

SELECT COMMITTEE—MAIN ROADS ACT ADMINISTRATION.

Consideration of Interim Report.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East)
[12.48]: I move—

That the consideration of the intermediate report of the committee be adjourned until the final report of the committee is brought up.

Question put and passed.

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [12.49]:
I move—

That the recommendation of the select committee that it be converted into an honorary Royal Commission be given effect to.

The PRESIDENT: The consideration of the report of the committee has been adjourned.

Hon. H. STEWART: Would not the hon. member be in order in moving his motion if he first got the leave of the House?

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Then I ask leave to move that motion.

The PRESIDENT: Has the hon. member got the motion in writing?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the Council that the hon. member have leave to move the motion?

Leave granted.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I move the motion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I anticipated that this question would be raised, so I consulted the Premier over the telephone this morning, and he said that if such a motion was passed, he would bring the matter before Cabinet and it would receive careful consideration.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 12.54 a.m. (Thursday.)

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 19th December, 1928.

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

QUESTION—SINKING FUND CONTRIBUTIONS.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (without notice) asked the Premier: As it was expected that we would have an opportunity before the end of the session to discuss the contributions to sinking fund and interest on debentures held and now in suspense, shall we have such an opportunity before the allocation of those funds is finally determined?

The PREMIER replied: Yes; I propose to do this year as has been done in the past two or three years—place the money in suspense and not use it or dispose of it in any way until it has been appropriated by this House.

QUESTIONS (2)—COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS.

Mr. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Will he make a statement regarding the appointment of a Commissioner of Railways in succession to Colonel Pope?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Everybody knows that the Commissioner of Railways has retired on account of ill-health. In the circumstances the Government decided to extend his sick leave until the end of the year. Therefore Colonel Pope will be in office until the end of the year. When that period has expired steps will be taken to fill the position.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL asked the Minister for Railways: I understand we are to have a special session to deal with the report of the Commission on the redistribution of seats. As the office of Commissioner of Railways is still held by Colonel Pope, and as the appointment of a successor is an important one to which Parliament must assent, will the matter be brought up in the special session?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: It will be submitted for approval.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If we have a special session I hope it will be dealt with then.

The Premier: My intention is to deal with no other business than the business for which we specially meet. The appointment of a Commissioner of Railways has to be confirmed by Parliament.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It could be confirmed in the special session.

The Premier: I am not promising a discussion in the special session.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We shall make an opportunity then.

The Premier: Perhaps.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND (CONTRIBUTIONS).

All Stages.

Introduced by the Minister for Health and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is necessary if the Hospital Fund Bill becomes law. It would be of no use having the Hospital Fund Bill on the statute-book unless we had this measure for the purpose of giving effect to what we have already agreed.

Hon. G. Taylor: This House has agreed to it but it has not been agreed to elsewhere.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I admit there is a possibility of the Bill being slightly altered in another place. I do not know exactly what alterations are contemplated.

Mr. Sampson: Just a comma here and there.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: A fair number of suggestions have been made but I do not expect that all of them will be in-

sisted on; in fact I am sure they will not. Last night another place referred the Bill to a select committee and the committee were reporting at 4.30 this afternoon.

Mr. Sampson: At 7.30.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They have finished their inquiry and I understand they intended to report at 4.30. I am informed that the committee are making three recommendations and while their recommendations will not greatly alter the principle of the Bill, they will involve certain amendments. However, the amendments can be discussed when the Bill is returned to us. Irrespective of whether they are accepted by this House, it is necessary to pass this Bill.

Hon. G. Taylor: This Bill will be of no use without the other.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, if the other Bill is lost, this one will be of no use. I hope the labours of the session will be completed to-morrow, and that being so it is necessary to pass this Bill. It provides for imposing a tax of 1½d. in the pound.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: From what date?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: From the date of proclamation which, at the earliest, cannot be before March of next year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: How will you compute the amount on incomes?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If it is proclaimed from the 1st March, four twelfths will be payable.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But a man might have no income for those four months.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is what the Bill provides for. In another place there has been no objection to that proposal and no suggestion of an objection. There is no need to make an elaborate speech on this Bill. The Hospital Fund Bill has been fully considered and this is purely a measure to give authority to impose and collect the tax. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.41]: Of course this Bill necessarily follows the passing of the other measure. It is not necessary to fix the rate at 1½d. in the pound. That is the maximum rate proposed, and I had hoped that the Minister would fix it at a lesser sum. When we get into Committee we can alter that.

The Minister for Health: You can try to.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. There is one thing I wish to ask the Minister. If a person goes into a hospital, is it necessary that he should be attended by a doctor?

The Minister for Health: He need not have a doctor unless he likes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If he wants a doctor, he will have to pay for the doctor provided he is able to do so?

The Minister for Health: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It might be a slight illness.

The Minister for Health: There would be a house doctor.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That might apply in the city, but in country places there is no house doctor. I agree that the patient should pay the doctor if he is able to do so.

The Minister for Health: Neither of the two Bills will interfere with that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Under this Bill everyone will have to contribute, but everyone will not be able to go into hospital.

The Minister for Health: Everyone will not go in, either.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Everyone will have a perfect right to do so, and since people will have that right they may want to go into hospital. At present many people remain at home and are attended by a doctor, but under this scheme they may want to go into hospital. The question is, if they do go into hospital, must they employ a doctor? To that the Minister answers, "Not necessarily."

The Minister for Health: That is so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A man may be suffering from influenza or cold, and may require nursing, but not a doctor. In his own home he would not have a doctor.

The Minister for Health: Many people go into country hospitals, and the doctor might have a look at them while he is on his rounds, but he does not attend them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Can a doctor attend a patient in hospital?

The Minister for Health: It will be a private arrangement between the doctor and the patient.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It will be purely a private arrangement; the patient need not have a doctor unless he likes?

The Minister for Health: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But to get into the hospital he must have a doctor's certificate.

The Minister for Health: He need not necessarily have a certificate. He may be recommended by a doctor, or he may be a casualty.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If he were a casualty a doctor's certificate would not be needed. The position is that a patient may enter a hospital on the order of a doctor. It would be ridiculous to discuss the subject all over again. In Committee we shall reduce the amount of the proposed tax very considerably. I would resist the passage of the Bill if I could. However, this measure follows naturally on the passing of the other Bill.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [4.46]: The Bill proposes the imposition of a tax of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound. The measure might have been held over for a little while to see what is done in another place with another measure. If another place struck out of the Bill which we have already passed the maximum of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. and substituted 1d., we should find ourselves in an awkward position in the event of our inserting $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the present measure. Another place could not amend the present measure, but could amend the machinery Bill.

Hon. G. Taylor: Whether another place has the power or not, it takes that power.

Mr. LATHAM: I will not discuss that aspect. What will be the position if another place reduces the maximum from $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1d. in the other Bill?

The Minister for Health: We will re-insert the higher amount when the Bill comes back here.

Mr. LATHAM: I am glad the Minister is going to assert the rights of this Chamber. I agree with the Premier that it is time we took stock in regard to conferences between the Houses. Still, this Bill might have been held up for an hour or two until the position in regard to the other measure was known.

HON. W. J. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [4.48]: There appears to me to be a difficulty in connection with the raising of the fund. If I understood the Minister rightly a few moments ago, it is likely that the proclamation authorising the collection of money will be made after April next. For the current year, the Minister will be

taking about four-twelfths. I am pleased to be able to state that quite a number of persons in Western Australia derive their incomes from investments such as mortgages, Treasury bills, Commonwealth funds and company shares. On some Commonwealth bonds dividends are paid on the 15th March, and those dividends are for the previous six months. The interest paid does not belong to the period for which the Minister expects to get his hospital fund tax under the present Bill. The dividend paid on the 15th March is a six-months dividend as from the previous September.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will be taxed.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: That would be very unfair indeed. There could be no objection to the taxing for the three or four months, but to tax income earned six months before seems to me unjust. As a rule the interest on Treasury bonds is paid on the 1st January and the 1st July of each year. It seems to me likely that difficulty will arise with regard to assessments. No doubt the Minister wants to get all the money he can for hospitals, but he should be fair to holders of investments. There is another matter which might be explained by the Minister. Assessments for income tax run from the 1st July in one year to the 30th June in the next year. In making up assessments there are a number of allowances to be made, and to my mind it would be indeed difficult to split up the year into thirds, as proposed by the Minister, and to bring the deductions into conformity.

The Minister for Health: The Commissioner of Taxation assures me that there is no difficulty.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: I am merely drawing attention to what seems to me a difficulty. I do not oppose the tax in any way. Indeed, I realise that the Minister has done much for hospitals during his term of office. The Bill should be carried, but we want to be careful that persons absolutely dependent upon investments from moneys accumulated during their earlier years are not treated unfairly. The matter seems to me to require some consideration.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.52]: I hope the Bill will not be passed. I am of opinion that it would prove a most irritating measure. Already both employers and employees have enough forms to fill in. Much of the

time of accountants in the various business offices is occupied with filling up various forms, and the irritating effect of this measure will be great. The revenue received to-day is very much in excess of what was received when a previous Bill of this nature was before Parliament. Indeed, since 1924-25 the State's revenue has increased by £1,800,000.

The Premier: That is the stale old statement that is always trotted out.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is true.

The Premier: The expenditure increases in the same ratio as the revenue.

Mr. SAMPSON: I know that both expenditure and revenue have increased.

The Premier: That sort of statement is all right to give out to the public, but it is no good here.

Mr. SAMPSON: In view of the great increase of revenue we should be able to carry on our hospitals without the imposition of this tax. I said that on the second reading of the Bill. Now I have the opportunity of saying it again. In many quarters I have heard references to the annoyance which this Bill will create in respect of collection of the tax.

The Premier: This Bill says nothing about the method of collection. You cannot criticise the method of collection on this Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: If this Bill is not passed, the measure now before another place becomes quite innocuous.

The Premier: But the method of collection is in the other Bill. This Bill only fixes the amount.

Mr. SAMPSON: But this Bill is the key to the position. Without the authority provided by this Bill, no action can be taken in respect of the Hospital Fund Bill.

The Minister for Health: And no action can be taken in respect of hospitals either. They will be left just as you left them.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not going to accept that, because when the Minister took up his work he found hospitals being erected all over the country. I would not personally seek to secure any praise for that. It followed the decision of the then Premier to provide pound for pound subsidies. Hospitals, I say, were being erected all over the country when the Minister for Health took office.

The Minister for Health: In seven years only 27 new hospitals have been erected, and we have built 23 of them.

Mr. SAMPSON: Hospitals were being erected in fairly large numbers throughout the State. I hope I may be allowed to say that I did not for a moment intend to set up a comparison. Comparisons are odious.

