole of the Commonwealth we are borrowing about £40,000,000 a year though not so much this year. If Australia increases its loan indebtedness by £100,000,000 in every three years, it will consequently add enormously to the interest bill, and, unless at the same time the population is substantially increased, where is it all going to land Australia?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We shall simply be squashed.

The PREMIER: Yes. We must have the population to carry the burden of interest charges, following along heavy loan expenditure.

Mr. Lindsay: And increased production.

The PREMIER: Increased production is dependent upon increased population. There is a limit to the amount of production, which will follow a given number of people. It is highly desirable that we should increase our production. That can only be done to a material extent by increasing our population.

Mr. Mann: Does the Premier think that we can continue to borrow at the rate we have been borrowing?

The PREMIER: All I can say is that the prospects of borrowing are tightening up very considerably. We know that unless expenditure is wise, we do not get results. In every direction, whether it be in our national life or our individual life, even though we may increase production each year by means of expenditure, we can become insolvent notwithstanding that increased production. But everything is bound up in the wise expenditure of money, whether it be in affairs of State or in our own affairs. The very key of the whole situation is the wise and prudent expenditure of our loan money. I have provided this year approximately the same amount as last year for mining development. It is unfortunately true that the number of men employed in the industry con-

tinues to decrease, in spite of the liberal assistance given under the Mining Development Act. There are deep boring operations going on at Coolgardie, Sandstone, Ajana and Eradu. As we know, the reports that have been received from Wiluna justify the construction of a railway and we hope and fairly well believe too, that the developments at Wiluna will add another fine goldfield to the mining industry. The railway to the manganese deposit at Horseshoe has been completed, and is ready now for operation. The estimated expenditure this year under the heading of development of agriculture will be less than that of last year and the expenditure in connection with groups will be less than that of last year by £97,000. We trust, of course, that the groups will gradually become more self-supporting, as they ought to be. It is desirable that the expenditure on existing groups should be a reducing quantity every year as they reach the self-supporting stage. The advances granted in connection with soldier land settlement are being reduced year by year, as must be expected. These settlements also are becoming self-supporting. We are anticipating a greater expenditure in the Lands Department in connection with the surveys of new areas. There are no fewer than 54 surveyors engaged principally in surveying and classifying new country. This work opens up great possibilities and we may expect a great number of new blocks being thrown open for selection in the not distant future. We have again provided funds for the purchase of wire netting from the Commonwealth Government, to supply to settlers. An amount of £10,000 is to be provided for the planting of pines and the purchase of land—principally 7,500 acres near Mt. Barker—for the plantations. In conjunction with this, the prison farm to be known as "Pardelup" is being established. The prisoners will be engaged on the work of developing this farm, and also planting pines. Provision is to be made for further funds for additions to Muresk College. This has been found necessary because the applications of would-be students exceed the accommodation that is at present available. It may be claimed that the expenditure on this item is decreasing, but I would point out that it is only the direct expenditure on the development of agriculture. In every other section of the Estimates, money is provided which might fairly claim to come

under the heading of development of agriculture. Under every section of these Estimates will be found provision for further expenditure for the purpose of surveys, railways, water supplies, roads, harbours and in other directions. There is a large increase shown under the heading of roads and bridges, public buildings, etc. That expenditure last year was £305,266; this year the expenditure is estimated at £563,400. The increase is due to the expenditure on roads. Of that sum £134,000 is in connection with the Commonwealth agreement. It will be remembered that owing to Commonwealth requirements last year we were unable to get the whole of our expenditure passed, and large amounts were held up. A portion of that money will consequently come into this year's accounts. This will swell the figures for this year, although the expenditure actually took place last year. On the reconstruction of the Canning road an additional £112,500 will be spent this year. The work was commenced late last year. I am again providing further funds for workers' homes. The Workers' Homes Board is carrying on excellent work, and last year proved a busy one. No less than 100 applications were approved under the Act, the amount involved being £58,058. The approvals this year it is expected will involve an expenditure of £90,000. I am glad to say that the Commonwealth Government have provided an increased amount for soldiers' homes. This will relieve the pressure in this State. We have provided £100,000 for public buildings, not including the savings bank. The amount is made up largely from Education Department requirements, buildings for the University, hospitals, police stations, etc. The Point Heathcote mental home, costing £49,000, will be completed this year.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Will any of that money for public buildings be spent in the country?

The PREMIER: Yes, most of it, in connection with schools, hospitals, etc.

Mr. Brown: Does it include anything for railway stations?

The PREMIER: No, they will come under the Railways Vote. For the Fremantle Hospital additions £11,000 has been set down, and the additions to the Old Men's Home will cost £9,000. We have provided only a small amount at present in connection with the Fremantle railway and road bridge. That will be sufficient for the preparation

of plans. I have already referred to the establishment of the prison farm for which the amount set down is £2,400. This will be required for alterations to buildings, additions and equipment. As usual, a small amount of additional capital is provided for the various trading concerns. An item that requires explanation is that shown under Loan Suspense in connection with the State vessels. This represents money paid last year to the banking account to cover losses in past years, and to put that account in credit. The affairs of the State Shipping Service for the last few years have been far from satisfactory. This has not been due to faulty management. It will be remembered that during the war years, considerable profits were made, and those profits were transferred to revenue. I think the last that was taken into revenue was in 1919, the year prior to the Leader of the Opposition taking office. In those years big profits were made. They totalled £277,000, and that money was taken into revenue. When the ships reached the losing stage and required money to carry on, the service found itself in an impossible position. No business concern could properly be carried on in that way. Prior to the war there were considerable losses, and since the war the losses have been fairly heavy also. These are due to many reasons well known to hon. members. The boats were found to be unsuitable and costly to operate. The "Bambra," a German boat, was most expensive to run, and it was not possible to replace her for a considerable time. The "Eucla" was also found to be unsuitable, and the "Kwinana," which was burnt, involved the service in a considerable loss. During the war period when freights the world over were very high, they remained stationary with our shipping service. Had the practice been adopted of increasing freights, our profits would have been much larger. The "Kangaroo" was the one ship that earned big profits because she was trading in all the seas. She was away from Australia during the whole of the war period.

Mr. Davy: She was chartered, was she not?

The PREMIER: For part of the time. The losses that followed were inevitable. In 1920 it was decided to instal a refrigerating plant on the "Kangaroo," and the work was entrusted to a well-known British firm. Unfortunately it was costly to carry out. Although the vessel itself cost £140,000 in pre-

war days, the work of installing the refrigerating plant involved a sum of no less than £190,000.

Member: What is the "Kangaroo" worth now?

The PREMIER: She is estimated to be worth £200,000. The "Kangaroo" is a very fine ship, although somewhat slow. The cost of the refrigerating plant has added enormously to the capital cost of the ship. The service pays interest on that, and it is an impossible burden to place upon it.

Mr. Stubbs: Are the ships being run at a loss now?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Stubbs: Why not put up the freights?

The PREMIER: I will consider that.

Mr. Coverley: Put up the railway freights first. Increase the freight on superphosphate.

Mr. Sleeman: What chance is there of another "Koolinda"?

The PREMIER: We were faced with the position of carrying on with a very unsatisfactory fleet and continuing to lose heavily, or of obtaining a new ship for the North-West coast and a new ship for the South coast. We obtained new ships and both boats commenced running during the financial year. Those boats have not been long enough in the service to enable us to form a definite conclusion as to the probable financial results, but the "Koolinda" will show a greatly improved financial position, and so will the "Kybra" if the freight is offering. I do not think there is any doubt about that.

Mr. Coverley: Why do not the State Shipping Service keep separate accounts for the vessels?

The PREMIER: I am not quite sure what the hon. member intends. It became necessary to dispose of the boats withdrawn from the coast, the "Bambra" and the "Eucla" and to rearrange the capital account. The "Bambra" went to England and we made a claim for improvements effected to her while she was in our service, but without result. I am not surprised that we should have been unsuccessful. So far our efforts to dispose of the "Eucla" have not been successful.

Hon. G. Taylor: Where is she now?

The PREMIER: She is here awaiting sale. The "Kangaroo" has been revalued and the amount spent on her refrigerating plant has been written down considerably. The accounts have been adjusted on the basis of the three boats still in commission, namely, the "Kangaroo," "Koolinda," and

"Kybra," and the "Eucla's" value was reduced by about £12,000. It then became necessary for the Government to put in order the concern's banking account, which had been considerably overdrawn for some time, and to do that £500,000 was paid in to the banking account. There was no other way out of the difficulty.

Hon. G. Taylor: Was that paid out of revenue?

The PREMIER: If it had been paid out of revenue I should not be announcing a small surplus. The position, which had developed over many years, had to be faced, especially as the profits had been taken into revenue during prosperous years. Now we have at least three good and serviceable boats in place of the vessels that have been showing such losses for many years. When presenting the Budget, I dealt with the loan indebtedness of the State, and on this occasion it will be sufficient to say that the net increase for the year was only £2,492,813. The net increase per head was £2 9s. 9d. It has to be remembered that the Coolgardie Water Scheme Loan was paid off during the year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That did not alter the net amount.

The PREMIER: No. The flotations for the year amounted to £3,189,624 and the redemptions totalled £2,594,369. That included the big redemption item for the Coolgardie water scheme.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Out of sinking fund, of course.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We had an overdraft of £1,400,000 in London at the end of the year.

The PREMIER: Yes, we generally have a heavy overdraft in London.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is absorbed by our loan expenditure.

The PREMIER: Yes. Our overdraft today is about £700,000, and no limit has been placed upon us by our London bankers. We frequently overdraw to an amount of £2,000,000. The loan raised in London last week by the Commonwealth Government is available for distribution amongst the States. It was raised for the States, £7,000,000 in all, and portion of it was available to us, but I decided not to take any of it because we could continue to carry on at a lower rate of interest under our bank overdraft. The loan is a 5 per cent. one and, until we have to go on the market, we can carry on with our bank overdraft bear-

ing a rate of interest of only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., so we are saving money by taking advantage of the bank overdraft rather than the loan money. During the year three meetings of the Loan Council have been held. The Loan Council was formed several years ago and has proved helpful especially to the smaller States. New South Wales for some years stood out of the Loan Council and of course hampered the operations because, while the Loan Council had decided upon  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. as the rate of interest for loans floated in Australia, the New South Wales Government went on the market for pretty large sums and offered  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. That had a serious effect on the endeavours of the Loan Council to get money at  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. Now we hope to be able to get the rate of interest back to what it was previously.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Acting together we should be able to get money at a reasonable rate.

The PREMIER: Yes; that is, if we are to get any money at all. If all the States go on the Australian market and offer the same rate of interest and there is no serious competition, we should be able to get it at the lower rate.

Mr. Sampson: Mr. Lang was working in with the boodlers.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. The Government of New South Wales were entitled to stand out. I am not sure that New South Wales was ever in the Loan Council, even in the days prior to Mr. Lang becoming Premier.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think we had a Loan Council then.

The PREMIER: Mr. Lang was Premier for only two years, but the Loan Council was in operation when the member for Northam was Premier.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: New South Wales was never a member of the Loan Council.

The PREMIER: Premiers of New South Wales, prior to Mr. Lang, decided not to join the Loan Council, and I think I am right in saying that that State never belonged to it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: New South Wales is such a big State in the Federation.

The PREMIER: Yes, and is a heavy borrower. Sometimes it borrows as much as if not more than all the other States put together. In some years I believe New South Wales has gone as high as £18,000,000. Of course the Government there are engaged in the construction of huge works such as

the North Shore bridge, which is a £6,000,000 job, and the construction of the underground railway scheme, which also necessitated heavy borrowing. At present the money market seems to be tightening considerably, and those people who ought to be in a position to offer an opinion believe that money will not be so freely available to the Australian States in the near future as it has been in recent years. Certainly there has been difficulty on more than one occasion in getting all the money required in London and recourse had to be made to New York, but in every case that was done only after consultation with our financial advisers in London as it was considered to be the best course in the circumstances. While it is easy for members to point out to the Government many necessary works that are not included in these Estimates, members should bear in mind that it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain money, and there is a general consensus of opinion that borrowing by Australia will have to be curtailed. I certainly think that we in this State are in a position to go on spending money wisely and prudently in opening up the State and providing the necessary public works and facilities for the development of the country. It is highly desirable that we should do our utmost to increase our wealth with production. If we do that, and granted that the money is soundly and wisely expended, I think we need have no fear of expending substantial sums of loan money.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is a matter of increasing the national income all the time.

The PREMIER: The State is awaiting the opportunity to expend money in many directions on development work, work that will increase settlement, increase production, provide avenues for the employment of our people, and enable us to increase our population. That is the task that lies ahead of us. To do it we shall need to have money, and although the expenditure of £4,000,000 a year seems much for our population—perhaps I should say £4,800,000, as stated in the Estimates, though we rarely reach that amount; for some years it has ranged round the £4,000,000 mark—I think it can be said that on the whole our borrowings have been utilised in directions that will add to the development of the country and will, in the near future, prove reproductive. Regarding loan expenditure, too, it should always be borne in mind—and a reference to

the Estimates will show it—that money is being provided for works and for public utilities that in other States are controlled by other bodies, and are not included in the loan expenditure of those States. Members will see that large sums are provided for water supply and sewerage for the metropolitan area. Such expenditure does not appear in the figures of most other State Governments, and the same thing applies to an extent to the expenditure on our harbour. The fact that in Western Australia the State Government are doing so much work that in other States is done by boards, trusts and other bodies makes our loan expenditure look heavy in comparison with the loan expenditure of other States.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is correct.

The PREMIER: When people compare Western Australia's indebtedness per head of population with that of other States, it is well to bear that important fact in mind.

Mr. Mann: That applies mainly to Victoria.

The PREMIER: It applies also to New South Wales and Queensland. Tramways, for instance, in Victoria, South Australia, and Queensland are not included in Government activities. The same applies to other public utilities. Having regard to the prospects I think the State is justified in embarking upon the expenditure set out in the Loan Estimates.

Progress reported.

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

## MOTION—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS, REDISTRIBUTION.

Debate resumed from the 12th October on the following motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell:—

That it is resolved by the Legislative Assembly that a proclamation should be issued for the redivision of the State into electoral districts under the provisions of the Electoral Districts Act, 1923.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [7.32]: I support the motion of the Leader of the Opposition. To-day we have 12 metropolitan seats, 13 goldfields seats including Yilgarn, 21 agricultural and outport seats, and four North-West seats, making a total of 50 seats. In the metropolitan area there are 13,229 electors, giving under the new Electoral Act, under which a redistri-

bution is desired, a quota of 6,882 electors; so that it appears that if a redistribution were carried into effect, the metropolitan area would have 15 members instead of 12. To my way of thinking that is the one weak spot in the Act. The metropolitan area is so well looked after, most of the country members being compelled to have their homes here during the session, that I hesitate about increasing the representation of the metropolitan area by three. We do not want in this State representation on a population basis alone.

The Premier: Do you wish to suggest that you are a metropolitan representative?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Certainly not: but the requirements of the metropolis are always directly under the notice of members living there. I am of opinion that in a redistribution it is far better to have due regard to the importance of country interests and country electorates, and also to give special consideration to the distance of electorates from the seat of government. I am glad, too, that that principle is included in the Electoral Districts Act, and will be put into operation if this motion is carried. In the agricultural areas and the outports there are 86,397 electors, and the quota would be 3,441, giving the agricultural districts and outports a representation of 25 members in this Chamber. That, I am sure, is little enough representation to give to the primary producers, who produce about 95 per cent. of this State's export wealth. The central goldfields districts have 8,431 electors, and the quota for the Golden Mile and the closely settled districts of Kalgoorlie and Boulder would be 4,441, those areas thus returning three members to this House. The outer goldfields have 7,897 electors, and under the Act would be entitled to three seats of 2,732 electors each. It is further provided that the North-West should retain its present four seats. In view of the distance of the North-West from the seat of government every member of the House will, I feel sure, agree that that is a very proper provision. If we pass the motion—and I hope the Government will decide to accept it, and thus do justice to the people of the State by assuring to them a fair and equitable redistribution of seats—then automatically an independent Commission consisting of a judge of the Supreme Court as chairman, and of the Surveyor General and the Chief Electoral Officer, will set to work to divide the State into 50 new electorates

on the basis I have described. I cannot imagine anything fairer than the method of redistribution proposed by the Act to correct the existing scandalous anomalies.

Mr. Marshall: It did not please you too well when the previous Government did it.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I did my best, sitting here night after night to vote in order to get that equitable and proper redistribution through. I am glad to be able to say I voted for it on every occasion when I had the opportunity. I have always approved of the principle, subscribed to by every political party in this House, that once an equitable basis of distribution has been arrived at, the work of carrying the redistribution into effect shall be done, not by politicians or any interested people but by an impartial tribunal such as that established under the provisions of the Act, comprising a judge of the Supreme Court, the Chief Electoral Officer and the Surveyor General.

Mr. Marshall: How was it the Bill of 1923 was not carried?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is a matter of ancient history, and I do not know that any good purpose would be served by my holding a post mortem on the Bill; but I certainly do not absolve the Government of that day from blame in the matter.

Mr. Marshall: You supported the party that defeated the particular measure you are now asking for.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No. I supported the Government of the day in their proposal, and it was defeated in circumstances with which the hon. member is fully acquainted, and which to my mind reflect no credit on those members of what was then the Government side of the House, who were responsible for the defeat of the measure.

Mr. Panton: Some of them are looking very sorry.

Mr. Marshall: The Government of the day had 32 members as against an Opposition of 18. Why did not the Government carry their Bill?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I venture to express the opinion that the Government of that day in not carrying the Bill are responsible for the Labour Party having attained the Treasury Bench and remained there ever since.

Mr. Marshall: Do not worry about that!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am of opinion that it is going to be extremely difficult to get any redistribution whatever through this House while that party are in power and

while the present distribution of electorates favours them politically to the extent that it does. At all events, I observed with regret that during the whole of last session no effort whatever was made by the Government to bring in a fair and equitable redistribution of seats, as I should think would be the desire of any democratic Government when observing the scandalous anomalies obtaining under the present arrangement.

The Minister for Mines: There were a few new anomalies under the previous Act as well.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At any rate, under the new Act most of the anomalies will be wiped out and we shall get a very much better distribution of seats, and also a much fairer and more democratic Government, than with the existing boundaries.

Mr. Kenneally: Did the hon. member vote to knock out the anomalies in the franchise of another place?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That question was certainly a very live one in my constituency during the general election, and the people there entirely endorsed my attitude in the matter, resisting to the utmost of their power, under a democratic franchise, any attempt in the direction of abolishing another place.

Mr. Kenneally: Making the other House democratic also.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: At all events, I wish to draw attention to some anomalies existing to-day. We have the Fremantle electorate, right in the heart of the metropolitan area, with only 3,791 electors; the Leederville electorate with 11,901 electors, and the Canning electorate with 17,347. When we look a little further afield, we find that example, known to everyone in the Chamber and throughout the State, of the Menzies electorate with only 265 electors. Then there is the Mount Margaret electorate with 498.

The Minister for Mines: And 51 men started work there yesterday.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is a good thing, and no one would be more pleased than members on these benches if the mining industry revived to such an extent that the population of the goldfields would be as great as it was in the days when the present electoral boundaries were arranged, and if the mining industry again employed as great a number in proportion to the population of this State as it did in the roaring days of the nineties. Unfortunately,

however, in spite of the desire of successive Governments to foster our mining industry, that industry is declining and the population of our once great goldfields districts going down steadily. To-day we find the Cue electorate with 555 electors, the Coolgardie electorate with 949, the Hannans electorate with 659, the Mount Leonora electorate with 685, and the Mount Magnet electorate with 995. So that those seven goldfields electorates between them have a total electoral population of 4,596, against which I should place the fact that my own electorate of Williams-Narrogin has 4,817 electors, or 221 more than those seven goldfields electorates put together. Added to which, I would point out that people engaged in primary production in my electorate produce much more per head of population than do the combined residents of those seven goldfields electorates. Right through the agricultural electorates we find much the same quota. In Avon there are 5,235 electors, in Katanning 4,536 electors, in Swan 5,474 electors, and in Nelson 5,634 electors. We claim that that is absolutely inequitable and unjust in any country professing to be governed under a democratic system. It is inequitable and unjust that the agricultural districts should be denied fair representation as compared with the outlying goldfields and pastoral areas. If the Government desire to be regarded as democratic, it is their bounden duty to accept the motion, or to introduce, if it can be done, an equally or a more equitable redistribution of seats.

The Premier: A fairly democratic proposal that was before the House quite recently did not receive much consideration from members on your side of the House.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That Bill was not democratic in its application and did not meet with our approval. The Country Party has always stood for a fair and equitable redistribution of seats with due regard to the importance of country interests. That is recognised to some extent in the provisions of the Electoral Districts Act under which the motion has been submitted. We say that people who produce 95 per cent. of this State's exportable wealth are entitled to proper and adequate representation in this House of Parliament.

Mr. Marshall: They could do that by helping on their present parliamentary representatives.

Hon. E. B. JOHNSTON: The motion before the House is a serious one, and should be accepted by the Assembly. I hope that the five extra seats that, if the motion be carried, will be provided for, three going to the metropolitan area and two to the agricultural districts, will be approved by hon. members. I hope the Government will accept the motion, or that at least they will not make it a party question and leave those of their supporters who, I feel sure, desire to support it, to vote for the motion.

Mr. Marshall: Although you have left the Labour Party, you know very well that they do not do those things.

Hon. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not, and there is no plank in the party's platform that would countenance the Menzies electorate continuing to return a member to represent 265 electors.

The Premier: Are you aware that there was an increase there of 48 last week?

Mr. Mann: We have already been informed about that!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I do not think that that position will be tolerated much longer.

The Minister for Mines: Both the smallest and largest electorates are represented by Government members and both seem to be satisfied.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: To-day some of the electorates are a disgrace to Parliament and to Western Australia.