The Minister for Health: They are in your instance.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister has his opinion. I consider that any reference in the nature of a comparison would show bad taste on my part, and so I shall not make any such reference. I think, however, I am justified in saying, with all courtesy, that the increased revenue of the State should enable this service to be provided without the imposition of a further tax. The facts in relation to that revenue justify the statement I have made.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [4.57]: This Bill merely empowers the Government to collect the tax. We have already passed a measure, which is now in another place, setting out what the tax shall be and how the money collected shall be spent. Whatever we may think about the past, it is time we considered how the future shall be conducted. Undoubtedly Western Australian hospitals need funds. It is regarded as a function of government to look after the sick of the community. That being so, I do not see how we can object to this Bill. I am perfectly convinced that people ought to be taxed for the upkeep of hospitals, and I am tired of seeing the cadging that goes on continually in the streets. I am tired of a condition of things under which the sick of the community are dependent on somebody in the street collecting a few shillings for the upkeep of hospitals. It is appalling that such a state of affairs should exist in any civilised country. I wonder that there should be any objection whatever to the Bill. I support the second reading.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [4.59]: I cannot understand why there should be any opposition to this measure. Surely the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) has not given consideration to the position of committee hospitals, or else he has not any committee

hospitals in his district. There is a continuous cadging from one small section to keep up those hospitals. Perhaps the member for Swan is in the happy position of knowing that any of his constituents who fall ill can be run into the Perth Hospital, which derives its upkeep partly from the revenue of the State. In my electorate there are at least seven committee hospitals, and it is one continuous cadge for their upkeep wherever one goes. It is not possible to go into any part of the electorate without encountering some appeal in aid of the local hospital. That appeal rests on the shoulders of a few, and those who can afford to pay will not, in many instances, buy the tickets. Those who are big-hearted enough to do so are those who are maintaining the country hospitals throughout the State. Then it is usual to hold one or two appeals each year in support of the Bridgetown, Pemberton, Boyup Brook and other hospitals, as well as annual balls that involve a lot of work among those who are willing to give their assistance to keep the country hospitals open. I feel strongly on this question and I have advocated some such measures being adopted for many years past. I believe it to be the duty of the Government to look after the hospitals. I cannot understand the opposition to the Bill. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) said that the collection of the tax would be cumbersome and that there would be many pinpricks. He said the Government had made provision for the building of all these hospitals.

Mr. Sampson: I said that hospitals were being built.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is quite correct.

Mr. Sampson: Including one at Boyup Brook.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: And the hon. member, when Minister, came down and opened it. At the same time, no provision was made for the maintenance of those hospitals. Certainly the then Government, in common with the present Government, provided a pound for pound subsidy, but all Governments seem to think that their obligations stop at that, and that the small country communities should look after the needy and sick in their particular localities. That is all very well for the people who have Government hospitals in their midst, because they have no cares or worries. To-

day if committee hospitals cannot be kept open because of lack of funds, they have to be closed. At Katanning, Northam and other such centres, where Government hospitals are established, the people are not confronted with that necessity, and if they do not raise money in support of their institutions, the Government will carry on the hospitals. Legislation of the type now before us is required, and I cannot understand any sane man in this House refusing to recognise the obligation that devolve upon the State.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.4] : I hesitate to contribute to the discussion in view of the remarks of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. He said he could not understand any sane man opposing it. To the best of my belief I am sane, and I intend to oppose it.

Hon. G. Taylor: You must have a public hospital at your centre.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not oppose the principle enunciated by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith), because I recognise it is the duty of the State to care for the indigent and sick, and to maintain our hospitals. What I am opposed to is the principle of the flat rate involved in the Bill. A person who is earning £1 a week will have to contribute 1½d. out of his small salary, whereas the person who is earning £5 a week will have to contribute 7½d. on the same basis. It is much easier for the person who earns £5 a week to contribute his share than for the person who is in the precarious position of earning £1 a week only. I believe the proper method of raising taxation would be by means of the imposition of a super tax levied on the basis set out in the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act. Deductions permitted under that Act are not allowed under the provisions of the Bill before us. A man on the basic wage may have a large family to support, and he will have to pay a tax of 4d., whereas another man receiving a similar wage but without any children whatever, will be asked to contribute a like amount. That must appeal to anyone as being most unfair. The Leader of the Opposition indicated that during the Committee stage he would move to decrease the amount. I am not concerned about the amount, as I am about the principle to which I have referred.

Hon. G. Taylor: But that principle was established in the Bill we have already passed.

Mr. MARSHALL: I opposed that Bill, and I oppose the measure now before us.

Mr. Teesdale: I suppose this sounds very well.

Mr. MARSHALL: The economic pressure upon the great masses of the people is such as to cause sickness amongst them. Under the provisions of the Bill, they will be called upon to maintain the hospitals by means of the imposition of a tax to which they will have to contribute on the same basis as the man enjoying the huge profits derived from their labours. There is another anomaly to which I shall draw attention. The people in the metropolitan area will pay the tax and secure hospital and medical treatment free. That arises from the fact that the hospitals have house doctors who attend to the patients without extra cost to them. In the more remote parts of the State, the people will have to pay the tax, but on top of that they will have to contribute to the medical fund in order to pay for the doctor. Irrespective of how we may look at the Bill, the fact remains that if we attempt to apply to the outer areas, conditions that are set up in the metropolitan area, the impost becomes unfair from the very outset. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.9] : I oppose the second reading of the Bill, which has been introduced as the result of the passing by this House of the Hospital Fund Bill just recently. I do not agree with the principle of imposing a special charge for a special purpose. I quoted the remarks made by the Premier and by the Hon. W. C. Angwin, both of whom strongly opposed a similar measure on an earlier occasion. I feel that I must oppose the imposition of a special tax for a special purpose, because it sets up a dangerous precedent. There can be no equity in the administration of such a measure when the people in the country districts have to contribute half the cost for the erection of hospitals in their localities, and to raise funds to maintain their institutions whereas similar conditions do not apply in the metropolitan area. If they were to apply generally, I would be more inclined to support the Bill because all sections of the community would then be dealt

with in like fashion. On the contrary the Government provide the whole of the buildings necessary for hospitals in the metropolitan area. It is true that people from all parts of the State come to those hospitals for attention, but it must be within the knowledge of the Minister for Health that country hospitals, such as that at Katanning, receive patients from outlying districts. Those patients do not contribute a penny as their share towards the erection or maintenance of those hospitals. That is a distinct anomaly. I will not traverse the ground covered by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) but I repeat what I have said on former occasions that with our increased revenue, it should be possible to carry on without the imposition of the additional tax proposed.

Hon. G. Taylor: You object to increased taxation?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

Hon. G. Taylor: But you do not object to the sick being provided for?

Mr. THOMSON: No. It is the duty of the Government to do that.

The Minister for Health: Money is required to enable us to do so.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister has done very well and I do not know why he cannot continue along the same lines.

The Premier: The Minister will not be able to get anything more in the future. I do not know how I could contribute another additional shilling.

Mr. THOMSON: The Premier wisely utilised the Federal grant to reduce taxation by $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent., but by agreeing to the measure before us now, we will merely re-instate a similar levy upon the people.

The Minister for Health: You do not say anything about the benefits that the people will derive.

Mr. THOMSON: They had those benefits in the past.

The Minister for Health: No, they did not.

Mr. THOMSON: I commend the Government for what they have done, but I think our position to-day is such that the Government should be able to continue to pay in the future as in the past. While I admit that the Bill embodies the means by which the Government will be able to contribute to the upkeep of hospitals at the rate of 6s. per day per bed occupied, I wonder whether

the imposition that is to be placed upon the shoulders of the people will not become unduly heavy. I am wondering what may be the position of the Treasurer if the Commonwealth Government should find it impossible to continue their grant to the State. If the Treasurer is to carry on successfully in those circumstances, he will be faced with the necessity for re-imposing that $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. taxation, the reduction of which we are now enjoying. It is from that point of view I am opposing the Bill. Every pound taken in taxation from a man prevents him from spending it in the development of his property or his business. So taxation is practically bleeding the country, whether it is drawn from the business man or from the man on the land. Generally the business man is able to pass on the taxation, but the man on the land has no such opportunity. In view of the serious decline in the prices of wheat and wool, I am afraid the Treasurer will not have as much from income taxation as he has had in the past.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you think the decline in the prices of wheat and wool indicates a decline in other things also?

Mr. THOMSON: That is inevitable. I will oppose the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Panton in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Contributions to the fund:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) "half-penny" be struck out.

That will leave the tax at 1d. instead of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. In my view the 1d. is all that will be required, and I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

The Minister for Health: We can discuss that when we get the other Bill back from another place.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister ought to be prepared to discuss it here and now. I am prepared to let the Minister have the 1d. in the pound, but this additional $\frac{1}{2}$ d. is quite unnecessary.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I cannot accept the amendment. If it were the purpose of the Bill to give only the benefits that were proposed in the Bill introduced by the previous Government, 1d. in the pound, perhaps, would be sufficient. But this Bill goes considerably further than the other one, and the ½d. will be more than swallowed up by the benefits given. Certainly it will not cover the actual amounts paid to-day for maintenance for our hospitals.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Are you going to stop all sweeps?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There will be no necessity for sweeps for hospitals after the Bill passes. At all events, I have nothing to do with the cutting out of sweeps.

The CHAIRMAN: And that has nothing to do with the amendment before the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If the Bill goes through, there will be no necessity for any committee hospital in the State to run a sweep or lottery, or go around cadging for the purpose of maintaining the institution.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am afraid this ½d. will be fully needed when the other Bill comes back from another place; because the principle of that Bill will be found to have been so altered that 2d. will be required rather than 1½d.

The Minister for Health: If that is so, we will not accept the Bill.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In view of the knowledge I possess about that other Bill, I will not support the amendment.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	20
				—
Majority against	..			6
				—

AYES.

Mr. Angelo
Mr. Brown
Mr. Doney
Mr. Ferguson
Mr. George
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Latham

Mr. Mann
Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Sampson
Mr. Teedale
Mr. Thomson
Mr. C. F. Wansbrough
Mr. North

(Teller.)

NOES

Mr. Chesson
Mr. Collier
Mr. Corboy
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Cowan
Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Lambert
Mr. Lamond
Mr. Marshall

Mr. McCallum
Mr. Millington
Mr. Munsie
Mr. Rowe
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Taylor
Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: I move an amendment—

That after "every" in line 2 of paragraph (a) "complete" be inserted.

A very large number of men earn wages that may not amount to more than £1 or £2 or some figure midway between the two. The incidence of the tax is a very much more important matter to those men than to other men earning more money. A person may be receiving £1 5s. a week, but under the clause may have to pay on £2.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I cannot accept the amendment. The hon. member could not have studied the Bill. The Hospital Fund Bill provides that a person is permitted to earn up to £1 15s. a week without paying on more than £1 a week.

Hon. W. J. George: I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

1, Loan, £4,800,000.

2, Appropriation.

Without amendment.

BILL—LAND AGENTS.

Report of Committee adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HARBOURS AND JETTIES.*Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [5.40] in moving the second reading said: This Bill comes from another place. It is a short measure and involves only one principle. It is really designed to bring our law up to date and make it more in keeping with similar laws in other parts of the world. In this State, where we have compulsory pilotage for oversea vessels, it is not clear, in the case of an accident to a jetty or wharf, whether the ship is responsible or whether the State will have to bear the whole cost. In other parts of the world that is made quite clear. The English Act provides that the shipowner is responsible, but that the company can take action against the pilot in cases where culpable negligence on his part can be proved. In other cases of damage to wharves or jetties the shipowner is responsible. There is a doubt as to the legal position locally. We have been involved in expense here due to damage to our wharves and jetties, and we have not felt safe about making any claims.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We charge for our pilots.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I have pointed out that in other parts of the world, even though compulsory pilotage may exist, the ship is held responsible. Many things may happen that are outside the control of the pilot. There have been instances here in which ships have been on the verge of accidents which have been beyond the control of the pilot, and yet it might have been argued that because the pilot was in charge the State must be held responsible.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not when a rope gives way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A ship came out from England with her steering gear reversed, one line pulling to starboard instead of to port. That ship was on the verge of an accident in most of the ports on the way to Fremantle. No notification was given to the pilot, and if the vessel had run on to the North Mole, as was nearly the case, it is questionable whether the State would not have been held responsible.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not for the ship?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. It was only when the ship was between Fremantle and Adelaide that the defect was discovered and, after examination, put right. A similar position occurred at Colombo and other ports on the way out. Many other instances could be cited of circumstances having arisen that were beyond the control of the pilot. As the law stands, so long as the pilot is there, it is doubtful whether the shipowners would not be able to make a claim against the State. As I have said, in England, where there is much more shipping than in any other part of the world, the responsibility rests with the owners. This does not mean that shipowners have to carry the burden because they are well covered by their insurances. The action for damages, however, lies against them. Our law is obsolete and our desire is to bring it into line with that of Victoria, though we do not propose to go so far as that State has gone. The Victorian law is up to the English standard, and the other States are about to move in a similar direction. The Bill before us does not go so far as the English law: it merely asks that the ship be responsible unless it can be proved that there has been negligence on the part of the pilot. Our position at the present time is too risky, and it may mean our being involved in heavy damages in the event of an accident or something occurring for which the pilot might not have been in any way responsible.