Mr. Withers: Don't forget this is one of your legacies.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I hope the motion will be accepted, especially when we remember that by our acceptance of it we will take the question of redistribution of seats out of the realm of party politics altogether and transfer it to an independent tribunal in which every member of this House has confidence. That tribunal consists of the Chief Justice, the Surveyor General and the Chief Electoral Officer. Every member of the House has complete confidence in those gentlemen, even admitting that the result of their labours will have to come before Parliament for ratification before the existing law can be altered. Thus the Government should agree to the motion as a small step towards democratic representation on an equitable basis. That would enable the independent tribunal to deal with the work during recess and then we should see the result of their labours as soon as Parliament met

again. In supporting the motion I have merely to add that the views I have expressed are those of the Country Party with which I have the honour to be associated.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [7.53]: I support the motion. When the legislation was introduced three or four years ago to enable a redistribution of seats to take place, I could not see my way clear to support all its provisions. I agree that even under the motion now before us, there will be anomalies, and there were anomalies in the Bill drafted by the Electoral Commissioners.

The Premier: So much so, that neither you nor I could support it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Many electors in my district were opposed to the Bill and I had to present a petition from the people in my district opposing it in its then form. I do not think any member will question my assertion that the mistake that occurred then was that the Bill did not make any provision for Parliament to refer it back to the Commission for amendment. While anomalies did exist under that Bill, they were nothing to be compared with those that exist at present. I can remember the present Premier many years ago, together with myself and other supporters, and possibly the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) as well, protesting against the present electoral boundaries. We heard the Premier say on that occasion that if he ever came into power again, one of his first duties would be to secure a redistribution of seats.

The Premier: An attempt was made.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But it was a half-hearted attempt and when a rebuff was received from another place, the Government of the day decided that discretion was the better part of valour and let the matter go by the board. If the Premier will give the House an assurance that he intends to move for the introduction of a Redistribution of Seats Bill, many of us will be prepared to abide by his assurance. As it is, we know that the present representation is not fair. As soon as members speak about the electoral boundaries we immediately hear members on the Government side of the House saying, "What about another place?" For my part I think the Council has a good case because anomalies exist in connection with the Council just as much as they do with the Assembly. We want a more comprehensive system by which the electoral boundaries of both Houses of Parliament can be altered.



Mr. Withers: To whom will you entrust that task?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: To the same Commission as did the other job.

Mr. Withers: And you turned down their work.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I think that either House should have the right to send the Bill back to the Commission for amendment, if we can show that anomalies exist. Had it been possible to do that on the last occasion, I am sure that by now we would have had a redistribution of seats on a more equitable basis in respect of both Houses of Parliament. In view of the anomalies that existed in the Murchison and Nelson electorates, I am sure no member could support such proposals. The Commission, on account of the expansion taking place in the group settlement areas, fixed a new seat called the Plantagenet electorate, but it could not possibly grow.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: It was a pocket borough.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is so. Mr. Camm, who was one of the members of the Electoral Commission, admitted that a mistake had been able and that they had overlooked that position. He said that after he had read the reports of the debate in Parliament. If we can carry the motion before the House and refer the matter to the Electoral Commission, I am sure that as the result of the experience gained from the criticism levelled at the members of that body, we will get an acceptable redistribution. As it is the constituency represented by the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) extends almost to Bridgetown. The Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Cunningham) intends to open a show in one of the group areas shortly, and he will be within a few miles of Bridgetown in the centre of the Nelson electorate. The Collie electorate comes down to a bottleneck passing through Kirup, thence it runs down through the hills and makes a bee line towards Augusta. It is not fair to the member for Collie to ask him to attempt to represent a constituency so widely separated as that. The member for Canning (Mr. Clydesdale) has 17,000 electors, but I think it is not so difficult for him to represent them as it is for the member for Collie to look after the interests of his constituents. In my electorate there are 5,600 electors, but I know that there are a good few who are not on the roll. Some of them will not help to get on

the rolls. We do not seem to be able to catch some of those who are responsible. I have gone to some people and asked them to sign their electoral claim cards and they have refused saying that if they signed the card, they would have the taxation officials after them in no time. A redistribution of electoral boundaries is urgently required for the Nelson electorate just as it is throughout Western Australia. The Premier must know that the existing distribution is unfair and does not tend towards good government under such conditions.

The Premier: I am rather impressed by the fact that it tends towards splendid government.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Possibly some people think so, but we must give the people an equal opportunity to speak.

The Premier: They would have had a different distribution altogether, but for the vote you gave last year.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Even my vote would not have made the difference, because the Bill was doomed to defeat in any case.

The Premier: But several other members followed you in that vote.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not want the Premier to flatter me.

The Premier: The Bill was lost through your action.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: However, I think half a loaf is better than none. If we carry this motion to-night we shall have to send the scheme back to the Commission on practically the same lines as we sent it before. Still, I believe that they, as sensible men, have realised the mistake that was made on that previous occasion. If the Premier will allow the motion to be carried—I do not know whether he is going to make of it a party question.

The Premier: It is entirely an open question.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am confident that from the debate the Commission would draw up a decent scheme of electoral boundaries that would be agreeable to everybody. The figures have been gone over time and again, but I think a scheme could be drawn up on an equitable basis that would ensure its giving satisfaction to all. At present nobody is satisfied. Even the Premier knows that the country is crying out for a redistribution of seats. The member for Menzies and the member for Mt. Margaret, every time they rise in this Chamber, blush when they remem-

ber how few people they represent. Instead of having 300 or 400 electors, they would much prefer to be representing each a few thousand.

Mr. Clydesdale: What about your blushes?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have no need to blush on the point. If the fate of the earlier Bill had depended on my vote, I would have recorded it with the then Opposition. However, I do desire that the matter should be discussed from both sides of the House. I want to hear the views of members opposite, so that we may have a fair distribution. The country requires it, and I think the House wishes it.

**MR. THOMSON** (Katanning) [84]: One is rather surprised at the conspiracy of silence on the Government side of the House.

The Premier: It could never embrace you.

Mr. THOMSON: Because I am always ready to face my responsibilities. I do not dodge them by joining in a conspiracy of silence. Apparently the Government are not prepared to discuss a difficult position, and so they prefer to sit silent and have the motion defeated on the voices. I think all fair minded men, and I hope the members of the Government are fair minded men, must admit that a redistribution of seats is long overdue.

The Premier: Lots of things are long overdue.

Mr. THOMSON: Of course, and I know that at present probably it suits the Premier and his supporters to regard the existing position as quite satisfactory. But the figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition, and again to-night by the member for Williams-Narrogin, must convince even the Premier that there is room for a redistribution of seats.

The Premier: I have always admitted that.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes at the proper time, but not in the proper place. This is the proper time and the proper place in which to decide upon a redistribution of seats.

The Premier: But this is not the proper method.

Mr. THOMSON: Seeing that the Premier has been in office for four years—

The Premier: No, three and a half.

Mr. THOMSON: Well, I won't split straws. Seeing that the Premier has been in office for four sessions, it is time something was done. These democrats, who be-

lieve in equitable representation, very much prefer to leave things as they are when the representation suits them. A grievous mistake was made when the Electoral Districts Bill was passed. It was a mistake in this respect, that the finding of that Commission should have been absolutely final. Judging by the discussions when the findings of the Commission were submitted to the House, apparently we are not as a whole competent to judge when the issue is clouded by our personal interests. If we have any confidence in the men whom we appointed under the Electoral Districts Act to arrange for a redistribution of seats, we should accept their findings as final. I commend that to the earnest consideration of the Government. The present position is entirely unsatisfactory. Even the member for Menzies will admit that he would prefer to be representing a district with a very much greater number of electors than he has at present.

Mr. Panton: It is coming fast.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope it will. No one regrets more than I the shifting of the population from the goldfields that has rendered a change necessary.

Mr. Panton: They are shifting back now.

Mr. THOMSON: If the motion is carried, the Commissioners will take due notice of the number of electors in the Menzies electorate and all other electorates. I do not propose to quote again all the various figures that have been quoted, for I think we are all tired of them. I regret that the previous Government did not see to it that the findings of the Commission were put into effect. When we appoint a commission and give them definite instructions, we should abide by their findings. During the last election the Premier visited my district, though certainly not in my interests. He put it to the people that he was desirous of having a mandate from Katanning to abolish another place.

The Premier: No, I used no words to that effect at all.

Mr. THOMSON: All I can say is the Government candidate was pledged to that, and certainly he was asking for a mandate. We know that the policy of the Premier and his party is the ultimate abolition of another place. But he did not in my electorate receive a mandate to even amend another place. I spoke very strongly—

The Premier: You always do.

Mr. THOMSON: I pointed out that a redistribution of seats was long overdue, and since I received an overwhelming ma-

jority I can speak of the mandate I got in my own electorate. When it comes to a mandate, it is entirely a matter of what is best and fair and equitable, and I think the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition should receive the consideration of the Government, and particularly of the House. I regret to say it seems there is a conspiracy of silence. The attitude of members opposite is, "It is of no importance. Why worry? Let it go. Let them talk themselves out, and then we will negative it on the voices." That is the only conclusion one can come to, because so far the whole of the debate has been on this side of the House. On the Government benches not a voice has been raised, except by way of interjection. No doubt they are all ready to vote. I think the Bill we enacted is fair and equitable. We as a party think the country districts should have a greater quota than the metropolitan electorates. For, after all, it is the country districts that are creating the wealth and providing work for those living in the metropolitan area. We find how quickly the State becomes disorganised, and how quickly the railway traffic is disorganised when certain men refuse to perform the duties they have been carrying out for some time, namely, the unloading of the wheat.

Mr. Sleeman: How will a redistribution of seats affect that?

Mr. Withers: I suppose it will bring the farmers into town.

Mr. THOMSON: We are living in a democratic age, and apparently the democracy that members on the other side stand for is to do as you like when you think you have the power. But I want to bring home to members sitting over there that if the present condition is persisted in, it will mean a very serious loss to the people of the metropolitan area. I am merely giving that as an illustration to point out that it is the inland towns that are creating the wealth. We know that at one period the goldfields produced a great amount of wealth, and that when the fields were in that happy position members representing goldfields constituencies could have no stone cast at them on the score of the number of their electors.

The Minister for Agriculture: You know that half the goldfields were for long denied representation.

Mr. THOMSON: I can only deal with the representation as it has existed since I

have been in the House. The present boundaries were fixed in 1911. One of the most amazing things is that there are on the Government side to-day members who fought that amendment of the boundaries and accused the then Government of gerrymandering. They held up the House night after night. Yet those people who strongly objected to the fixing of the present boundaries calmly sit down now and say, "It suits us. Everything in the garden is lovely, and we do not desire any change at all."

Mr. E. B. Johnston: To-day the goldfields are ably over-represented.

Mr. THOMSON: I am sorry the Government are not giving this matter consideration. We feel we are only doing our duty to the State in drawing attention to the present anomalous position. I do not think any hon. member opposite, including the Premier, will deny that the existing position is entirely unsatisfactory. The sooner we appoint a Commission and give it power to alter the present boundaries the better. Once that Commission has amended the boundaries the matter should not be discussed again by the House, but the decision should be regarded as binding on all of us, irrespective of how much we may feel, and we should then go out and face the electors on the new boundaries. I hope the motion will be carried.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [8.16]: I wish to deal with only one argument. It has been suggested during the debate that because another place does not include democratic suffrage, therefore the existing seats here are in order. It is also suggested that because the Bill that was brought forward recently to amend the franchise in the other Chamber was not carried the existing position should remain here. In order to amend the seats in this Chamber, we are merely restoring the Constitution, whereas in the other Chamber, by altering the franchise to be more democratic as it is called, we are seeking to amend the Constitution, which is quite a different thing. Our Constitution throughout has provided for two Chambers, one of which represents the household vote, roughly speaking, and the other the democratic vote.

Mr. Panton: Very rough.

Mr. NORTH: We know it, and those who come to our shores know it, and hitherto have supported it. It is now said that because we have boundaries which are not

equitable—it is true they should be altered, that is to say that the Constitution should be restored—we should wait a little while until we can amend the Constitution in another direction. I am living in a district where we have a very large boundary for the Metropolitan-Suburban Province. There is as much to be said in favour of amending the boundaries as they affect the Legislative Council as there is in favour of amending the boundaries here. But we can distinguish the question of boundaries as between the representation of the people in one Chamber and the household suffrage in another Chamber, from the question whether in both Chambers the existing boundaries are not accurate. Members are aware that we have in the Metropolitan-Suburban Province between 24,000 and 25,000 persons on the roll, whereas I think the West Province has perhaps only two or three thousand persons. Whether the Government are going to support this motion or not, I suggest to them that both Chambers are sadly in need of new boundaries. Whether the question of amending the Constitution in the manner indicated is a good suggestion or not need not be dwelt with at this time.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [8.20]: This motion is similar to the one discussed in the House last year. For myself, I am not able to give it any more support than I did last year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If there is only one against it, it does not matter.

The PREMIER: Members on this side of the House are free to vote in any manner even to the extent that I would be left the sole opponent of the motion. As to whether their judgment should lie in that direction or not is another matter.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am afraid you know what they think.

The PREMIER: I do believe I know what they think. I have a very fair idea that they would not support a redistribution of seats on such an inequitable basis as is laid down in the Electoral Districts Act. I anticipate, therefore, that not many of them will support this motion.

Mr. Thomson: Will you indicate what you think is fair?

The PREMIER: I will indicate what I think is fair when I am dealing with the subject. If the hon. member cares to look it up he will find

in years gone by what I have considered fair in regard to this matter. In the first place, is it to be expected that in the first session of a new Parliament we should set about a redistribution of seats? If so, it is anticipated that when the rearrangement of boundaries is completed, in pursuance of the carrying of this motion, we should dissolve Parliament.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No fear.

The PREMIER: I do not think so either. What purpose is to be served by having a re-arrangement of the boundaries two years or more before the general election takes place?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If this is carried we shall not get the Bill through next year.

The PREMIER: We should get it next session, which would probably be two years prior to the general election.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No fear.

The PREMIER: Of course it would be so. Then we should have the impossible condition of members for the following 18 months or two years representing electors they had no intention of representing, and knowing perfectly well they would not be representing in the next Parliament.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is always so.

The PREMIER: It is not always so, but it creates no difficulty because it has always been the practice to have the alteration made in the last session of Parliament, and therefore members go to the country immediately.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could not do that.

The PREMIER: It is always done that way. What would be the position of members for two years in this House if they continued to represent electors whom they would not be representing in the next Parliament? They would be representing one section of electors for the remainder of this Parliament, and would have their eye upon and be attending to a body of electors in the constituency of a neighbouring member, knowing they would be in that district when the re-arrangement took place.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That might be rather a good thing.

The PREMIER: We can imagine the degree of neglect that might take place on the one hand through a member no longer being concerned with portion of one electorate, but displaying a great deal of interest in an electorate that was represented for the time being by another member. That is what

would result from a redistribution of boundaries at present. It is because that anomalous and impossible position would arise, this Parliament, and every other Parliament in Australia, so far as I know, has always provided for a redistribution of seats in the last session of the Parliament.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why did you not have it in the last Parliament?

The PREMIER: I was just coming to that. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) may tell us why we did not have it in the last Parliament.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I could not do that.

The PREMIER: He found that everything was wrong with the present condition of things, but it is mainly wrong because of the attitude he adopted in the last Parliament. That is shown not only by his voice in this House and by the vote he gave, but by the manner in which he organised his electors in the Nelson district to prepare and present a petition to the House.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is not so.

The PREMIER: He exercised all the powers and all the privileges it is possible for a private member to exercise in the House, even to the presentation of a petition.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I rise to a point of order. I must take exception to the Premier's remarks. He said I organised my electors to draw up a petition. That is absolutely wrong.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member takes exception to that, I will withdraw the word "organised," and say there was a wonderful display of activity on the part of the electors that is usually associated with the activities of the member. The Leader of the Opposition wants to know why this was not done in the last session of Parliament. I have given one reason. Although the Leader of the Country Party seems to think that silence is unbecoming in members on the Government side of the House on the present occasion, I should have thought that silence on the part of the hon. member would have been most becoming with regard to this particular question.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That was not in the last Parliament.

The PREMIER: Whenever it was.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It was a long time ago.

The PREMIER: The boundaries would have been altered, and so the hon. member would have had the change desired. I am now asked why there has been no alteration. I am unable to understand why the hon.

member expects this Government and the party on this side of the House—

Mr. Stubbs: To commit suicide.

The PREMIER: Not at all. The Leader of the Opposition asks by motion that the Government should do something which he failed to accomplish himself. He was not able to do it.

Mr. Marshall: And he had 32 on his side.

The PREMIER: He had a larger majority than this Government has. He failed to do that which he now says this Government should do. It is somewhat inconsistent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I will support you although you opposed me.

The PREMIER: I have no such egotistical feelings as to believe that I can be successful where the hon. member failed. That is how it appeals to me.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They tell me your supporters will fail if they do not support me.

The PREMIER: I know that they should not support this motion for a re-arrangement under the Electoral Districts Act. So many of the supporters of the hon. member thought his redistribution was inequitable, and the Bill was lost.

Mr. Lindsay: Many who voted for it are not in Parliament now. They lost their seats.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. I will not mention anyone, but I was forced to name the member for Nelson because of the important part he took in the discussion. We are told this is a perfectly fair Act. Members of the Country Party say that it is an excellent one. The Leader of the Opposition has said the same.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You think so, too.

The PREMIER: To begin with we have, they say, a good Act which provides for a fair and equitable re-arrangement of the boundaries.

Mr. Thomson: By an independent Commission.

The PREMIER: I am taking the Act itself. Secondly, we have a Commission whose impartiality has never been questioned, an excellent body consisting of the Chief Justice, the Chief Electoral Officer and the Surveyor General. The members say it is a most excellent Act and a Commission of most impartial men. By this good Act and by this Commission the boundaries were drawn and presented to the House, but they failed to become law. Hon. members themselves

with the aid of a perfect Act, and the work of a most honourable and impartial Commission and with a large majority in the House, failed to give effect to the rearranged boundaries. The Act was of their creation, and the Commission was the emanation of that Act, and yet they are now crying to the skies about the boundaries.

Mr. Latham: Every year the position gets worse.

The PREMIER: Yes, a few changed over here and a few changed over there, and every year it gets worse. It was bad from the hon. member's point of view three or four years ago; so now immediately after an election he wants us to rush in and make a change.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, you are not in the habit of rushing in.

The PREMIER: I do not feel equal to the task of doing what hon. members opposite failed to do under favourable auspices. It is not a reasonable request; it is too much to ask. We have heard so much talk about democracy and our disregard for it.

Mr. Marshall: Don't look at the Leader of the Country Party.

The PREMIER: Members opposite complain about the undemocratic nature of the present boundaries and how unjust it is to have a large number of electors in Canning possessing the same representation as the fewer electors in, shall we say, Menzies. How undemocratic it is! Notwithstanding what the member for Claremont (Mr. North) may have said, or the views he entertained with regard to the question, it is apropos that I should draw attention to the fact that when the Government a few weeks ago sought to rectify a thousand times greater anomalies, so far as democratic government in this country is concerned, he and other members opposite did support that principle from their side of the House. Where is the comparison between the inequalities of citizenship, that is to say of representation in Parliament, in respect to the making of the laws of this country, a comparison between the difference in the boundaries of this House for the election of members to which every citizen has a vote, and the undemocratic and unjust fact that three-fourths of our citizens have no vote at all for the election of members to another place and therefore have no say in the making of the laws they have to obey? That

created no feeling of unrest; it did not perturb the minds of members opposite at all. It is nevertheless a fact that so many of our citizens have not full citizen rights in this country.

Mr. Sampson: We want to clean up this Chamber first.

The PREMIER: This Chamber is a perfect palace of cleanliness so far as democratic representation is concerned as compared with the representation in another place.

Mr. Thomson: Do you accord everyone the rights of citizenship?

The PREMIER: I do not know what the hon. member means.

Mr. Thomson: You know very well.

The PREMIER: The very beginning, the foundation stone of citizenship and the fundamental right of every man and woman in this country is to have a say in the making of the laws of the country.

Mr. Thomson: Will you give them the right to work.

The PREMIER: Of course.

Mr. Thomson: Subject to your conditions.

The PREMIER: Subject to my conditions!

Mr. Thomson: You will not allow them to live.

The PREMIER: All that this new apostle of democratic principles is concerned about is that a few men shall get work, but he talked here until he could not talk any longer with regard to votes for the Council. There has never been an instance to my knowledge since he has been a member of this House where fundamental questions of principle or democratic rights have been involved, that he has not been on the Tory side. He is the very embodiment of the political troglodyte that lived in the dark ages.

Mr. Thomson: I believe in the right to live.

The PREMIER: So I say that in the same session and only a few weeks after the debate on the constitution of another place when the hon. member decided to shut out 140,000 of our people from the right to make the laws of the country, we get this demand for something that they had the opportunity to do and failed to do.

Mr. Thomson: Those figures are not correct.

The PREMIER: They are correct.

Mr. Thomson: The rolls will show it.

The PREMIER: I recollect that the Leader of the Country Party prophesied

that he would come back with a tremendous increase in the number of his party.

Mr. Thomson: We did increase it.

The PREMIER: Yes, but the hon. member said there would be a very large increase.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The only mistake in that prophecy was that it was made three years too soon.

The PREMIER: The hon. member talked about things long overdue. The principal thing that is long overdue in the mind of the Leader of the Country Party is the time that it is taking him to reach these benches.

Mr. Marshall: That is all that is worrying him.

The PREMIER: And he would change the boundaries after every election if he thought that by doing so it would bring him nearer to the goal of his ambition.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Carry this motion and we will soon see.

The PREMIER: I do not envy hon. members opposite. I really think the country people ought to have greater representation in this House and some day when they see things in a different light they will have that greater representation. The Electoral Districts Act cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered fair. How can any redistribution of boundaries which would give the same representation in numbers, say, to the Swan electorate, as it would give to the goldfields central electorates 300 or 400 miles away, or distant agricultural centres, be considered fair? As I have pointed out, the Swan electorate is right round the city of Perth and can be reached in an hour or two, and that has the same representation under the Act as a goldfields seat 400 miles away or an agricultural seat 300 miles away, and covering a much larger area. If proximity to the seat of Government is to be a factor in redistribution, and it is admitted that it is, why is it that the one alongside the seat of government has the same representation as a district hundreds of miles away? Another factor is means of communication. Surely no one will compare the means of communication of some districts within an hour or two's run of the city of Perth with the outlying mining and agricultural centres hundreds of miles away? And so it goes on. The Northam electorate which can be reached in a couple of hours will have the same quota under the Electoral Districts Act as will the districts of Kalgoorlie and Boulder nearly 300 miles beyond.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And 40 per cent. more people.