Hon. W. J. George: It will mean putting up freights.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That has not been the experience elsewhere, and the hon. member must know that they do not do things in England that are likely to cause an increase in freights. They are very cautious at the English ports in the way they move. I repeat that it is only because our law is obsolete that the Bill is introduced. With the larger ships that call here now, the pilot is not in the same position as he was when handling smaller vessels, when he could see everything around him. There have been instances at Fremantle where the second officer, who has to take up a position from which he can communicate with the pilot, has failed to do so, the failure nearly resulting in an acci-

dent that might have involved the State in heavy damages. With the law as it stands to-day, the State would have had no redress. There is no desire to do anything that is unfair, and I repeat that we are not going nearly so far as the English law. There have been instances lately where we have had to pay, and where we should not have been compelled to pay. We paid because our law was doubtful. If there had been similar mishaps in any British port, the ships would have been responsible. As I said, Victoria has passed a law closely resembling that in force in England, and the other States are also moving in a similar direction, at any rate to bring it in advance of what it is. The issue is perfectly simple, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.50] I wish the hon. member had quoted the Acts that govern the position at English and other ports. He might also have shown us a photograph of the vessel that he referred to with its steering gear reversed. The vessel certainly performed a marvellous feat in coming out with its steering gear reversed. The Minister who introduced the Bill in another place gave considerable detail, and I fully expected that the Minister for Works when submitting the Bill here would do likewise.

The Premier: That was the House we were uncertain about.

Hon. G. Taylor: You always are.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister for Works just took slabs from the Honorary Minister's speech in the Legislative Council and gave us about one-tenth of what was said in another place. However, the Bill is clearly worded and we can safely accept it. I do not see why we should have less protection against damage done by ships than is the case at other ports. The Minister is quite right in saying that we should be no worse off than are other ports. Thus we can support the Bill.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [5.52]: All large vessels are bound to have a pilot, and there is no doubt that there is necessity for a law of this description in view of what has happened in recent periods. The Bill will relieve the Government of a big liability, because it will have to be

proved that there was negligence on the part of the pilot before they can be held responsible. Other ports have even more drastic legislation and therefore the Bill might well be supported. It is a big move compared to what we have been accustomed in our ports, but at the same time a layman cannot be expected to speak authoritatively on the subject. I suppose the Minister has been advised by those capable of giving sound advice that there is urgent need for the Bill. I do not know that the result of the passing of the Bill will be increased freights, as has been suggested. I believe shipping companies are insured against all risks, and especially this particular form of risk. I support the second reading.

MR THOMSON (Katanning) [5.54]: The Minister has given reasons why the Bill should be passed and it is proposed that where any damage is done by a vessel, the master of the vessel shall be asked to pay the damages. Some time ago we had a reply to a question that was asked about the "Moreton Bay" which crashed into the wharf at Fremantle and it was stated that a sudden squall drove the vessel on to the wharf. In a case of that kind, would the shipowner have to pay?

The Minister for Works: Such a case would be referred to the court.

Mr. THOMSON: I have no intention of opposing the Bill which was discussed very fully in another place.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and *passed*.

MOTION—NORTH-WEST DEVELOPMENT.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the following motion by Mr. Angelo (Gascayne):—

That, in order that a more comprehensive policy for the development of the North and North-West portions of this State might be formulated, it is in the opinion of this House, desirable that the Government should engage

an expert irrigation engineer to make inquiries as to the suitability of the rivers of those divisions for irrigation and closer settlement.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [6.3]: The member for Gascoyne, in moving his motion, told us of the possibilities of the North-West, what would be gained by appointing an engineer and the advisableness of undertaking irrigation in that part of the State. For many years Parliament has had bitter experience of the appointment of engineers to investigate various matters. If the motion were carried, the Government would be committed to the spending of millions of money in the North-West.

Mr. Angelo: Not necessarily the Government; perhaps private enterprise.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We have also had experience of private enterprise. If private enterprise wholly and solely had undertaken the construction of freezing works in the hon. member's electorate, the State would have been saved £60,000. That sum of Government money was spent on the works at Carnarvon and lost, for never a lamb was frozen there and never a hoof went through the works.

Mr. Sleeman: The Government must have been the lamb.

Mr. Angelo: A sum of £55,000 was spent by private enterprise.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: What consolation is that when the taxpayers of the country lost £60,000 on the venture? In spite of that the hon. member comes to the House with a proposal to spend goodness knows how many millions on irrigation in the North-West. If he wants irrigation why not go to the South-West portion of the State? There we have abundant rainfall and rivers that run continuously throughout the year. The hon. member told us the North-West contained 130 million acres of land, and only 25 million acres were still available. Then he proceeded to say that the country could not carry many people.

Mr. Angelo: Who said that?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member did. He told us the population had decreased between 1917 and 1927 by 30 per cent. He spoke of the rivers, but he omitted to remind us that the Government lost £10,000 in endeavouring to grow cotton at Derby.

Mr. Angelo: How much has group settlement cost the country?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: He omitted to tell us that £25,000 had been lost in an endeavour to grow pumpkins at Darwin. Only one pumpkin was grown for the £25,000, and I cannot say how large it was.

Mr. Angelo: Darwin is not in this State.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: He omitted to say that the Government lost £2,000 in endeavouring to grow vegetables at Wyndham for the meat works employees. The hon. member spoke of the rivers of the North-West—20 of them, I think—that are dry all the year round—

Mr. Angelo: I did not say that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Excepting in flood periods. I know what the hon. member said; I have taken extracts of his speech from "Hansard."

Mr. Angelo: I am afraid you are like our rivers—not always dry.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I have heard of rivers without water. There is no justification for passing the motion, because it would be binding on the Government. If the report of an engineer favoured our making the experiment, the Government would be committed to the expenditure of millions of money. It would be better to spend the money in the South-West where there is an assured rainfall, and almost any commodity can be grown. If the money be spent in the North-West to grow tropical fruits under an expensive irrigation scheme—

Mr. Angelo: It is not for tropical fruits.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Could not we import them very much cheaper? If we did grow them, could we compete with the imported article? The member for Pilbara was very cautious in his remarks on the motion.

Mr. Angelo: He supported it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, but very faintly. Reading between the lines of his speech one could see he was doubtful of the success of the proposal. He was even doubtful whether the Government would be justified in appointing an engineer. He told us about the barren land of the North—

Mr. Teesdale: Barren!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes.

Mr. Teesdale: Heavens!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: In the most favoured portion of the North-West—

Mr. Latham: Which part is that?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: On the Gascoyne River.

Hon. G. Taylor: They could grow bananas there.

Mr. Angelo: Have you been there?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Practical men who know that part say that those flats are of a porous nature. The day after one or two inches of rain have fallen, the ground is almost as dry as a bone.

Mr. Ferguson: What about the grass?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I believe it is a wonderful country for grass, but I am speaking of the ability of the land to retain the moisture. I am told that if the Gascoyne River were dammed and irrigation were undertaken, millions of gallons of water would be required, and it would be absorbed almost as soon as it was run on the soil. Is not that true?

Mr. Angelo: It is absolutely untrue.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Can the hon. member deny that the soil is so porous that the water runs through it almost immediately?

Mr. Teesdale: He gave you the lie direct.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If we are to undertake irrigation, let us go to a part of the State where the climate is favourable. We have an example of what can be done under irrigation at Harvey, the productivity of which district has been increased wonderfully. At one time the settlers there confined their attention to orange-growing. A weir was constructed across the Harvey River, and to-day they are engaged in intense culture. The climate of the South-West lends itself to intense culture. If we are going to extend our activities in irrigation—and I am a great advocate of it—let us do it where the climate is favourable and where intense culture will produce luxuriant growth. Would the hon. member start dairying in the North-West? I believe bananas could be grown.

Hon. G. Taylor: They were tried on the Gascoyne and failed.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, and on account of the high tariff preventing the importation of bananas from Java, this food, of which the people are so fond, has to be imported from Queensland. Yet we could import bananas from Java at a much cheaper rate. If the hon. member had shown that the North-West could grow bananas at a price to compete with the Java product, there would be something to be said for his motion, but I have yet to learn that in a tropical country it is necessary to have irrigation in order to grow bananas.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The engineer for the proposed investigation would have to be highly competent. The carrying of the motion means that the Government of the day, whoever they might be, would feel in duty bound to send an engineer to the North-West and spend a large amount of money on investigations. I claim that such expenditure is not warranted. Perhaps the tropical areas may grow bananas, pineapples, and coffee. In his reply the member for Gascoyne might indicate how coffee is to be grown in the North-West to compete with Java coffee.

Mr. Angelo: You do not drink coffee, do you?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, a great deal; and that is what makes me look so well. I also drink whisky, and am not ashamed of it. Some people drink whisky, and are ashamed of it. There is no need to irrigate the North-West in order to grow tomatoes. Tomatoes to supply the local market and the Eastern States can be grown in Geraldton for eight months of the year without irrigation; and when the Geraldton production goes off, tomatoes can be grown in the south without irrigation. There is nothing in the argument as to tomatoes. A few years ago the hon. member spoke about peanuts and how to grow them in the North.

Mr. Angelo: I never mentioned peanuts in this House.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I understand that peanuts grown in the North are eaten out by white ants as soon as they mature. In any case, peanuts can be grown in the South-West. A few years ago the hon. member had an experiment in the growing of bananas in the North. There was a small plantation of bananas on one side of the river. On account of the wind, however, they would not grow. Thereupon they were moved to the opposite side of the river, and not one banana has ever been marketed from that plantation. Yet the hon. member expects the country to commit itself to the expenditure of millions of money for the North-West. In season and out of season the hon. member talks about the rivers of the North-West and irrigation for the North-West. I am informed that it is only owing to the huge flood waters—due to the heavy rainfall—that these rivers last for three or four months of the year, and that during the other nine or ten

months, when things should be growing, the rivers are dry and there are stretches of 20 and 30 and 40 miles between pools.

Mr. Angelo: Do you know what irrigation really is? Do you know what a weir is?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I was never on the Nile. The hon. member pointed out that the population of the State had increased by 30 per cent. in ten years, and that during the same period the population of the North-West had decreased by $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Mr. Angelo: Quite true.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But the hon. member forgot to mention that the stock in the North-West had also decreased enormously.

Mr. Angelo: I pointed it out. I have the figures here.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: He also forgot to mention that stock had increased enormously in the southern portion of the State. Not long ago the hon. member advocated strongly that the North-West should be taken over by the Federal Government.

Mr. Latham: He does not say it should not be now.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yet he tries to commit Western Australia to an expenditure of millions of money on the North-West.