The PREMIER: So it goes on. Why were the mining fields divided into two?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: To give the outer mining people an advantage.

The PREMIER: No, to give the central people a disadvantage.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

The PREMIER: Yes. The central mining area was created in which the quota was much larger than that of the outer mining field and so in the 1910-11 redistribution it became for the first time a central mining area, the sole object being to give it a larger quota than would be the case if the whole was confined to one area.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Just put it the other way.

The PREMIER: Not at all. I would be quite content to have one mining district. If it were one mining district we should have ten seats and not seven.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: How do you make that out?

The PREMIER: There is no justification whatever for going 400 miles away from the seat of government—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You can get to it in a night.

The PREMIER: You can get to some of the electorates alongside the city of Perth in less than an hour. I suppose the hon. member would say there is no difference between a day and an hour. Why, you could motor all round the Swan electorate in less than half a day.

Mr. Sampson: Well, then, increase the size of the Swan electorate.

The PREMIER: It seems to be necessary for me to make a rapid flight from the Swan to the goldfields to illustrate the point and make it clear for the hon. member. I had better do some aeroplaning in this connection. What I want to know is why were the goldfields divided into two areas. No other part of the State was similarly treated. The agricultural districts were not divided into two, a centre and an outer. Why were not Northam and York and Swan and those close to the city made one central agricultural area, and given a higher quota than the outlying agricultural districts? Why was that not done? No, because it would have had the higher quota for the nearer and more central agricultural areas and would have given those agricultural areas fewer seats. That is the reason the mining areas

were divided into two because that action resulted in the taking away of seats.

Mr. Thomson: The central area was regarded as the metropolitan area of the goldfields.

The PREMIER: Four hundred miles away and it is the metropolitan area of the goldfields!

Mr. Thomson: At one time it had a very large population.

The PREMIER: What has that to do with it?

Mr. Sampson: It had all the facilities of a big centre.

The PREMIER: Even though the people should be gathered in comparatively large numbers in a comparatively small area, it does not decrease their disabilities of approaching the seat of government when they are 400 miles away.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you remember that your Government introduced a Redistribution of Seats Bill in 1913?

The PREMIER: Yes, I do.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You would have had four members under that measure.

The PREMIER: That shows the impartial attitude with which my party approached the question. That was an equitable rearrangement of boundaries, although it might have resulted in giving us fewer seats than we would have had under this proposal.

Mr. Latham: What is your objection now?

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member think I am approaching this question from the standpoint of the number of seats we would get? The 1913 measure was a more equitable one than that introduced by the member for Northam when he was Premier, although under it we would have had four seats fewer on the goldfields.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You would not have had so many.

The PREMIER: That would not matter.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: One fault of my Bill was the number of seats and now you admit you would have got better representation under my Bill than under the measure of 1913.

The Minister for Mines: What about the little pocket borough down south?

Mr. Thomson: What was that?

The Minister for Mines: Plantagenet. There are not 2,000 people in the whole area to-day, giving the prison farm in, and that was proposed five years ago.

The PREMIER: The discrepancies that exist under the Electoral Districts Act would be too great to justify us in making a redistribution under it. No one will deny that a rearrangement of boundaries is necessary. I am not contending for a moment that a rearrangement is not necessary. I have agreed with that ever since the passing of the Act of 1911. The very fact that I was a member of the Government who, in 1913, introduced a Bill to amend the boundaries, showed that we disapproved of the boundaries as they were then and we equally disapprove of the boundaries as they are to-day.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Very well, that is getting somewhere. Where will you go now?

The PREMIER: We are going on all right.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But what is the policy?

The PREMIER: There is no argument about the present boundaries, but I do say that when Parliament sets itself out to make a rearrangement of the boundaries to provide for a redistribution of seats, it is of no use taking up time merely to rectify to a very small extent the inequalities that exist. When we undertake to rectify the existing inequalities we should do it on something like reasonable and equitable lines, and I venture to say that something in that way will be done during the life of this Parliament. At least an attempt will be made.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That can be made an absolute certainty or a failure.

The PREMIER: The hon. member says we should adopt something that is most inequitable rather than do nothing at all.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have had years to alter it if you do not agree with it.

The PREMIER: We shall make an attempt. The hon. member, when he was Premier, made an attempt and failed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope you will suffer all the pangs of hell if you don't.

The PREMIER: What!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope you will suffer all the curses that can be heaped on you if you don't.

The PREMIER: An attempt will be made, but it will be on lines that commend themselves to the judgment of the Government as being fair and equitable.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I see.

The PREMIER: I think the Government are just as capable of taking a stand for what is right as is any other section of



the community. We are not going to say that the House must take the existing Act or must take the views of other people. I am not going to do that. I say, moreover, that however annoyed members may be about the present boundaries, they are perfection itself in comparison with our Constitution.

Mr. Thomson: That is a pretty tall order!

The PREMIER: It is true. I do not wish to be offensive, but one could say that to be annoyed or to make pretence of being annoyed about the present boundaries, and at the same time to resist to the uttermost any extension of the franchise for another place, savours somewhat of hypocrisy. To talk about our boundaries and be quite content that three-fourths of the people living in the country year after year should have no vote at all for representation in another place—

Mr. Thomson: Three-fourths are not without the franchise.

The PREMIER: The official figures, taking the total enrolment for the Legislative Council and the total enrolment for this House, stand in the proportion of one to three.

Mr. Latham: A large number of people qualified to vote for another place will not enrol.

The PREMIER: We can always fall back on the statement that a large number of people qualified to be enrolled for the Council have neglected to enrol.

Mr. Latham: It is perfectly true.

The PREMIER: The same thing could apply to the Assembly.

Mr. Latham: No.

The Minister for Mines: It is also true there are several people enrolled for the Council eight times and one person is enrolled 10 times.

The PREMIER: There are always a mysterious number of people who, according to some members, can be enrolled for the Council, and are not. The figures for some of the electorates have been given—Forrest, for instance—and surely we need not be unduly alarmed at the state of affairs for this House while members sit back quite unconcerned about the franchise for another place.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And with the franchise for another place the Council can dictate to the representation in this House.

The PREMIER: As it has been doing for weeks past, and can continue to do. The Council elected by one-fourth of the people have the final say as to how the other three-fourths of the people shall be taxed and what laws shall be made affecting their welfare and their liberty. They have to submit to those laws without having a voice in the making of them. That is what the member for York stands for.

The Minister for Mines: And then he cries out about democracy.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What awful things are done in the name of democracy!

The PREMIER: The member for York and his leader talk about the wealth produced in the country districts, and argue from it that they should have greater representation. That is an extraordinary basis for representation in Parliament, the wealth the people produce!

Mr. Thomson: I said the people of the country were carrying the metropolitan area on their backs.

The PREMIER: That is a good old cry.

Mr. Thomson: And a true one.

The PREMIER: Apparently the basis of representation should be the wealth that sections of people produce.

Mr. Thomson: I said they were entitled to more representation.

The PREMIER: Because of the wealth they produce.

Mr. Thomson: No.

The PREMIER: Then what was it?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Because of the value of the work they do.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said the people of the country produced 95 per cent. of the wealth and he goes on to argue that, because of the work they do and the wealth they create as primary producers, they should have greater representation in this House. That is an extraordinary basis on which to rest representation.

Mr. Thomson: You admitted that yourself a little while ago.

The PREMIER: I admitted no such thing.

The Minister for Mines: The Premier mentioned nothing about it.

The PREMIER: Where should we be if we gave representation on that basis? There are large numbers of people in every community who render essential services, but who do not produce wealth directly in the manner referred to by the Leader of

the Country Party. Because of that, should they be disfranchised altogether?

Mr. Thomson: No, and they are not disfranchised, either.

The PREMIER: There are numbers of people rendering services just as essential as are those engaged in producing wealth, and according to the hon. member they should have less representation in this House.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: If you based it on wealth you would abolish this Assembly and allow the Legislative Council to carry on. We should go out of existence.

The PREMIER: Except those who are producing wealth. The production of wealth of itself does not entitle the people concerned to greater representation as compared with fellow citizens who are not directly producing wealth.

Mr. Thomson: How many members on your side could be on the Council roll and are not?

The PREMIER: What has that to do with it?

The Minister for Mines: There are members on this side who have not a vote for the Council and cannot get one.

The PREMIER: Yet the Leader of the Country Party talks about producing wealth! I do not think the Leader of the Opposition dreams for a moment that his motion will be carried. When I brought in a Bill to provide that the householder should have a vote for the Legislative Council, it was opposed by every member on the Opposition side of the House. So far as the present Government are concerned there is not going to be any redistribution of seats under the existing Electoral Districts Act. Unless Parliament agrees to amend that Act—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then why don't you amend it?

The PREMIER: We shall do so, but we are not going to take up the time of Parliament in the first session when an amendment could have no effect for two years.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: When will you do it?

The PREMIER: In ample time for the next election.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We shall take a bit out of you in the meantime.

The PREMIER: There will be no redistribution under the existing Electoral Dis-

tricts Act, and unless Parliament agrees to a reasonable and equitable measure, there will be no redistribution. The hon. member cannot complain, because in a Parliament in which he had a substantial majority, a redistribution of seats under the existing Act did not take place.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You can command the necessary support. I could not.

The PREMIER: When I say there will be no redistribution under the existing Act, I am merely indicating that we shall be doing what members opposite did when they were on this side of the House and had a larger majority than we have. Can the Leader of the Opposition complain if we fail to re-arrange the boundaries under the existing Act, when he failed to do it, although he had a large majority?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I could not command members.

The PREMIER: Neither can I.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course you can.

The PREMIER: This matter has nothing to do with the Labour platform. Members are no more bound to it than were members who supported the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then they could go to the electors fully supporting the vote they cast in this House.

The PREMIER: Members on this side of the House are just as free to vote as they please as were the members who sat behind the member for Northam.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We shall see.

The PREMIER: I do not know what we shall see, but that is a fact. The existing Act is no better to-day than it was when it was passed four years ago. If boundaries could not be rearranged under it then, I see no reason why they should be rearranged under it now. I repeat that so far as the present Government are concerned, the boundaries will not be altered under the existing Electoral Districts Act.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [9.1]: It is gratifying to hear the expressions of repentance, as it were, of the Premier.

The Premier: Repentance?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier does say that it is unusual to bring down a redistribution of seats Bill in the first session of a Parliament. Now, there has been a previous Parliament, and no redistribution of seats Bill was brought down in the last

session of it. Therefore it seems to me reasonable to say that there is something in the nature of an expression of penitence for opportunity overlooked during the last Parliament.

The Minister for Mines: Nothing of the kind. We gave you the same opportunity during this Parliament, and you went against it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I did not go against it.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, you did.

Mr. SAMPSON: Is the Minister referring to the Legislative Council matter?

The Minister for Mines: Yes.

Mr. SAMPSON: Very well. Let us take the beam out of our own eye before we—

The Minister for Mines: No. I believe in picking a bit out of theirs first.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier says there will be a redistribution, but not under the present Act. The Swan electorate has been referred to, and with some degree of justification because of its proximity to Perth, but only from that standpoint. I dare say the House will have no objection to increasing the quota for Swan and other agricultural electorates adjacent to Perth. Community of interest is the basis which largely determines the class of constituency.

The Premier: It is only one of several considerations.

Mr. SAMPSON: Let us increase the numbers of the Swan electorate if necessary, so long as we can amend a position which, it is gratifying to know, the Premier himself and other members on this side of the House would like to see altered.

The Minister for Railways: Why this repentance from you now? Your Government introduced a Bill with those anomalies.

Mr. SAMPSON: No. The Premier and other speakers find fault with the Swan electorate.

The Premier: I do not.

Mr. SAMPSON: They find fault with it because it is handy to Perth.

The Premier: I find fault with the numbers given to goldfields seats in comparison with Swan.

Mr. SAMPSON: If that is the objection, perhaps the Premier will see that the matter is varied in the Bill to be put up. The whole position regarding boundaries of electorates has altered during the past few years. There is the alteration in the outlook of places like Mt. Magnet, Kanowna, Menzies and other goldfields centres. Kanowna, for instance, had a daily newspaper; and I be-

lieve that in Menzies two dailies were published.

Mr. Panton: They killed it!

Mr. SAMPSON: Possibly; but I will not say whether they did or not. However, speaking seriously, it must be acknowledged that the whole position has altered; and it is wrong from the standpoint of equitable representation—not to overwork the word "democracy"—that the position should continue. The Electoral Act Amendment Bill made some provision for variation in numbers; and had that measure been approved, it would have been possible to correct to some extent the anomalies which arise. The figures on the rolls for the last general election have been quoted so often that I do not propose to refer to them beyond—

The Premier: Beyond a brief reference to Menzies!

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, a brief reference to Menzies and Canning, and also a passing reference, naturally, to the claims of democracy, and to the obligation of sincerity which rests upon us all. The Swan electorate has at present an enrolment of 5,474. Personally, I would not like to see any one of those electors taken from the Swan electorate; but this is not an individual matter; it is a matter of principle. Are the electorates of the State to be divided so as to give equitable representation? I have been making a few calculations regarding the notorious Menzies

Mr. Panton: What, again?

Mr. SAMPSON: And also regarding the famous Canning electorate. In the 1927 election there were on the roll 140,506 effective votes.

Mr. Panton: Not in Menzies only!

Mr. SAMPSON: No; on the whole of the rolls. Menzies had 224 effective votes.

Mr. Panton: We have sent two more up since, you know!

Mr. SAMPSON: On the basis of Menzies with 224 effective votes returning a member to this Assembly, there should be in the House at the present moment 627 members.

Mr. Panton: Fancy all Pantons!

The Premier: Fancy all Sampsons!

Mr. SAMPSON: Canning with 11,364 effective votes would mean, if that basis were universal so far as this House is concerned, 12 members for Canning. The net enrolment at the last election was 210,949. On the basis of that net enrolment Menzies—

Mr. Panton: What, again!

Mr. SAMPSON:—with its net enrolment of 265 would mean a membership in this House of 800. It requires some power of imagination to see those 800 members trooping in. I do not know how they could be gotten into the Chamber.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: If they all had to be paid, I am afraid the deficit would be rather bad!

Mr. SAMPSON: If the cost is worked out at the present rate of allowance or payment to each member, not only would the surplus be wiped out, but another lot of Loan Estimates would have to be brought down.

Hon. H. Millington: I see you are putting it on one vote one value.

Mr. SAMPSON: For the purpose of argument.

Hon. H. Millington: I mean for the purpose of redistribution.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not at all. Canning with its net enrolment of 17,347 would mean a House of nine members. The whole thing is positively ridiculous.

The Premier: It is not as ridiculous as the fact of our Constitution which you support, giving us 150,000 citizens without any vote at all.

Mr. SAMPSON: A large percentage could be added to the Legislative Council rolls if all those qualified would put in applications. We might make it compulsory, applying the same law to the Legislative Council rolls as applies to the rolls for this Chamber.

Miss Holman: That is all we want.

Mr. SAMPSON: That would make a difference.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You would have to define who is qualified, first. It has never yet been properly defined.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is always a good deal of argument, some of it sincere, as to those who are qualified to be on the Legislative Council roll. I do not know why we should be so violently and permanently concerned about the Legislative Council.

The Premier: Oh!

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not like that loud laugh. I do not see why we should be so concerned about the Legislative Council. This is the popular House, as we have heard time and again. It is the House of adult suffrage. It is the House which makes the laws.

The Premier: It does not make the laws.

Mr. SAMPSON: It makes the Governments, and in respect of many pieces of legislation it is the only House that can inaugurate or initiate them. It is the House that deals with certain documents—for instance, the Estimates.

The Premier: As regards the Estimates, for instance, the other House has just as much say as we have. It can throw the whole lot out.

Mr. SAMPSON: I can remember the Premier in days gone by referring to the burlesque of bringing down Estimates.

The Premier: I? Never.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have heard the hon. gentleman reflect on the time taken up in the House in discussing Estimates.

The Premier: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: I had an idea that there had been some criticism on those lines. I am gratified to know that the Premier does intend during this Parliament to bring down a redistribution of seats Bill. Whatever it is, it will be welcomed. We shall welcome it whatever it is, because it surely must be an improvement on the present position.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Be careful now!

Mr. SAMPSON: I feel that we shall never have the position existing to-day brought down to us in a Bill, a position under which one member representing 17,000 electors has the right of a seat, and another representing 224 effective votes, votes cast for himself and opponents, has the same right.

The Premier: And 150,000 citizens have no right to a vote at all.

Mr. SAMPSON: Now we are going back.

The Premier: Well, it is very necessary.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not blame the Premier for referring to the Legislative Council. It is the one argument, I suppose, that can be used—that consideration should be given to the Legislative Council franchise before a redistribution of seats Bill is brought in here. But I cannot see the reasonableness of that argument, and I am pleased that we are to have a redistribution of seats Bill, which, of course, will be satisfactory to every citizen, no matter whether on the Government side or on the Opposition side. The present situation is wholly deplorable. It is entirely unfair. It is a satire on democracy.

The Premier: Not so much as our franchise and Constitution.

Mr. SAMPSON: From the aspect of sincerity it has no standing whatever. I could almost wish that this were the last session of the present Parliament, so that we might welcome the Bill which the Premier proposes to bring down. With what gratification the hon. gentleman will face the House to wipe out the unfairness and the anomalies of the present electoral boundaries! Then will be given to the Premier such an opportunity for eloquence and persuasion that even those of us who have heard him speak on many occasions will say, "On this occasion the Premier has surpassed all previous efforts." The hon. gentleman would have won new friends, always presuming, of course, that his Bill is on fair and equitable lines.

On motion by Hon. G. Taylor, debate adjourned.

### MOTION—CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

#### *Completion of Parliament House.*

Debate resumed from the 24th November on the following motion of the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy)—

That in the opinion of this House the completion of the front of Parliament buildings should be associated with the centenary celebrations.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [9.16]: I have very little to say with regard to this motion except that I endorse entirely the remarks of the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) when he submitted it to the House. There is no member of either House of Parliament nor is there any citizen, who has an acquaintance with the work of the House and the accommodation provided here, who will not agree at once that at any rate a start should be made towards the completion of the buildings. It has been urged in some quarters that there are works of greater importance waiting to be done. Bridges across rivers have been mentioned; roads have been indicated, and many other public works have been suggested.

Hon. G. Taylor: A leading article was devoted to the subject.

The PREMIER: Yes. Many undertakings have been mentioned in connection with which it was urged that the money could be better spent in the interests of the State. It appears to me, however, that if we are

to wait until we reach a time in the history of the State when no roads are required, no bridges will have to be built, or railways to be constructed before we can contemplate the completion of Parliament House—

Hon. G. Taylor: Neither you nor I will be here.

The PREMIER: No. This building will have crumbled to decay long before we shall be able to undertake the necessary work to complete it. Can anyone imagine that at any time in the history of the State there will be a period when no particular work will be pointed to as being more urgent than the completion of Parliament House? I am sure that no country in the world has delayed the construction of its principal public building, such as Parliament House is, until it has reached a stage at which money is no longer required for expenditure on other public works.

Hon. G. Taylor: The same arguments were put up when the building was started.

The PREMIER: Of course they were.

The Minister for Mines: The present buildings would never have been constructed if we had taken notice of such arguments.

The PREMIER: That is so. Probably at no time would it not be possible to point to some public work that might be claimed to be of more importance than the construction of Parliament House, but in those earlier days those arguments must have applied with greater force than they can apply now.

Hon. G. Taylor: And they were emphasised at that time.

The PREMIER: Notwithstanding that nearly every country in the world has set about erecting Houses of Parliament, as a fitting centre in which the government of the country can be carried on, the only question is as to whether we have reached that stage in our history when we should proceed to complete our own buildings. I do not think Parliaments that have gone before us can be accused of extravagance in the consideration extended to matters they considered essential, especially in view of the fact that nothing has been done to the building for nearly 25 years. No additions or improvements or added buildings of any kind, have been carried out since the building was completed 23 or 24 years ago. So I say without committing the Government to find the money this year or next year—indeed the member for West Perth did not ask that I should do so when he submitted his motion,

because all the time he very carefully indicated that he desired the motion to be carried, provided the Treasurer could find ways and means—I shall support the motion.

Mr. Mann: You may be able to find sufficient money to commence a portion of the building.

The PREMIER: That might be done.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: At any rate we might have a foundation stone.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was laid 25 or 26 years ago.

The PREMIER: We might not be able to complete the whole building at once but it might be done in three or four sections. We might commence at one end and might complete the other end in the following year and perhaps construct the front later on. Thus the complete work might be carried out in three or four years' time. I remember that in 1910, during the regime of the late Mr. Frank Wilson, a sum of money was placed on the Estimates to complete one wing of the building. Nothing was done at that time.

Hon. G. Taylor: The vote lapsed.

The PREMIER: If it was considered justifiable to make a start with the building in 1910 and nothing has been done in the meantime, I think the time has arrived when a commencement might be made. Without definitely committing the Government to find the money this year, I propose, as an expression of opinion, to vote for the motion.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL** (Northam) [9.23]: It can always be said that there are far more urgent works to be undertaken. If I had my way I would build a good many more miles of railways and open up all the land suitable for settlement without any delay at all. I believe that is the most important duty we have to undertake at present. I have already pointed out to the House that the whole world has stopped railway building, and if we are to get some advantage from that, we should make use of the opportunity to settle our land and produce a great deal more wealth each year. There is no reason at all why we should not do that. If we constructed all the railways that were needed, it would not mean more than a matter of £3,000,000 or so, and that investment would return a profit direct to the Treasury. Apart from that, there is no reason why we should not proceed to com-

plete the Houses of Parliament. Members must have some place where they can work. Some people think that all we have to do is to walk into this Chamber and do all the work we have to do in the interests of the country. I have been a member for 22 years and during the greater part of that time I have had an office in which to do my work. Probably that would apply to 15 out of the 22 years. Members cannot do their duty by the country housed as we are. It is utterly impossible for any member who has no room to himself to do what he should in the interests of his Parliamentary duties. Without that convenience, he cannot study the problems of the day; he cannot look closely into financial agreements and other matters relative to that problem; nor can he study or read as he should do. We have many Bills that have a far-reaching effect and we cannot compare that legislation with Acts in existence elsewhere, without some room where the study can be carried out quietly.