Mr. Latham: Read the motion.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: An engineer is usually accompanied by an army, and he and his army look for more work. Suppose the engineer reports favourably on the project, and says he can harness the Gascoyne River at a cost of £1,000,000 or perhaps £2,000,000. Then in season and out of season we would have the member for Gascoyne advocating irrigation right through the North-West.

Mr. Thomson: And rightly so.

Mr. Angelo: I have not mentioned the Gascoyne River.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: What need is there for that expenditure when we already have an abundance of water to grow anything under the sun?

The Premier: Is this a battle between the north and the south?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is no battle about it at all. I merely do not think the House would be justified in carrying the motion. Perhaps there is a quiet wish on the part of the member for Gascoyne to be able to go back to his electors and say, "This is my project, but the Government of the day would not agree to send an engineer to make investigations as to irrigation."

Mr. Angelo: We do not have submarine warfare in the North.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know whether the hon. member has submarine warfare or aerial warfare in the North. In my opinion, his part of the country is greatly favoured. The North has enormous areas, and there has never been any lack of sympathetic administration on the part of successive Governments. We are told that possibly the wealth of Western Australia is derived from the North-West. However, we know quite differently. There is no necessity to go outside the southern portion of the State if irrigation is desired. There is no necessity whatever to send to the North an expensive engineer with all his paraphernalia and his army of assistants, accompanied by the camels which will be needed to cross the areas between rivers when they are dry. People of experience have told us that irrigation is an impossibility in the North-West.

Mr. Latham: Some people said that about the settlement of the South-West, but it was not true.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There are no freezing works established at Bunbury, but in two or three years' time the South-West will have the control of the fat lamb export market, besides supplying the whole of Western Australia.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It will not be very long before we have freezing works established in Bunbury by the present Government or some other Government, and those works will not be standing idle with £60,000 of the State's money invested in them.

Mr. Angelo: What has Fremantle had from the Government?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Fremantle has had freezing works from the Government. Who was behind those works? A very particular friend of the hon. member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is no need for me to mention names. In my opinion the North-West is a huge area offering no possible chance of intense culture. Irrigation there is a dream. We all have ideas about irrigation just as the member for Gascoyne has. But it is a dream which will never be fulfilled.

The Premier: It might be a nightmare.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We cannot compete so far as bananas, pineapples, coffee and pea-

nuts are concerned. Peanuts are very nice at threepence a bag, but we cannot compete in them. As for tomatoes, they can no doubt be grown by irrigation in the North, but I have already explained that a full supply is obtainable from Geraldton without irrigation for eight months of the year.

Mr. Clydesdale: What about the shark industry?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There being abundance of water for the sharks in the North-West, irrigation is not required for that industry. I believe, as a matter of fact, the industry has proved a failure at Shark Bay. Another dream of the member for Gascoyne! I oppose the motion because I fail to see that any good can result from it. It represents a pious aspiration on the part of the hon. member. It looks so simple that he thought every member of the House would say, "Certainly send an engineer to the North-West, or send 10 or 20 engineers for the 10 or 20 rivers there." The motion should not be carried, because the carrying of it would commit the Government to sending along those engineers to make investigations.

Mr. Clydesdale: Let us send explorer Terry there!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know that explorer. I see the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) is taking notes, doubtless with the intention of tearing my arguments to pieces.

Mr. Teesdale: I was merely reading the Notice Paper.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not feel inclined to commit the country to any expenditure on a hare-brained scheme such as this.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.45]: After listening to the very interesting speech by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith), one wonders whether the North-West is part of Western Australia. If it is, then I imagine that those people who are living in the North will be rather surprised to think that there is a member of Parliament who could speak as he has done this evening, and who could condemn that fertile portion of this great State.

Mr. J. H. Smith: From the standpoint of irrigation only!

Hon. G. Taylor: Yes, be fair!

Mr. THOMSON: The motion moved by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) should commend itself to every member of the House except, possibly, the member for

Nelson. There is nothing of the pious about it. The motion represents a very practical suggestion and the object is to secure a comprehensive policy as the result of the visit of an expert irrigation engineer to the North and North-West to furnish the Government with advice as to how the country can best be developed.

Hon. W. J. George: Do you not think it would be a fitting motion to bring before the next Parliament?

Mr. THOMSON: I commend the member for Gascoyne for his attitude in battling for the North-West in season and out of season. I admit frankly that each Government with the limited amount of money at their disposal, have done their best to develop the northern parts of Western Australia. Let us draw a comparison with what has been done in other parts. We have heard a lot about the 3,000 farms scheme. Expert officers have been sent out and they have laid down a policy for the development of that large area. I commend the Government for their policy in that direction. Surely if a scheme can be propounded from an irrigation standpoint, and it can be shown to be practicable to the satisfaction of the Government and of Parliament, so that in due course the northern parts may be properly developed, then the time of this House will not have been wasted in discussing the motion now under consideration. Some members of Parliament and people outside this Chamber assert that they would not hand over the North-West to the Federal Government and they claim that it must be developed as part and parcel of Western Australia. If that is so, surely it is not asking too much to say that an expert investigation of the northern areas should be carried out in order to see what can be done to develop it. If we are not prepared to do that, and to see that the North-West has adequate facilities to enable progress to be made there, then it is time we took other steps. Should an expert decide that it is not possible to embark upon irrigation schemes that will result in the development of the North-West and the North, then the member for Gascoyne will have accomplished his object. On the other hand, should the expert be able to suggest comprehensive schemes for the development of those parts, and show that by the erection of a dam or a weir across various rivers we

can bring large areas into a condition suitable for closer settlement, then we will know what is ahead of us. At present those areas are held purely for pastoral purposes.

Mr. J. H. Smith: How long do you think it will take one man to do all that?

Mr. THOMSON: I should say it would not take very long for a practical man, who is an expert on irrigation, to give us an opinion as to whether it will be possible to carry out an irrigation scheme in certain areas.

Mr. J. H. Smith: He will have to take levels over miles and miles of country.

Mr. THOMSON: And that is not an expensive, nor is it a long process. I will support the motion and will go so far as to say that if the people of the southern parts of the State will not recognise that the north is part and parcel of Western Australia, then the sooner we hand that part of the State over to the Federal Government for development, the better it will be for the people concerned. At least we should give them the opportunity, by means of their votes, to say whether they are desirous of remaining within the jurisdiction of Western Australia, or whether they would prefer to come under the administration of the Federal Government.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.50]: I believe that the motion will be supported by the majority of the members of this House. The appointment of an expert irrigation engineer to carry out the investigations suggested, has much to commend it. From what the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) has told us, in spite of the fact that there has been an increase in the population of the State as a whole of 30 per cent., that of the North-West has decreased by $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. during the last 10 years. That in itself is sufficiently serious to justify the most careful consideration being given to the motion. Unless we are prepared to do something with that great territory, we must expect other people to attempt to do so. As a matter of fact, the area referred to in the motion has been reported upon by laymen, and their information was that it was a well-watered country, but that the water supplies required conserving. Under existing conditions the water flows down the rivers into the ocean, and consequently the moisture that is necessary during the remainder of the year, is not available. I

recall that in about 1915, Sir Hal Colebatch visited the North-West with an expedition, and he brought back a large number of views of the country. Those of us who were privileged to see them learnt, in many instances for the first time, that the North-West was a remarkable country with regard to its many rivers. Sir Hal showed views of the country by means of lantern slides. I venture to hope that in connection with this motion relating to the North-West, at least serious consideration will be given to it.

Mr. Davy: At least let us be honest about it.

Mr. SAMPSON: The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) has never ceased to urge the importance of doing something for the North-West. That part of the State should be utilised to its fullest capacity. How can we expect success to attend the operations of the League of Nations unless we utilise the country that we have at our disposal. We know that other countries are over-populated, and in some it is practically impossible to find room for the ever-increasing population.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Are you suggesting black labour?

Hon. G. Taylor: Or Maltese?

Mr. SAMPSON: The population of some countries is expanding to such an extent that the retention of so vast a territory in an undeveloped state constitutes a serious menace to the Commonwealth as a whole. Whether those who have eyes on our territory be black, yellow or white will make no difference if we fail to utilise the country we have within our own borders. If we do not realise it, we must expect others to endeavour to do so. We have adopted a dog-in-the-manger attitude. Speaking from the standpoint of the Commonwealth generally, we are committed definitely to a White Australia policy, and we say that Australia must be populated by white people. That is a fine ideal, and I hope it will be preserved. How can we hope for it to be preserved and for Australia to be kept white, if we allow the great northern parts of the State to remain unpopulated?

Hon. G. Taylor: Oh, dear!

Mr. SAMPSON: I know that the hon. member has heard these statements over and over again. Let him remember that Earl Roberts spoke on many occasions about impending war. People said it would never come, but it came. And who will say that

the Empire was prepared when it did come? Who will say in the not far distant future, when an attempt has been made by a foreign people to settle in the North-West, that no warning voice was raised here? Warning voices have been raised from time to time, and during the last half century they have been heard in this Chamber. In the years to come the people of Australia will marvel because of the long delay and complete indifference of the people of Western Australia in respect to the importance of occupying the northern portions of the State. We are indebted to the member for Gascoyne for stressing the importance of doing something in a practical way to deal with the position. We should approve of a policy for developing the North and the North-West, and we should support the Government in any movement that may encourage them to engage an expert engineer to make inquiries as to the suitability of the rivers of the North and North-West for irrigation and closer settlement purposes. When we speak of irrigation, we refer to work the practicability of which has been proved in many countries. If we go to Egypt we can see the crops ripening—

The Premier: In the desert.

Mr. SAMPSON: —in various stages throughout the whole year. If we go to the great apple orchards of Okanagan in British Columbia, Canada, we can see that irrigation has made possible apple growing in extensive areas there. If we proceed to some parts of the United States of America, we can see that the desert has been changed into a country that is flourishing and blossoming like the rose. In California we find that the fruit production depends entirely upon irrigation. We have seen what can be done there, and we also know what has been done in our own country. The Mildura district was dingo country in earlier days; to-day it is an area where there is wonderful productivity and where dried fruits are produced in large quantities, entirely due to irrigation. Had it not been for irrigation, many other settlements along the River Murray, including Berri, Blanchetown, Renmark, Cobdogla, Pyap, Wakerie, Merbein, and other similar centres of production would be uninhabited by settlers and would still be given over to the wild dogs.

The late C. J. De Garis said that when the Murray and the Darling Rivers were developed there would be along those rivers a settled population of no less than five million souls. I fully believe in the truth of that statement.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Is that a tropical country?

Mr. SAMPSON: It is a sub-tropical country. But whether or not it is tropical is not the point. It is a question of the feasibility of irrigation as a means whereby production in agriculture is secured. We know what has been done in Mildura and those other centres, and we know that that result has been brought about by irrigation. That being so, who would dispute that consideration should be given to our own territory? Why should Western Australia be the Cinderella of enterprise? Why should we always sit back? Are we waiting for another son of Western Australia to arise and say, "The North-West shall be developed." I hope the Premier will not only assist in carrying this motion but—

The Premier: I will not assist if this goes on much longer.

Mr. SAMPSON: We look to the Premier to see that a real effort is made to ascertain the true position in respect of the North-West and set out to remedy it. The scientific watering of portion of that area would bring untold wealth to Western Australia and justify the expenditure of every effort. It has been suggested that the appointment of an irrigation engineer would involve the expenditure of a good deal of money. I do not agree with that. But even if it did, the issues are so great, the importance is so manifest, that no effort should be lost. I look to the Minister for Agriculture. It is a matter that should be very close to his heart. Anybody occupying the position of Minister must feel that on him to a large extent rests the responsibility for the continued non-use of this territory.

The Premier: Are you stone-walling? We are nearing the end of the session.

Mr. SAMPSON: I understood the Premier was anxious to hear this statement. I acknowledge there is a tendency here to do too much talking, and perhaps in respect of the non-development of the North-West too much has been said and too little done. The member for Gascoyne stressed the beef shortage. I had the privilege of referring

to this subject a few weeks ago, following on my visit to London. Members were good enough to listen attentively to what I had to say on that occasion, so I will not repeat myself. But in the latest copy to hand of the monthly bulletin issued by the Department of Agriculture, Sacramento, California, appears this statement—

Since 1925, there has been a consistent decline in the number of cattle raised in the United States. The 1928 report shows 55,696,000 head, or 13.8 per cent. less than in 1925. The period immediately after the war, 1920-1925, showed a decided increase over the cattle production of 1909-1913. The present high prices of beef are chiefly due to the decline in production. The consumption of beef has also lowered. During 1925 and 1926 it rose somewhat but remained below pre-war figures.

That statement alone is sufficient to justify considering the utilisation of that portion of the North-West from a commercial standpoint. Cattle are needed, and the North-West is ideal country for the production of cattle, provided the necessary water supplies are available. The position calls for definite treatment. While individual efforts to develop the North-West have been made, and while the men who have grown up in the North-West are strong, healthy virile men, the progress generally has been far from satisfactory. That is shown by the diminishing figures of population. Queensland has made progress with her northern country, but unfortunately that cannot be said of our North. The Department of Public Health could materially assist in overcoming the disabilities of climate. Plenty of destructive criticism has been advanced, but the only way in which we can ascertain the real position is by having an examination made of the country by an expert irrigation engineer.

Hon. G. Taylor: Why stonewall the thing?

Mr. SAMPSON: Realising the area of the North that would be well watered if water were conserved by modern irrigation principles, the rich Kimberley country which still remains unused, and remembering that the tropical territory of Australia exceeds one-third of the continent, I must say that for that and various other reasons I hope the motion will be carried. Unfortunately we are not sufficiently well acquainted with our own country, and the member for Gascoyne is deserving of our thanks for having directed attention to the importance of having an examination made. I hope that not

only will the motion be carried, but that the request contained therein will be put into effect.

MR. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [8.8]: I am sorry the vaudeville variety show by the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) has taken up so much of the time of the House to-night. He has made a long speech about very little. He admitted that he has never been to the North, that he knows nothing whatever about it. His opinions have been gained from people met in pubs and clubs and trams and trains. He has attacked the men born in the North and reared in the North, and he had the effrontery to accuse me of knowing nothing about it. I cannot think of any excuse for the member for Nelson, except that something he had for dinner has disagreed with him. I will support the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo). I compliment him upon the way in which he put his case to the House. When everybody is finished jeering, when the Premier has finished saying that he is getting pretty tired, I am still going to break a lance for the North. With all due respect to the Premier, I ask him to give me a few more minutes.

The Premier: You are the only one who knows anything about the question.

Mr. TEESDALE: The member for Pilbara (Mr. Lamond) gave his experiences, very ably too, regarding the settling of small sheepgrowers. He made out a very good case, and it would be well if the Government looked into a few of the facts he has given. Having the permission of the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley), I shall deal briefly with East Kimberley, knowing that I am on safe ground there and that the strictures passed by the member for Nelson in regard to the water supplies could have no relation to East Kimberley, where we have huge rivers running 40 feet high in the wet season. There we have a regular season that can be depended upon as Sunday following Saturday. We know that the country there has some splendid soil and that there are large tracts of it. We had the experience of the last survey party that went up there. Here I might call attention to the proverbial modesty of the Leader of the Opposition in omitting to mention the fact that during his last term of office he was instrumental in sending up that party to classify the country known as Elephant

Hill. That is a wonderful country. I only wish it were in my electorate.

Hon. G. Taylor: What else do you want?

Mr. TŒESDALE: Any remarks by the member for Mount Margaret will be dealt with hip and thigh, for I have only a few minutes left. I should very much like to have that Elephant Hill country in my electorate. In my own district I am not too popular when advocating anything in the shape of tropical agriculture. I do not know that the water there is sufficiently reliable to justify it. As to this Elephant Hill country, Mr. Angwin, the present Agent-General, very capably took up the work where my chief left it, and went to a lot of trouble in having that country properly classified. We have a splendid area there, but unfortunately no subsequent attempt has been made to settle it. I recognise the difficulty of getting the attention of the young Australians that were to replace the pioneers lately sneered at by a University professor, who made a jibe of them. If that professor is half as good a man as those old chaps were at 60 and 70 years of age, he will be a very good sort of citizen. But for him to talk about the pioneers that went up there, and the three months they spent on the trip in a little schooner with their wives and families, their cattle and household goods is sheer nonsense. They were marooned for months at a time. Those men went through condensed hell. I have known them carry their ewes ashore in their arms, the animals too weak to stand on their feet, and have their boys feed them with cut grass, trying to get a little strength back into them. Yet this professor, this University magnate, jeers at those men. I have known those pioneers and their wives, known them of my own knowledge; not like the member for Nelson, who has to depend on what he hears in some pub or club. Those men have been without flour for months, and their wives and kiddies have been living on pollard that the member for Nelson feeds his ducks with. Those men have been for long periods without tobacco, and have had to be content with smoking tea and charred moleskin. Those are the men who made the North. Fine men they were, and fine men their successors have remained. It is a big thing for the pub that has the patronage of the North-Westerners and others who meet there to talk about the great South-

West. I am not blaming any Government for these happenings, but I am blaming Parliament for the adoption of a dog in the manger policy. Parliament has said, "We can do nothing, and will not allow anyone else the right to try." If we have not the money, for God's sake let us borrow it from the Federal Government. Of course the Government will not give the Federal authorities the lower North, where all the big rentals are. The lower North is carefully excluded. They say, "We are quite content to entertain an offer for the east and west Kimberleys, for that is a little inaccessible, and the rents are low." If they would only do that, I should be satisfied. The Elephant Hill country is one of the finest tracts ever discovered in the State. The report of the party that was in charge of Mr. Drake-Brockman was a splendid one and very exhaustive. There is no doubt that this party came across some unique positions. At one place there was a deep water creek running for two miles. Wherever they sunk they were able to get water at three or four feet. There is a splendid deep water frontage in Cambridge Gulf where steamers can lie within a stone's throw of the shore and take on goods. They are also within two hours' steam of the Wyndham Meatworks where the stock could be taken. I am in favour of pig breeding in that district. I do advocate a few lines, and peanuts is not one of them. I want something that can be grown readily with white labour. We can grow maize, tobacco and breed thousands of pigs cheaper than can be done anywhere else in the State. With 25 acres of sweet potatoes and maize there would be no need to purchase an ounce of tucker from the south. These paddocks could be brought under cultivation at very little expense. I am sure with a little encouragement many of the employees of the Wyndham Meat Works would keep their families up there instead of coming to Perth and waiting here until the next season commenced. These men could readily embark upon the pig-raising industry. They could get the country cheaply, and it would be readily accessible. There is nothing arduous about the life up there, and the task is within the ability of any ordinary man. If we can only get a settlement up there to begin with, some good will have been done. If we cannot do this ourselves,

we should give publicity to the matter by supporting the motion. The member for Nelson roars and jeers at the idea of an engineer going up there at a cost of millions. He knows nothing about either the duties or the pay of an engineer.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Would he not need a staff?

Mr. TEESDALE: Two or three reputable men would not cost a great deal. If they made a report it would draw more attention to the North-West if circulated in London than all the speeches made in this House. This is not much to ask of any Government. Each Government has done something for the North. After I had 35 interviews with him, the Leader of the Opposition gave me a jetty, which was a very successful undertaking. The present Premier also guaranteed that we should have another jetty in one of the old districts.

The Premier: I remember being interviewed both in Melbourne and Sydney.

Mr. TEESDALE: I chased the Premier to Sydney, and got this promise of a jetty. It will put fresh heart into my electors, and will greatly solidify my position at the next elections.

The Premier: That was the idea in promising a jetty.

Mr. TEESDALE: The engineer in charge of the party I have spoken of reported to the effect that irrigation was an essential aid to any increase in population and production in the North. Population is the one thing that the North needs. The request that has been made is a reasonable one. I do not ask that it should be carried out next week or next month. The Government might even appoint one or more of our own engineers. All they would be required to do would be to gauge the rivers, determine the amount of water available, classify the river basins, and note the areas suitable for irrigation. The work would not take many months to carry out. We do not want the 20 rivers visited, and would be glad that the engineers should confine their attention to the Gascoyne and Kimberley Rivers. The Gascoyne has never had a chance. Only one or two small experiments have been made there. We have heard mouthed with greatunction statements cavilling at nearly £10,000 having been spent in cotton growing. That sum might as well have been thrown into the sea for all the chance it had of bearing fruit. I know the class of man who went up there.

Many of them should never have left their mothers. Other countries that do not possess one-fourth of the advantages this does have progressed wonderfully. Africa not long ago was spoken of as a dark continent, suggestive of swamps, malaria, and other evils of the kind. A wonderful transformation has been effected there by means of capital. Within the near future there will be an All-British built railway connecting the Soudan with Rhodesia, 5,000 miles in length. That is a wonderful transformation to effect. It is not long since we read of the extraordinary dangers and vicissitudes of travellers in Africa. There are now thousands of miles of railway connecting the coastal towns. The development that has occurred in Kenya colony and Tanganyika is wonderful. Railways extend from the coast to the inland towns, and the country is now peopled with white settlers. There are also 25,000 miles of motor roads constructed.

Mr. Angelo: And they are running 30,000,000 sheep there.

Mr. TEESDALE: We want a chartered company in the North with unlimited capital. We must have publicity. The scheme should be backed up by experienced men of good standing. If we authorise Mr. Angwin, the Agent General, to circularise this information, I will guarantee that he will do it. No one was keener on the settlement of the Elephant Hill project or was more earnest in getting the blocks classified and surveyed than he was. If he had stayed a little longer I would have had a great deal of assistance from him. I wish now to refer to the wonderful development at Beadon, which is one of the most extraordinary occurrences that has ever taken place in the State. A few years ago the place was unpopulated. Between June, 1925, and June, 1928, 39,000 sheep were shipped away from that place. Most of these would otherwise have died in their paddocks because of the drought. Prior to this it cost 4s. a head to lighten the sheep out to the ships and another 5s. for freight, upon wethers the owners of which would have been glad to accept 5s. for them in the paddocks. We also shipped nearly 40,000 bales of wool at a cost of 1s. a bale instead of the old price of 5s. I hope members will bear these illustrations in mind. This jetty has meant the saving of a considerable sum of money to the pastoralists, and they in turn spend a good deal of their capital in the south.

When they are broken down in health and can no longer stand the stress of the summers, they come south and buy homes in the metropolitan area and invest their money in other ways. It now costs 1d. a head to ship the sheep instead of 4s. by means of a lighter. In nine cases out of ten 20 per cent. of the sheep were smothered before they reached the vessel, and packed like herrings they were sent out with ropes round their necks. What fine mutton they became! I have copious notes but the Premier has been very good in allowing private motions and Bills to be discussed, and I appreciate his action. I know also that the member for Claremont has a little contribution to make and therefore will not do him in the eye if I can help it.