The Premier: There is not a spare room in the building.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, nor any table that a member can use for himself for a whole day, much less for every day.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is a positive scramble to secure a table if you want to write a letter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: To merely write letters is one thing. Some members have got beyond the stage when they write letters that might well be written by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston). It is a great pity that members do not have a proper opportunity to do their work. The country loses a great deal because of that. What opportunities have any hon. member to study all the reports in connection with the financial proposals now before the House?

The Premier: They have all to go in one room to do so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That cannot be done. It requires hours of study to go through those reports. I am able to come to the House each day at 8 a.m. and work on until Parliament meets. I can do that on ordinary days as well as sitting days. Other hon. members might well be expected to do what I have to do.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: They are expected to do it.

The Premier: But they cannot do it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They are not in a position to do so.

The Premier: They would have to take measures home and even then they would not have the records or books to consult.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. As it is if an hon. member gets out a few books and places them on the table to assist him to study a problem he finds that if they are left there for half an hour the books are put back on the shelves. I do not know that there is a more uncomfortable building than the one in which we are expected to work. It was never intended to be used for that purpose. Of course it is a comfortable place for men who have nothing to do. They can rest in the corridors or in the library, but there is no place where men can work. I deplore the fact that the country loses heavily because of the present position. I would like to see accommodation provided that would enable members to do their duty by the country. That can be done only by extending the present building. I do not know exactly to what extent that should be done, nor do I know exactly what the cost would be. That is a matter that can be gone into. In view of the important functions to be carried out by members of Parliament, we are entitled to have more adequate provision to enable us to carry out our work under reasonable conditions. Take the proposals submitted to us in connection with the Financial Agreement. I can assure members they are not going to get an understanding of the position sitting with other members, as they must, about the corridors, the only place available to them—not if they were to try for a month.

The Premier: It is only of recent years there has been a room available for the Leader of the Opposition. That was attained only by taking away the one room that members had.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and I suppose the Premier's pill-box round there is just a bit of a corridor boarded off.

The Premier: For years I had no room at all when I was over there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No room was available, and I suppose there would be no room to-day, if those little temporary additions had not been made.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Country Party has very poor accommodation up here.

Mr. Richardson: And the United Party has worse.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is impossible for members here to do their work. I wish the public could understand just what members need to do and ought to do, and how impossible it is for them to do it. The position of Australia to-day is very different from what it was a few years ago. The problems are far more intricate and interesting, and the opportunities far greater. It is very necessary that every member should understand, not only the local conditions, but understand also the opportunity offered to us because of our position in the British Empire. If members are to understand these things, they must have facilities for quiet study. To my mind we have never had such opportunities as are offered to us now, and I believe that whether we like it or not we shall have to take in a very large number of people in Western Australia before long, and provide for them too. There are most hopeful signs, surely, in the Press cables from the Old Country. What could be more hopeful than the references in this morning's newspaper to the re-establishment of industry? Every day almost there are references to the position of the Empire and the need for spread of population. That will make us far more important than we have been in the past. I hope, too, there are going to be very definite and determined efforts against any suggested unification. I hope our responsibilities will not become less, but rather greater, as time goes on, that our work will become far more important. We often hear people say there are too many Governments in Australia. So long as we are governed well, it is quite right that we should have the half-dozen State Governments. But we ought to be properly housed. I am sure it will lead to the better government of this country if every member will express his views and tell the people, through you, Sir, that he has no opportunity to carry out his duties to the people as he is housed at present. I object as much as the Premier does to the expenditure of the money, but I hope the cost will be gone into. After that we can see whether it is possible for the work to be completed. It is an awful pity it was not completed originally. By the way, there is a foundation stone, carefully hidden, laid by Sir Arthur Lawley

25 years ago. There it is now, within a few feet of the present building. If that represents the line of the outer wall, I do not believe the cost can be so very great after all. However, I appeal to the Premier to have the matter looked into, and I hope we shall carry the motion on the understanding that it will be looked into, so that we can know definitely what will be the cost of the work.

Question put and passed.

*(The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.)*

## **BILL—METROPOLITAN TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 22nd November.

**MR. MANN** (Perth) [9.35]: I desire that, if possible, this Bill should be passed. The Bill is for the appointment of a commission. Then there is another Bill for the appointment of a town planning and development commission. That Bill, probably, will go to a select committee, but there is no reason why this Bill should not pass. It would enable the authorities to appoint the commission and get into their stride and have the work well on the way in the event of the other Bill going through next session. The appointment of this commission is well justified and long overdue. In most parts of Europe, in America and in Victoria a commission of this kind has been operating for a number of years. A commission was appointed in England in 1914 to go into the question of town planning. I find that a similar commission was appointed in New York in 1911, while the commission in Melbourne was appointed three years ago. The Perth City Council, realising that it was necessary to get a commission appointed in order that there should be uniformity of opinion and of action, called a meeting of the local authorities of the metropolitan area in July, 1926. No fewer than 21 local authorities attended at the conference. The appointment of a commission was discussed and it was agreed, with the exception of one, I think East Fremantle, that it was a necessary step to take. From that time onwards the authorities, with the Town Planning Association, have been actively engaged endeavouring to get this commission inaugu-

rated. These local authorities have been split up into three divisions, and it has been suggested that there should be one member for Fremantle, East Fremantle, North Fremantle and the Fremantle and Melville road boards. Also that there should be one member to be appointed by Midland Junction, Guildford, Swan, Bassendean, Bayswater, South Perth, Belmont and Canning district road boards, and one member for the Subiaco and Perth road boards, the Claremont road board, the Claremont Municipal Council and the Peppermint Grove, the Cottesloe and the Cottesloe Beach road boards, one member to be appointed by the City Council, and certain other members. To show the necessity for this appointment, I cannot do better than put before the House some of the facts that have been elicited and some of the information that has been gathered by the commission sitting in Melbourne. It will show the great amount of money that will be saved in the years to come and the great benefit that will be derived by the metropolitan area from having a commission inquiring into the various needs of the whole of these 21 local authorities, who will then speak with one voice and act as one authority. One of the questions that has been inquired into by the Melbourne commission is the cost of developing a city. That commission has found the cost to be, exclusive of any system of transport, £300,000 per square mile. That is under a well organised system of development. This commission will inquire into matters of sewerage, transport, the cutting up of estates for dwelling-houses, factory sites and a hundred and one things about which it is necessary to have a proper understanding in order to avoid doing something that in the years to come will have to be altered. Some interesting evidence obtained by the commission in Melbourne shows the density of population. Those of us who know Melbourne would consider it to be a densely populated area. But with 26 municipalities it has only six persons to the square acre, whereas New York has 30, Manchester 34, Liverpool 38, Glasgow 54, and London 60.

**Mr. North:** It adds to the cost of transport in Melbourne.

**Mr. MANN:** Yes, that is an important point. With a thickly populated city the cost of administration is much lower than with a sparsely populated city. For we must have the same systems, there must be the same sewerage connections, the same



transport arrangements and the same utilities, whether they are used by 1,000 people or 10,000 people. So if we have only 1,000 persons using our utilities, it follows that it costs much more than if we had 10,000 persons using them. A question that is being investigated, particularly in New York and the big cities of England, is the height to which buildings should be allowed to go. That is not so much in regard to safety as in regard to the control of population and the filling of the streets with people at certain periods of the day. New York has found that while it was economical from one point of view to have skyscrapers for the housing of her population, it is not economical when those skyscrapers empty themselves into the streets. Then a quite uneconomical position arises in respect of transport. Another matter that has been investigated is the great increase in motor transport. In 1923 in the United States there were 15,092,177 motors, or one to every seven persons. In Los Angeles there was one for every three persons, in Detroit one for every four people, in Canada one for every 17, and in Victoria one for every 20. In Western Australia we are nearly as advanced as Victoria, for we have one motor for nearly 20 persons. It must be apparent that this is a question that is entitled to grave consideration. We must consider the lay-out of our metropolitan area. We want to make sure there will not be the crowded conditions that prevail in other cities. Although it may be late in the day to do this, it is not too late. It is not as late as it is in London, or New York, Manchester and other places where these Commissions are investigating these matters. If a Commission is appointed here it will have a busy time and much responsible work to do. I hope the Bill will pass, so that the Commission can be appointed and we may look forward to the more important Bill being passed later on. The Commission in Melbourne has given grave consideration to the question of the transport of the people. The utilisation of trams as against any other form of transport is favoured. The passenger traffic for several days was checked in Melbourne. It was found that light cars, taxis, etc., to the number of 30,000 passed a certain point, carrying 18 per cent. of the people. There were 11,000 bicycles carrying 3 per cent., 5,000 motor bicycles carrying 1 per cent., 630 buses carrying 3 per cent., and 9,000 trams car-

rying 72 per cent. It was shown that the cost per mile to tramway passengers was very much below the cost per travelling mile by any other form of transport. We have been discussing for three or four years the question as to what form of transport would be most economical and suitable in our metropolitan area. I was led away by the idea that buses would be the most economical, but after following the investigations of the Commission that has for three years been sitting in Melbourne, and reviewing the evidence taken, I am forced to the conclusion that in the long run the tramway service is the most economical, and the most suitable for the carrying of large crowds.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. MANN: The railway authorities in Victoria were also examined. They said it would be possible for them to increase their passenger trains from six to 10 carriages to shift the crowds at the peak periods of the day. The question arose as to how to get the people to the station without making subways and overhead bridges. When dealing with the safety of the people we shall have to consider that question. In Melbourne the Flinders-street and Spencer-street stations were mentioned, especially the necessity for subways leading to Flinders-street. The time must come when we shall have a subway from Forrest-place, in the years to come, to our railway station, should it remain where it is. There is also the question whether the station should remain where it is, or be moved further north in order to do away with the bottleneck in our city. In many respects Perth is in the same position as Melbourne. Melbourne has a bottleneck formed by the river and the railway service, and Perth has the same. We have the river cutting us off from the southern suburbs and the eastern suburbs, and a railway running through the centre of the city. We, too, are tied up in a bottleneck. This puts upon certain properties values that are far in excess of what they should be, and does not permit of the natural expansion of the city. That question would have to be considered by the Commission. Another question is that of arranging proper sites for our factories, and taking into consideration the means of transport and the cost of electric current. We must also consider whether the river can be utilised commercially, or whether it should remain for all time a beauty spot. Certain mem-

bers and many people outside seem to think the river should always remain a beauty spot. That would be very nice, but as a result of investigations, it may be found that from an economic point of view it should be used for commercial purposes. In England a Commission was appointed in 1913, and has been operating since the war. In 1913 a deputation waited on the Prime Minister of England (Mr. Asquith) now the Earl of Oxford. A Commission was appointed then to deal with the question of transport, town planning, housing, the equal distribution of population, main drainage, and other facilities. The cost of any reformation or new scheme will be very much greater than if the work were put in hand before the population grows, as it has grown in the cities in the old world. In Manchester a Commission is now dealing with town planning. It is called an advisory committee. It deals with the question of motor transport and the general lay-out of the city. In New York, on the recommendation of the Height of Buildings Commission, appointed in 1913, a committee of the Board of Estimates and Apportionment made certain recommendations to prevent further sky-scrapers from being constructed because of the difficulty of economically transporting the people. When sky-scrapers empty their tenants into the streets it has been found impossible to handle the multitude of people in the time necessary economically to deal with them. These are matters that will have to be dealt with by the local Commission. There is no reason why it should not be appointed now instead of postponing it for a period of years. The local authorities are anxious that this work should be gone on with. I have heard members in the House refer to councillors as bumbles. These councillors are giving a great deal of their time in a voluntary way to the careful consideration of this question, and are anxious that the Bill should be passed to enable them to carry into effect the work of the Commission. The Minister outlined extensively the objects of the Bill. As I represent an important part of the metropolitan area, in which a great deal of this work will go on, I am anxious to give this Bill my support. I hope the House will pass it so that the Commission may be appointed. I also look forward to the passing of the more important Bill after investigation and research by the Commission.