MR. LATHAM (York) [8.31] : I support the motion moved by the member for Gascoyne if for no other reason that it will help us to enter into competition with Argentine. Something should certainly be done in the way of irrigation and all that the hon. member asks is that the Premier should appoint an engineer, whose reputation is above reproach, to go to the North and report upon the possibility of irrigation in that part of the State. There is no doubt about it that irrigation has helped the Argentine to conquer the English market so far as beef is concerned, and the only chance we have of entering into competition with that country is to deal with our North in the manner that the Argentine dealt with their areas.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is Argentine irrigated?

MR. LATHAM: A lot of it is. It is not irrigated from rivers, but from bores and wells. Whilst I was in London I met a South Australian who was representing an Argentine company in London, and he told me he thought we should be able to improve our North-West seeing that our stock were continually kept well fed with green feed. Recently I read that the Migration and Development Commission proposed to spend something like three millions in New South Wales in damming the Lachlan River. The country there is practically an arid region, as you, Mr. Speaker, are no doubt aware. If money can be made available through the Migration Commission for that purpose, surely we should be able to get something also to investigate the possibilities of irrigation in our North. I believe it will be more

profitable to spend money in the north of this State than in that part of New South Wales that I refer to. I have no desire that anything should be taken from New South Wales, but I consider we too should get our share for irrigation purposes. I often think that the northern people must regard the southern people of Western Australia as always ready to render lip service year after year, and not go beyond that. We carry pious resolutions in this House and that seems to be the best we can do. Unless we do something to encourage population to go to the North, our safety must be imperilled. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion moved by the member for Gascoyne, and I hope effect will be given to it as early as possible. Perhaps the Premier might be able to persuade the Commonwealth Government to advance us some money under the migration agreement for the purpose suggested in the motion.

Question put and passed.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Bill returned from the Council with a schedule of four amendments which were now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Angelo in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

No. 1—Clause 21, Subclause (1).—Strike out the word "lease" in line nineteen.

No. 2—Clause 24.—Strike out the words "competent authority" in line thirty-six, and insert "board."

No. 3—Clause 25, Subclause (1).—Strike out the word "lease" in line three.

On motion by Minister for Works the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

No. 4.—Insert new clause to stand as Clause thirty-three, as follows:—

"33. Subject to the regulations made by the Minister under the preceding provisions of this Act, the Governor may make such further regulations as are necessary to give effect to this Act."

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is the usual clause dealing with regulations. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A little while ago the Minister said that another place could not do anything right and now he accepts an amendment like this. It is a double-barrelled amendment. The Minister should not have power to make regulations. Apparently the Minister may do as he pleases and ultimately at the request of the Minister the Governor may also make regulations. It is ridiculous and the amendment ought to be resisted. The Minister seems to have been tamed by the Upper House.

The Minister for Works: I think you are trying to soothe me on.

The Premier: Even the bravest soldier gets weary of fighting.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Apparently the Minister has gained a little experience and from now on we shall expect him to improve. If the Minister says we should accept the amendment I shall not object.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am sorry the Minister has so readily accepted the amendment of another place.

The Minister for Works: What is this, a conspiracy?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We know that the Governor will not attempt to make regulations in any circumstances; it is not part of his function. The Minister will satisfy Cabinet that regulations are needed, and they will be framed and submitted to Executive Council for the Governor's signature. One would think the new clause had been drafted by an expert clown in an American show, and I am surprised at the Minister accepting it.

Question put and passed.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE (No. 3).

All Stages.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. H. Millington—Leederville) [8.47]
in moving the second reading said: The Perth City Council have embarked on a very

ambitious development scheme in respect of their endowment lands situated between the western boundary of the city and City Beach. There has been a road through the picturesque country to the beach for a number of years, and the City Council have now constructed a return road which will make a circular drive.

The Premier: I do not think we should agree to this Bill until the council change that foreign name of boulevard.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They are now engaged on a subdivision for a model seaside resort near the City Beach. The road to the proposed townsite is constructed on approved town-planning lines, but the road proposed to be closed interferes with the subdivision. No regard has been paid to the contour of the country, which consists of sandhills, some of them drifting sandhills, and it is necessary to close the road and vest it in the City Council so that they will have the same control over the road as they have over the endowment lands. When that is done and the subdivision is completed, they will survey a road to take the place of the closed road.

Hon. G. Taylor: They will declare a road equal to this one?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The plan has already been drafted, but the council cannot interfere with an existing road. The departmental officers have examined the proposal and they have no objection to it. The measure will not have effect until proclaimed, and it will not be proclaimed until the deviation of the present road has been declared. The council cannot complete the subdivision until they know whether the road will be closed and vested in them, but they must complete their part of the contract before the measure is proclaimed. The City Council are entitled to some encouragement for the excellent work they have carried out, and the passing of the Bill will assist them in their development of the endowment lands. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST.

To Disallow Regulation.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.56]: I crave the permission of the House to move that a certain regulation laid on the Table of the House be disallowed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member be permitted to proceed?

Leave granted.

Mr. THOMSON: I thank the House for granting the opportunity. I move—

That the regulation made by the Fremantle Harbour Trust relating to wheat for export, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 14th December and laid on the Table of the House this day be and is hereby disallowed.

The regulation will have a very serious effect on the wheat industry of the State. In view of the fact that the Fremantle Harbour Trust showed a profit of £133,000 last year, and that the price of wheat is falling, it is not wise that any further impost should be placed upon the handling of wheat at Fremantle. The old charge was 2.275d. per bag and it is to be increased to 2.775d., an increase of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bag. The charge per ton worked out at 2s. 3.982d. and it is to be increased to 2s. 10.132d., or an increase of 6.15d. per ton, equal to 22 per cent. For taking the wheat from trucks alongside steamers and putting it into ships' slings the old charge was .75d. per bag and 9.225d. per ton, whereas the new charge is 1.125d. per bag and 1s. 1.837d. per ton, or an increase of .375d. per bag and 4.612d. per ton, an increase of 50 per cent. The handling charge at Bunbury where the shippers are permitted to handle the wheat is .66d. per bag, or $\frac{1}{2}$ d. below the Fremantle charge. The charge at Bunbury is 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton below the Fremantle charge. The percentage of Bunbury charges below those of Fremantle is 41. The old charge for the use of the gantry was 5s. per hour. The proposed new charge is 15s. per hour, or 10s. per hour increase. Suppose one were loading flour, the charge for the gantry would be 11s., and if the gantry were not used the charge would be 15s. The use of the ma-

chinery means a charge of 11s., and not to use the machinery means a charge of 15s. The whole of the increased charges must be paid by the shippers, and not by the ship owners. The increases mean a penalty to be borne by the wheat-growers. It is estimated that the net loss to the growers in the Fremantle zone will be £11,200, or a little more than an eighth of a penny per bushel. We have no coin under a farthing, and it will mean that immediately the regulation comes into force, buyers of wheat throughout Western Australia will reduce the price to the farmers by $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel. That is a serious loss. It is also to be pointed out that regulation No. 2, which increases the previous charge of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. is regarded as an imposition. After two years' negotiations between the shippers and the shipowners, the shipowners agreed to meet the shippers by bearing half the cost of delivering wheat from trucks to ship's slings. If the regulation is not disallowed, the whole of the fruits from these protracted negotiations will go to the Fremantle Harbour Trust, instead of benefiting the farming community. Last year the Fremantle Harbour Trust paid into Consolidated Revenue, after providing for all legitimate charges such as interest, sinking fund and working expenses, no less a sum than £133,000. If the regulation is not disallowed, what is really an export tax will be placed upon the primary producers of Western Australia. It may be argued that wheat handling does not pay the Harbour Trust. All I can say is that if it does not pay the trust, the shippers will be only too pleased to carry on the handling of wheat in the port of Fremantle at the old rates. They will then show a substantial profit. It is interesting to note that port dues totaling £16,000 were paid by ships loading full cargoes of wheat during the past 12 months. The amount makes no allowance for ships which loaded parcels of wheat. The obvious intention of the Government is expressed in the Fremantle Harbour Trust Amendment Act, No. 35 of 1906, as follows:—

If in the opinion of the Governor the Commissioners shall not, in any year, have collected and received from dues, charges, rents, and other sources of revenue sufficient, or shall in any year have collected and received as aforesaid more than sufficient, to provide for the lawful expenditure of the Commissioners, including interest and contribution to the sinking fund, in respect of the value of the property vested in and charged against them under

Sections 56 and 57, or if for any other reason the Governor thinks fit so to do, the Governor may revise the harbour dues, harbour improvement rates, wharfage charges, and other dues, tolls, rates, fees and charges prescribed by the regulations under this Act, and it shall be the duty of the Commissioners to impose and collect such dues and charges in accordance with such revision until the Governor shall otherwise order.

Anyone reading that provision will readily agree that it was only intended the Harbour Trust should pay their way: and they are doing more than that. I hope, therefore, that the House will agree to disallow the regulation, which will impose a serious burden on the farming community. The charges will only apply to the port of Fremantle, but private buyers will be compelled to offer a farthing less per bushel for all the wheat produced in Western Australia. I appeal to the Government to agree to the disallowance of the regulation, which is most inopportune.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [9.10]: A considerable sum of money is annually paid into Consolidated Revenue from the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and that is quite enough. I do not think we ought to make a public utility a tax-gathering concern. If public utilities return a little clear profit, it is all we can expect. The charges imposed upon the wheat growers are a serious matter. No section of the community is taxed more heavily than they are. I am indeed sorry that the regulation has been brought down at the last minute. It is impossible for me to work out to-night what the increases will amount to, but the sum will be considerable when applied to the export of wheat. This year I hope we shall send away not less than 26,000,000 bushels. Ordinarily we should send away far more than that. Even a fraction of a penny applied to each bushel of such a quantity amounts to a large sum. There is no reason why the wheat-growers should be penalised time and again. Already this week we have passed a measure which will add to the cost of wheat production fairly considerably, without doing anyone much good. There is no reason at all why we should increase the burden upon wheat, as here proposed, since the port charges are more than sufficient—last year they were more than sufficient by £130,000—to meet all outgoings, including interest. We must

average things. We cannot say that each line of produce shall yield enough revenue to meet all Harbour Trust expenses. It is the wheatgrower who is responsible for the importation of most of the goods that pay charges to the Harbour Trust. Were it not for the export of wheat, we should not be importing nearly as much as we are. This year I hope we shall send away some millions of pounds' worth of wheat, and every pound that the wheat brings will be represented by goods, which will come almost wholly through the port of Fremantle.

Mr. Sleeman: Could not that argument be applied to other exports, such as timber?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Certainly.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: And to other ports?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, but the charges at other ports would not be so great. I object to charges on the primary producers being increased anywhere, and particularly in a case where there is no need to impose an additional burden, except by way of increasing the collection of revenue. The Harbour Trust did not want the increase.

Mr. Thomson: I do not think the Treasury wanted it either.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then the Government should not have permitted these regulations.

Hon. G. Taylor: They may have slipped through.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No; they were seriously considered. Possibly someone said to the Minister, "Here is £16,000 more revenue for you," and the Minister said, "Put it on to the farmer."

The Premier: In such a case I would say, "No: the farmer has had enough put on to him."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then the Premier will agree to the disallowance of these regulations.

The Premier: I will consider the matter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is too late to give much consideration to anything. These regulations mean £16,000 to the farmer, and possibly more. We do not know that the wheat buyers will consider the extra charge a farthing, which cannot

be split when buying by the bushel. I hope members representing Fremantle will recognise that their port is disadvantaged by these regulations. I hope those hon. members will be true to the electors who sent them here, and that they will protest stoutly against such a regulation. We want to do what is just and right, and the law of this country does not contemplate that the Fremantle Harbour shall be used merely to gather in taxes. The conveniences of the port have been paid for by those who use them, and when those charges are met, the Government should cry a halt. The Leader of the Country Party was perfectly right in introducing the motion. The additional cost involved will be fairly considerable. The various increased charges represent a large impost, and I hope the Premier will agree that he has secured enough already and that these additional charges should not be imposed upon people who are paying far too much already. I refer to the farmers who have had to shoulder the burdens. I support the motion moved by the member for Katanning and hope that the regulation will be disallowed.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [9.16]: I support the motion. It comes to me as a surprise to know what has prompted this move. The Leader of the Opposition has pointed out that it probably represents a loss to the farming community of about £16,000. Certainly there will be a loss to the pool of at least £11,200. Coming on top of the demurrage charges that the farmers had to pay last year through no fault of their own, and bearing in mind that the profits shown by the Fremantle Harbour Trust last year amounted to £130,000, I am at a loss to understand why this additional impost should be placed upon the farmers. I hope the House will support the motion for the disallowance of the regulations.

On motion by Mr. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

BILL—POOR PERSONS LEGAL ASSISTANCE.

Council's Amendments.

Bill returned from the Council with a schedule of 11 amendments which were now considered:

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 2—Insert before the interpretation of "Minister" the following words:—"Committee" shall mean a committee of the Law Society of Western Australia."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is no objection to the amendment because we propose to co-operate with the Law Society, and the amendment merely provides for an interpretation to cover the committee of the Law Society, should we secure their co-operation. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed: the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 2—Insert after "and" in line 17, the words "if such poor person is married then he or she and his or her wife or husband, as the case may be, are not together worth the said sum of £50 and that such poor person."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This means that if a man should declare himself to be a poor person and his wife have considerable assets, the latter fact must be taken into consideration when the qualifications of the man to receive assistance under the Bill are taken into account. In some instances the wife may have considerable means, although to all outward appearances the man may have qualifications entitling him to the benefits of the legislation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But he may be separated from his wife.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But in the vast majority of instances their relations would be those that normally exist between man and wife. While there is a point to be considered should the husband and wife be separated. I do not think it is of sufficient importance to warrant disagreeing from the Council's amendment and perhaps going to a conference. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: As the Minister has pointed out, there may be virtues in regard to the amendment, but there may be many instances in which the parties may be separated and that will lead to difficulties.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hon. member will notice that in the latter portion of the definition of "Poor Person," as it appears in the Bill, the position he refers to is covered.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is all right.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 2—Insert at the end the following:—"Society" shall mean the Law Society of Western Australia."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 3—Insert after "Governor" in line 4 the words "may appoint the Law Society of Western Australia or a committee of the society (if willing to act), such committee to be approved by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Western Australia for the purpose of carrying out all or any objects or purposes of this Act and failing such society or committee being willing to act the Governor."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I propose to agree to the amendment. When the Bill was first placed before hon. members, it was suggested that we should co-operate with the Law Society of Western Australia, and confer upon them certain powers to enable that to be done. We could not legislate specifically in that direction because we had not negotiated with the Law Society. The amendment will make it optional, so that if we can enter into an agreement with the committee of that organisation, the necessary powers will be contained in the Bill. If no arrangement can be arrived at, then the Governor will be able to appoint a public solicitor.

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. Davy: This merely makes more obvious what it was already obvious you could do without it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 5. Clause 5, Subclause 2—Insert after "application," in line 24, the words "to the society or committee and failing them."

No. 6. Clause 5, Subclause (3)—Insert at the beginning the words "society or committee or."

No. 7. Clause 5, Subclause 4—Insert after "the," at the end of line 38, the words "society or committee or."

No. 8. Clause 7, Subclause 2—Insert after "the," in line 37 the words "society or committee if acting hereunder or to the." Delete "he is" in line 39.

No. 9. Clause 7, Subclause 2—Delete the words "he shall lodge," in line 42, and insert the words "there shall be lodged."

On motions by the Minister for Justice, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

No. 10. Insert the following new clause to stand as Clause 12:—

12. Should the public solicitor or practitioner acting for a poor person discover at any time that the poor person or the wife or husband, as the case may be, of the poor person is possessed of means beyond £50 he shall at once report the matter to the Minister, who may withdraw and cancel any leave given to proceed under this Act and take such action thereon as he may think proper.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This means that if the solicitor appointed to appear for a poor person discovers in the course of his investigations that his client is worth more money than he had represented himself to be, the solicitor shall communicate with the Minister, who may withdraw the assistance. The solicitor would have done the same without this new clause. Still, I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 11. Insert the following new clause:—

(1.) Except as herein provided no public solicitor or practitioner shall solicit, take, or agree to take or seek to obtain any payment, fee, profit, or reward for the conducting of proceedings or any expenses in connection therewith or make or attempt to make any arrangement or agreement to share in the proceeds of any judgment or moneys or property which may be obtained or recovered on behalf of any poor person, and any solicitor or practitioner so doing shall be liable at the suit of Minister to repay or redeliver the same to the Minister on demand, and also to pay by way of penalty such sum as the Minister may in his sole discretion demand or fix up to double the amount of the payment, fee, profit, or reward, moneys or property received by such solicitor or practitioner, and the name of every such person will be removed from the said list referred to in section four thereof.

(2.) If any payment, fee, profit, reward, money or property shall be made, given, paid, delivered or promised all right or leave given to any poor person to proceed or to receive legal assistance under this Act shall be cancelled and withdrawn, and such poor person shall not again be entitled to receive legal assistance under this Act in any proceedings which may be brought or instituted by or against him save by leave of the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This, of course, came from the other Chamber. I do not know where the mover of these amendments got the whole thing from. I do not see very much in this new clause, except the fact that the solicitor who is appointed cannot make any arrangements in regard to costs. He is supposed to take the case gratuitously and, under this, if he is found making a profit out of it the Minister can fine him.

Mr. Davy: The Minister is not the person to fine him.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Anyhow, the situation is never likely to arise, so there can be no grave objection to the thing.

Mr. Davy: But it is absurd. Another place cannot persist in this.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I doubt if it is worth conferring about or risking the Bill over. The case can never happen. Some people seem to think that if a Bill goes through another place without being amended, members there are not doing their duty. I have no very strong opinion about this amendment, but in deference to the opinion of the House, as expressed by one or two interjections, I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and on motion by the Minister for Justice a committee consisting of Mr. Davy, the Hon. G. Taylor and the mover drew up reasons for not agreeing to amendment No. 11.

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

MOTION—DILLON CASE.

To inquire by Royal Commission.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [9.45]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the case of the Crown v. Mrs. V. G. Dillon.

Some weeks ago, when this motion was on the Notice Paper, the Minister for Justice stated in a speech that the liberty of the subject was as vital as the health of the subject. These words are very true and apply to the case I am now dealing with. Particulars of this trouble were published in the local Press. The matter came before me by way of a letter from the Mayor of Cottesloe, Mr. Bryan, who on the 17th November wrote to me as follows:—

During the past month I have been waited upon by a Mr. Dillon—a resident of Broomstreet, North Cottesloe, who lives within 100 yards of my home—several times relative to what he maintains was a malicious persecution and prosecution of his wife by some of the neighbours, aided, he avers, by the detectives and police; and claiming from me, in my official capacity, some protection from what he considered a grave inspired conspiracy, calculated to defame his wife and incidentally to financially, mentally and morally cripple his future prospects and those of his children in this State. From time to time letters were received by me setting out the unusual and, in my opinion, disgraceful tactics displayed by those responsible for the prosecution in the light of the “*nolle prosequi*” now issued without any apology of any sort in favour of Mrs. Dillon. I feel that this matter merits the earnest consideration of Parliament, deserves a thorough impartial inquiry by a Royal Commission with the object of probing the reasons that prompted the remarkable and, in my view, un-British methods that appear to have been employed from a certain source to secure, at all costs, a quick and summary conviction in the police court on the grounds of insanity. These are the features of the whole business that cry aloud for inquiry. Naturally a husband and father of three well brought up boys has been much agitated; but he has acted with commendable restraint. His wife was arrested, striped and kept in a cell—then thrown into a mental observation ward. The shocking methods adopted by the police, the separation of a child of six from his mother is, I consider, the blackest blot on the fair and widely respected force entrusted with the maintenance of law and order in this State. Should the story sworn to by Mrs. Dillon be true in all particulars—and that sworn statement demands investigation—I fear that, under conditions such as those alleged, no one is safe in this State. In writing to ask your immediate counsel, or, better still, action, I do so with a full sense of responsibility. For several years, nearly, I have known Mr. Dillon. He is a stranger in a strange land. He works—so does his wife. As ex-groupers they have, as educated people, endeavoured to explain to their friends overseas, particularly in England, the stupidity that it is claimed permeates the officialdom of this fair land of ours, particularly in connection with their experiences in the group settlements. That extracts from their letters have been printed in England, in view of the controversy here and there,

is not to be unexpected. Surely any form of administration would welcome criticism provided the criticism is not defamatory of the country. I have inquired into the bona fides of Mr. and Mrs. Dillon. Their letters are enclosed. The wretched bolstered-up charges—the merits of which I am not concerned in so much, have caused mental anguish and strain on these unfortunate people. The Press has broadcasted the police court proceedings here, there and everywhere. With the “*nolle prosequi*” entered the stain of that shocking business will stick for a generation. The humiliation of the husband, the degradation of the wife, and the definite, calculated and wicked impression now indelibly formed in the minds of those adolescent boys is something that will never be eradicated, except by like announcements conveying to them, to their people in the Homeland, and the citizens of Western Australia at large, Mrs. Dillon’s innocence, and an explanation of the circumstances that brought about the change of front in respect to the Criminal Court proceedings that have now been abandoned, and the punishment of those responsible. These people have been faced with an unparalleled problem in defending their liberties in this British country. They have apprised their Excellencies, the Governor General, and the State Governor of their plight. Having lost their money, the group farm, their all, they have been forced to borrow from strangers to pay the expenses involved—a considerable amount. Surely this case calls for the closest investigation.

The Minister for Justice: Do you say that was a sworn statement?

Mr. NORTH: That is what the letter from the mayor said.

The Premier: I understand that is merely a statement of the mayor of Cottesloe.

Mr. NORTH: Yes. On receipt of that letter I made inquiries and had several interviews with Mr. Bryan and others. I was also able to obtain a sworn statement from Mrs. Dillon in regard to the circumstances arising out of the letter. It is a statement under the Evidence Act, a declaration which is not exactly the same as an affidavit.

The Premier: It is merely an expression of opinion.

Mr. NORTH: The mayor’s letter is a general statement of the case, but I have from Mrs. Dillon a statement sworn before a solicitor of her side of the case. Her statement bears out in a measure the contents of the letter from the mayor. I will read extracts from it in order to inform members as to the issues in the case. It is really a statutory declaration.

Mr. Davy: It has the same effect as an affidavit. A false statement in it involves perjury.

Mr. NORTH: The statement from Mrs. Dillon is to the following effect:—

Sept. 28th, 1928. At 2.15 p.m. Detective-Sergeant Cameron, Policewoman Dunlop, and a plain-clothes man called. Detective Cameron read out a warrant for my arrest. I said, “This is dreadful—I am innocent of all this beastly charge.” He said to the policewoman, “Take her to get a change of linen—I am going to search.” He produced no search warrant (neither is there one on the file) and absolutely ransacked my house.

Under the criminal law there is no necessity for a search warrant in criminal cases. In some instances it is possible to search without a warrant. Why was a warrant issued rather than a simple summons?