**MR. E. B. JOHNSTON** (Williams-Narrogin) [9.55]: I am glad the Government have brought down this Bill for the appointment of a metropolitan town-planning Commission. I am sure it will commend itself to all members. It is not necessary for me to deal with it at any length. No doubt the city of Perth and the metropolitan area have a great future before them. Because of the progress being made in the agricultural and other industries, the time cannot be far distant when Perth will vie in population, importance and standing with the capitals of the sister States of the Commonwealth. We have seen that millions of money have been spent in recent years in the city of Sydney in widening the main streets everywhere, and in a comprehensive scheme of town planning. With our narrow streets we cannot get to work too soon upon this matter. The constitution of the Commission seems to be a proper one. The city of Perth will be represented as well as the 20 other local governing authorities in the metropolitan area, who will be represented by three members in three very suitable groups. The city and suburbs are growing in a haphazard way and there is no proper design governing the position. I am glad the Government have on the Notice Paper a proposal for a proper and comprehensive town planning Bill. It has been stated that that Bill may not become law this session. If this Bill is passed the town planning Commission can be appointed, and can settle down to its important duties. I am sorry the Bill does not go a little further than it proposes in the way of making it necessary for all subdivisional plans in the metropolitan area to be submitted in the meantime for the approval of the Commission. Although that is not provided, the same result can be obtained, because all the local governing bodies will be represented on the Commission, and no subdivisional plan can be approved of without the consent of the local governing body in which the area in question is situated. So that if the representative of each local body on the Commission keeps in touch with the local bodies he represents, he will see to it that no plan is approved if it violates the policy of the Commission. At the same time when the Bill is in Committee it might be possible to amend it to make it necessary for the plans to be submitted to the Commission for approval. If that be done it will be a good thing. It will also give the Gov-

ernment on the recommendation of the Commission an opportunity to acquire at low prices suitable reserves for parks and recreation purposes in localities where new subdivisions are being laid out. I do not think that large subdivisions should be approved unless a certain area of the new subdivision is made available for public recreation purposes and for parks, at small cost. Another question that deserves urgent attention is that of the widening and improving the main arteries of the city. At the present time the Causeway is a positive death-trap. The traffic over the Causeway is very heavy. Practically the whole of the traffic from the country districts has to enter the city over the Causeway. It is perfectly true that the time is close at hand when we shall have to build other bridges over the Swan to provide access to the city from the north and the east. In the meantime the Causeway should be widened and the work should be put in hand without delay. Something should be done quickly because the suburbs are becoming more populous and the country traffic is increasing very rapidly. This question and also that of providing additional main arteries to the city will be amongst the first duties of the Commission. The question of transport generally will have to be considered as well. There is no doubt also that the time is at hand when areas should be set apart and defined for the establishment of factories. We do not want factories scattered about in residential parts, and it is a good thing that the Bill is being introduced giving the Commission a wide range of inquiry including the making of recommendations for the setting apart of factory localities in the metropolitan area. When those localities are declared anyone will be able to proceed with the establishment of a factory with the knowledge that it will be possible for him to carry on operations without annoying people who may be residing in the locality, and without being subjected to the risk of injunctions against operating the machinery. The Bill is certainly very necessary. It is a good thing that the work of town planning in the metropolitan area is to be carefully investigated by a properly constituted tribunal. It is wise, too, that this is being done in the early part of our history, for the longer action is delayed the greater will be the expense. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill and I am also very glad that the Government are not waiting until the

comprehensive town planning Bill now before us becomes law, before putting through the Bill we are now discussing. The Government are acting wisely in operating the Commission so that it can look into all the questions to which reference has been made.

**MR. RICHARDSON** (Subiaco) [10.6]: I desire to say a few words in support of the measure which I, too, consider is long overdue. For many years the local governing bodies in the metropolitan area have from time to time been discussing matters of importance to all concerned, but there was no uniform method of working. Very often resolutions were carried at the conferences held, but they were merely what we here usually term pious resolutions. The fact of having a commission appointed, a body such as is provided for in the Bill, will result in effect being given to what is desired, not only by the local authorities, but by experts who will be in the position to advise the local bodies. From time to time we find that there is friction between the various local bodies and it is reassuring to know in regard to this measure that there is only one local body in the metropolitan area that has not yet come into line with the others. I hope it will not be long before it does come in. Much time and money can be saved in future if the commission is appointed without delay, and later on the other Bill is carried also. There is one provision that I think will probably have to be amended. I am assuming that there will be no difficulty in that respect. I notice that the amount of £3,500 is set down as the expenditure for the commission. I do not consider that the commission will be able to get through their three years on that sum, and I am assuming that the Government, or any other Government that may be in power, will not hesitate to recommend an additional amount if it is found that the commission are carrying out their work as we expect them to do. The commission are to be given plenty of work to do. I think that practically everything that is required in the metropolitan area is included, and the commission will be expected to offer advice on all manner of subjects. That being the case there will be a considerable amount of work, and I am doubtful as to whether they will be able to submit a completed

comprehensive scheme within the three years.

The Premier: We can always bring in a short amending Bill to extend the period.

MR. RICHARDSON: The time is certainly limited, and the money to be voted is also limited. The commission will be of great assistance, not only to the local governing bodies but also to the Government, especially in connection with transport, water supplies, sewerage, street lighting and almost everything of necessity that can be mentioned. All these questions will have to be investigated by the commission. I consider the method to be followed in the appointment of the commission is correct. Representation will be given to the bodies who will be paying in, and likewise the Government will be given recognition. Especially is this so, for in subclause 3 of Clause 4 we find that three members are to be appointed by reason of their respective qualifications in the technical and professional matters to be dealt with or investigated. We know that the local governing bodies' representatives will certainly be anxious to do the best they can for those whose interests they will be expected to watch. There should be no opposition to the measure which will result in nothing but good to the metropolitan area. The effect should also be to reduce to a minimum mistakes that have been made in the past by local bodies, unconsciously perhaps, believing that they were doing what was best in the interests of the district. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [10.11]: I desire to support the Bill in a few words. The representatives of the local bodies in my district are anxious that the Bill should become law. The question of level crossings is a matter of great importance in my electorate because of the numerous accidents that have taken place, some of them fatal and of recent date. These crossings must receive the attention of the commission. The question of removing the central railway station must also come under the notice of the commission, as well as the river problems. It is a curious thing that in many of the big cities of the world the authorities have been able to get on very well without such bodies as commissions to govern town planning, and it seems strange also that where town planning commissions exist, the towns

appear to make slow progress, as against those which, having advanced and grown in importance have been able to carry out their improvements late in the day, but nevertheless satisfactorily. It is difficult to look ahead so often. What may appear to be a good plan to-day may require to be altered by ever-changing conditions. We may be making plans for 20 years ahead, but long before the expiration of that time the conditions may have changed to such an extent that the original plans may be found to require drastic amendment. We may begin with our alterations to-day, to make them in keeping with the moment, but they may require to be changed in the course of a few years' time. London is a city that has developed itself without plan, and yet it is considered to be as modern as any other big city in the world. I noticed the other day experts visited London from Chicago to make investigations about London's operation of the underground traffic. Those experts returned to Chicago amazed at what they had seen. They concluded there was no place that could show London how to cope with its traffic in any way better than was being done there. All the same, it is vital that we should co-ordinate our schemes so that in the future we may carry out the plans that we may prepare to-day. It often happens that plans have to be hurriedly amended because they do not fit in with the altered condition of things. Economic conditions may set in to drive the trade elsewhere, and so change the trend of the city. Something of that kind may be seen in Perth to-day. A section of Adelaide-terrace not so long ago was regarded as a coming residential centre, but gradually things have shifted and it is difficult to stop the changes that seem to come about quite naturally. Although we favour broad streets and wide avenues, the commercial community seem to prefer narrow lanes for their businesses. We have an example of that in Melbourne where so many great businesses are carried on in Little Flinders-street and some of the other narrower thoroughfares. In Sydney the same thing occurs.

Mr. Lindsay: Yes, look at Pitt-street; that is narrow.

MR. NORTH: Even in Perth there is a similar tendency. Hay-street, in spite of its narrowness, maintains its supremacy as a business thoroughfare. In London, Bond-

street is about the same width as Hay-street, Perth. It does seem hard to make commercial instincts follow the great ideals set by town planners.

Mr. Lindsay: Rundle-street, Adelaide, is just the same.

Mr. NORTH: That is so. I have nothing more to say. If members become voluble on this Bill, we may be here for a long time, but I am one of those who are brief in their remarks. I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*House adjourned at 10.16 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 30th November, 1927.*

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

### QUESTION—VERMIN ACT, MINERS' HOMESTEAD LEASES.

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. J. E. Dodd) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Are the Government aware that 124 miners' homestead leaseholders within the area covered by the Phillips River Road Board, holding an aggregate acreage of 17,401

acres, are exempt from taxation under the Vermin Act, and, as a result, the said board did not strike a vermin tax for the year 1927-28? 2, If so, do they intend introducing an amending Bill this session to include miners' homestead leases within the scope of the Vermin Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter will receive consideration.

### QUESTION—SHEEP DISEASE.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the Minister aware that mortality from Beverley or braxy-like sheep disease has been heavy this year? 2, Is he aware that the area of infection is increasing? 3, If so, what steps have been taken to advise owners of sheep? 4, Has any report or interim report, of the investigation, made some years ago by Mr. Bennett, been published? If not, when will it be published?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3 (a), By personal visits of Veterinary Pathologist and other officers of the Veterinary Branch to settlers in localities where mortality has been reported. (b) By distribution of the bulletin containing the progress report of the Veterinary Pathologist. 2, Investigations were commenced in 1925, and at the conclusion of the first season a progress report was printed and distributed. This contained advice regarding suggested methods for reducing losses.

### QUESTION—KANGAROO SKINS, ROYALTY.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM asked the Honorary Minister: What amount has been received by the Government in connection with the royalty on kangaroo skins from the pastoral areas?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: It is impossible to differentiate between kangaroo skins coming in from pastoral areas and those received from other areas. During the last five years the average amount received annually by way of royalty upon red kangaroo skins (these marsupials frequent that portion of the State where pastoral areas are situated) was £1,403.