—All he could find was—

1. Three articles I had written out in the rough some months back and never submitted.

2. Five letters I had written to friends. These were returned. On searching a drawer he came across a letter I had received from Sir James Mitchell on the group settlement. He turned and snarled, “Yes, I have seen your articles on group settlement.” The postman came. Mrs. Dunlop handed me a letter from my husband. Cameron snatched it from my hand and read it before allowing me to do so. He then grabbed my packet of daily letters I had received from my husband since he left. He read through them. I said sarcastically, “Incriminating, are they not?” “Umph,” he snarled, “didn’t expect them to be, you’re too artful.”

He then went to Hull’s and returned with a letter. “Oh, so now you are sweet on the Sergeant.” I told him I objected to his insinuations and his attitude. I also told him that in England a person was considered innocent till he was proved guilty, but here one was guilty till he was proved innocent. I called a neighbour who promised to care for my boys till their father came home—he was 375 miles away, but I had wired him and knew he would be down by the first train. We then went out to the police car. He asked me where my boys attended school. I told him, the two elder boys at the Christian Brothers’ College, Perth, and the younger one at the local State school. He then asked for a description of the younger boy’s dress, which I gave. He gave orders to the driver to patrol the streets till he sighted the boy. He then stopped the car, got out and took the little chap behind a sand bank and cross-examined him. Desmond has since told us that he suggested he had taken letters and put them under Hull’s door. Naturally the child denied the charge. I asked Cameron if he had told Mrs. Hull he was taking me away. Why? “Because if she does not know she may write another letter and incriminate herself.” He snarled, “There will be no more letters—the EVIL is removed.”

We arrived at Perth police station at 4.25 p.m. Whilst the charge was being entered Cameron personally searched my pockets, and then ordered removal of my wedding ring. Policeman and policewoman demurred. I asked if I

was to be man-handled. He then ordered police-woman to take me behind, strip and search me. All this degradation I had to endure on a framed up charge of defamatory letter writing. Cameron then entered and said he was going for my boys. I begged him to leave them alone. The cupboards were stocked, a neighbour would care for them. My boys are 15, 13, 6, and have had 2½ years in the bush. Neither of my children have ever been separated from me, and I knew my baby would be heart-broken. I asked, "Where will you take them?" "Where they will be safe." About 7.30 p.m., accompanied by the gaoler, Detective-Sergeant Cameron visited me with a reply-paid telegram from my husband. Before the gaoler and a fellow prisoner I protested at his high-handed, prejudiced and biased attitude throughout the case. Further I strongly protested at his action in cross-examining a baby of six, and again asked for legal assistance—the second time that day. As he went out of the cell he growled, "I have your boys." "Where have you taken them?" I cried. "Where they will be safe till we know what will happen to you." My fellow prisoner said expressively, "Fig."

At 6.30 a.m. I was turned out into the prison yard. About 7.30 the gaoler came to warn me to prepare for court at 9.30. I asked where my boys were. He did not know but promised to make inquiries, and offered to send the reply telegram to my husband. Reply as follows:—Dillon, Kalgoolie. "Frame up successful. Arrested. Boys in charge of State. Love, Invictus." He also tried to procure a solicitor for me, but, failing, asked me particulars of my case, and proceeded to instruct me as to court procedure and advised me how to set about getting bail.

9.30 a.m. I marched into court with men prisoners, only woman, confined behind dock with men. Again I asked for legal assistance—none forthcoming. My case was about third on the list. I was ordered into the dock, the filth and abomination with which I am charged with writing was read out. Before I could say a word, the prosecuting sergeant jumped up and said the (?) had indisputable evidence as to my vindictive attitude to Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Dyer and asked that I be remanded for eight days' mental observation. I cried out, "I am not guilty. I am innocent of the whole diabolical charge." Silence. Stand down. Marched out with male prisoners through the gaping crowds. Handed over to Policewoman Dugdale. Ordered to enter car driven by uniformed driver, accompanied by a plain-clothed man and Mrs. Dugdale and driven to Perth Hospital. What a dangerous or important person I must be to require such an escort. I immediately asked for news of my boys. Nobody could give me any information.

I am not going to give further details; I shall relate what happened after the woman was arrested. After having been taken to the Perth Hospital where she remained for some days, it was found that there was nothing wrong with her mental condition. Eventually she left for her home and she

appeared at the police court on the 5th October and was remanded on bail to the 15th October. Later on, as we know from the Press, a nolle prosequi was entered. The point I wish to emphasise is this. Is it a fact, first of all, that Mrs. Dillon was arrested on a warrant, that she was stripped and searched and then placed in a cell, that next morning she was charged at the police court with an offence and then sent to the mental ward at the hospital where she remained under observation for two weeks before she had any chance to defend herself? If all that be true, it is a serious thing for the community. We all know that any member of the police force may make a mistake, but if it is possible for any person at any time, on the information of others, to be arrested on a warrant, locked up and brought before the court charged with some offence next day, and without being given a chance to offer any defence, to be clapped into an observation ward for two weeks, then I say it is a state of affairs that should not be tolerated, and the law should be altered to prevent it happening. Surely no other member in this House will stand for that kind of thing! It is not justice. It was thought that there was some other question at issue, and that in my bringing the matter forward I intended to make an attack on the police force. I assure the House that nothing was further from my mind. We all know what we owe to the police force, and we all know what latitude is required to be given to those who guard us from criminals, and to enable them also to carry out what are at times very awkward duties. But here is a case where, in the execution of their duty, the police apparently have made a mistake. They charged this woman with writing letters, arrested her, took her to the court from where she was ordered to the mental ward of the hospital, without even having the chance of saying guilty or not guilty.

The Premier: That involves the court, not the police.

Mr. NORTH: I think it does. The whole thing makes us feel that a thorough investigation should be made. Let us assume that something was known about this woman, that A, B, and C went to the police and said that she was insane and that she had been writing letters. Next, the woman is in the clutches of the law and finds herself in court. Even if she had been charged with

murder, it is terrible to think that it should be possible to clap her into prison and then on appearing in court to be told to stand down, and then be removed to the public hospital just because the sergeant or sergeants were able to say to the magistrate, "We have indisputable evidence that this woman is a menace to the community." The whole thing is outrageous, and I am sure that neither this nor any other Government will tolerate such a condition of affairs. Even the Premier's wife, on such a theory, could be arrested and whipped into gaol to-morrow morning, taken before a magistrate, and ordered to the Perth Hospital for observation. I could say a lot more, but my desire is to keep to essential facts. I will not do any good to Mrs Dillon by labouring unessential matters. What I have said I think is sufficient to warrant an inquiry taking place. It has been put up to me that a Royal Commission should be appointed, that the Commissioner should be a judge and that he should investigate the whole affair from beginning to end. One point that needs to be explained is why the woman was arrested and not summoned in the ordinary way. Because letters were being distributed why should it be necessary to issue a warrant for her arrest and clap her into gaol? The whole thing is awful. Those of us who have studied psychology, and the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) if he were here would tell us that it is so, are aware that there are conditions in the life of a woman that incline her to write letters, and that kind of thing might happen in any street in any village and in such circumstances the police, when they decide to act, should be sure of their ground. I would like to think that the police in this case merely made a mistake. There is another question, and it should be stressed at this juncture, because I think it can be seen arising—it is the question of professionalism which seems to be entering into every sphere of activity; "intense professionalism," I call it. Professionalism is now found in every calling. It is the desire of victory. It is associated not only with sport, but with many callings. With the police force we might use the word "professionalism" in the sense that they have a feeling that they must secure a conviction. It rather looks as if there were an ambition behind the charge laid against Mrs. Dillon to secure a result, as it were. I hope I am wrong.

Mr. Davy: Having discovered an offence, they must pot someone!

Mr. NORTH: One does not want to say that. We know the other side of the story, and we know that it is everyone's desire to shelter behind the police. If on a stormy night we hear the back door creaking, we are glad to think that there is a police officer perhaps not far away to whom we can go for protection.

Mr. Sleeman: When the time comes that you hear the door creak, you begin to think you are bound for the observation ward.

Mr. NORTH: We are aware that a big responsibility rests upon the police which makes one hesitate to say anything against them. We know that they have a most difficult job to perform. In the short life I have lived I have seen the public equanimity upset in many directions. I have seen buildings fall to the ground. I have read of great steamers of 50,000 tons sink to the bottom of the ocean. I have read of scandals in public life. I have read of sexual exposures, and in fact in every way we find our equanimity disturbed, and that things are not as they seem on the surface. But in regard to the police generally, we look upon them as angels.

The Premier: We have heard the Western Australian police force spoken of as the best police force in the world. If what you say is true, there is reason to doubt that.

Mr. NORTH: We can say that the police force of Western Australia have set an example to the civilised world in the way they have tracked down murderers and sheeted home many crimes. But if what I have related is true, it means more to the public than smart arrests for murder. The writing of letters is a common occurrence, and we want to feel that justice will remain as supreme as ever it was. I have quoted extracts from sworn statements, and I contend now that the matter should not be allowed to remain where it stands. I am justified in asking that a judge of the Supreme Court should investigate the case of Mrs. Dillon, and arrive at one of two conclusions, either that it is possible and quite correct for any woman, at any time, to be arrested and taken before the court and then ordered to an observation ward, or else that what happened should never have occurred. There are two issues, either that what was done was correct and we must ask Parliament to amend the

law, or that what took place was the result of a gross error, in which case the Minister for Justice must take the necessary steps to see that such a thing never occurs again. There is another issue which justifies the matter being brought forward. We all know that the Crown, under British law, can do no wrong. We know that there are petitions of right where a subject can by a circuitous route get to the ears of the Crown and perhaps secure compensation if he is fortunate. Lawyers, however, know that petitions of right do not often succeed, and that they do not often lead to financial adjustments. At any rate, it is very hard for any person under our system of justice, to get any recompense from the Crown if a false charge is laid. That is our system. We give the police unrestricted right to nail home a charge that they may have preferred against anyone, be that a charge of murder, or even writing letters. That is the end of it and costs cannot be asked for. In this case it is terrible to think that this unfortunate woman should have lost her reputation for months and that it should have cost her £100 or more to clear herself. The noble prosecutor in itself is not exactly a clearance because it leaves the implication that the police did not continue the charge for the reason that there was not sufficient evidence. Therefore the fact of there being no charge or conviction is naturally a detriment to Mrs. Dillon.

Mr. Sleeman: Was she brought before the court again after being in the observation ward?

Mr. NORTH: Yes. When she came out of the ward she was taken before the police court, a prima facie case was made out, and she was committed for trial. That was mentioned in the newspapers. It meant that the filthy letters were read out to the court and the unfortunate woman was labelled with them at that time. I do not know whether any member has any knowledge of the letters, but even in the absence of the member for Forrest (Miss Holman), I would not presume to read one word of them to this House. To do so, I think, would shock even the hardened members that I see sitting around me.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do not look at me, anyhow.

Mr. NORTH: It has been a terrible affair and it was worse from the fact that she was

a married woman. Had it been a man that was concerned, it would have been bad enough. I have said sufficient to show that there is something wrong. I do not think anyone will deny that my statement about the mental ward can be proved, and if it is true, an inquiry should be made for the sake of the good name of the State, the safety of its citizens and the order of justice in future.

On motion by the Minister for Police, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 20th December, 1928.

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

QUESTION—ALBANY HARBOUR BOARD ACT.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Why has no proclamation been issued bringing into force the Albany Harbour Board Act, which was assented to in December, 1926? 2, When is it proposed to proclaim the Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: (1) and (2). The position has remained unchanged since the 25th October last, when