

to its use. But I am not sure that the words proposed to be inserted should not find their place after the word "land," in the same line.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I agree that the words would be better placed after "land." However, we might let it go now and, as I say, recast the clause on recomittal.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is not certain that the Committee will agree to the recomittal of the clause.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Very well. With the leave of the Committee I will move that the words proposed to be inserted be inserted after "land," in line 4.

Leave given.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: On behalf of Mr. Seddon I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause 3:—"No land shall be declared subject to the Act on which the Agricultural Bank will not make advances to the owner."

Throughout the areas between the Great Southern railway and its spur lines there are thousands of acres of second-class and third-class land carrying a sprinkling of first-class land. The Agricultural Bank will not advance on such land. Therefore it is not fair that such land should be subject to the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I really do not know what this means. What owner is alluded to; the man who owns the estate or the man who will own one of the blocks after subdivision? There may be good reason for the bank refusing to lend to a particular owner. I do not approve of the amendment, but I suggest the hon. member could best achieve his purpose by making the amendment read, "No land shall be declared subject to the Act unless the Agricultural Bank trustees certify that such land would be deemed suitable for advances by the bank." I will oppose the amendment.

Hon. H. Stewart: Why not take out the words "to the owner"?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The difficulty could be overcome by deleting the words "to the owner." The Agricultural Bank officials take into consideration the value of the land and the personal equation. A man may be in possession of good land, but the personal equation may not warrant the bank making an advance.

Hon. H. STEWART: With the approval of the Committee, I accept the excision of those words.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 20th November, 1924.

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

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

The SPEAKER: I have received from the Auditor General, in pursuance of Section 53 of the Audit Act of 1904, the 34th report for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1924, which I now lay on the Table of the House.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

(1) Norseman-Salmon Gums Railway.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

(2) Fair Rents.

Introduced by the Minister for Justice.

BILL—MAIN ROADS.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.38]: The Bill itself is a simple one and there is no need for me to give an elaborate exposition regarding the subject matter of the measure, even if I felt inclined to do so. It is a measure that has been under consideration for many years. I notice that the previous Minister for Works had such a measure under consideration for some time, but nothing definite was done by him. From time to time road board conferences have urged the necessity for this legislation, and it has become increasingly evident that the upkeep of main roads has got altogether beyond the powers of the existing local authorities. They cannot, as it is, give the necessary attention to all the work required on subsidiary roads in their districts and at the same time keep the main roads in order. Motor traction has revolutionised the position and whereas a few years ago the roads in a district were used mainly by the residents in that particular district, motor traction

has developed to such an extent nowadays that main roads in particular are used by people throughout the State and not merely by those residing within the boundaries of particular local authorities. It becomes more evident from day to day that it is impossible to place upon the shoulders of local authorities the responsibility for the upkeep of main roads, because the task has gone beyond their means and the local authorities cannot face the position. In some instances Government departments have stepped in and repaired the main roads, but the boards concerned have done very little to maintain them or keep them in order subsequently. If evidence were required to establish that point, it is only necessary to see the road at Armadale, and the road between Perth and Fremantle. The Government put those roads in order at considerable expense but nothing has been done to them since to keep them in order. On the last two occasions on which the Perth-Fremantle road was reconstructed by the Government, the money was charged to loan account and nothing has been done by the local authorities to maintain it in repair. It is safe to say that had not the Government taken over the responsibility of maintaining the road, it would have drifted into the same state of disrepair as it was in prior to its reconstruction. When I first took over the Public Works Department, I invited suggestion from those interested in the construction and maintenance of main roads throughout the State. In response to my invitation a great number of suggestions were obtained, and they were submitted subsequently to a committee comprising representatives of the Treasury, the Taxation Department, and the Public Works Department. That committee examined the suggestions and submitted a report to me, embodying their opinions regarding the proposals. The main question involved was, of course, the control of the finances, and the suggestions indicated a wide divergence of opinions on that point. All sorts of suggestions were forwarded. Several of these were made in favour of the imposition of a petrol tax, and nearly all who sent in suggestions favoured the pooling and collection of all traffic fees. Two or three suggested a stamp tax on the sales of motor tyres, and a number favoured a special unimproved land tax. Another suggestion was that the proceeds of the totalisator tax should be earmarked for main roads, while it was also proposed that there should be an export tax on gold. It was also suggested that the license fees for hotels should be increased.

Mr. Sampson: How did that appeal to you?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was suggested that a proportion of the increase should be allocated for main road

purposes and also that motor garages should be registered and charged a licensing fee. Another proposal was that the Federal authorities should be asked to pay to the several States the whole of the duties imposed on account of motor cars, petrol and accessories, for the purpose of maintaining the main roads. Nearly all favoured the proposal that the control should be handed over to a central authority, that body to be charged with the obligation of maintaining and constructing the roads. All the Eastern States, exclusive of Tasmania, have recently provided by legislation for the upkeep and maintenance of main roads, and all the authorities with whom we have been able to discuss the subject, agree that the results have been most satisfactory, particularly in Victoria, which was the first State to make any such provision. Queensland followed the example of Victoria; South Australia established a board on different lines from those adopted by Victoria and Queensland, and New South Wales has recently passed a law very similar to that of Victoria. The road board conference recently held in Perth passed a resolution favouring the establishment of control similar to that in Victoria, but with modifications to suit Western Australian conditions. I greatly regret that the conference did not give me a better lead. Men who had studied the position for years should have been able to indicate to me the modifications they thought desirable to meet local conditions.

Mr. Sampson: They approved of the principle.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They passed a bald resolution favouring the Victorian system with modifications to suit Western Australia, and left me to find out what those modifications should be.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is what you are there for.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not complaining. I have done it, but I certainly expected to receive assistance from those men. I have set out what I consider is necessary, and no doubt the road board representatives will express their opinions.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We have a few representatives of road boards here. They will tell you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In my judgment the Victorian Act would be entirely unsuitable for Western Australia. Victoria has established a borrowing authority, who can call upon the local governing bodies to meet the interest on one-half of the expenditure within their districts.

Mr. Sampson: Except in certain circumstances.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In other circumstances they can levy a tax on the local authority. They can call upon the local authority to strike a rate or they can construct a road and call upon the local

authority to pay half of the cost. They are a taxing authority. It might be possible to meet such charge in a highly developed State like Victoria, but our local authorities could never meet the charge of one-half the amount expended. It would not do for us to have a board that was a taxing authority able to levy toll upon the local governing bodies.

Mr. Sampson: Boards with small revenue would require special consideration.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not proposing to give our board any power approaching that of the Victorian board. We have decided to declare that all main roads shall be Government roads. Thus we shall relieve the local authorities of the obligation for the upkeep of main roads. That will become the obligation of the board to be constituted under this measure. The Government will be entirely responsible for the construction and maintenance of main roads, without assistance from the local authorities.

Mr. Teesdale: Does that apply to the North, too?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The board will be given power to proclaim districts, and wherever they extend their control, the provisions of the measure will apply.

Mr. Teesdale: I am afraid they will cut the North out, as usual.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the older and more highly developed States the local authorities could share with the Government a burden that our local authorities could not bear. Victoria has borrowed £5,000,000 for main and development roads. New South Wales has appropriated £3,000,000, and all the traffic fees that previously went into revenue go to the board. Queensland commenced in 1921-22 with a revenue of £62,000 from traffic fees, and in the following year the board there were granted from loan money £217,500. In South Australia no special appropriation has been made, but funds are voted by Parliament from time to time. New Zealand made available to the board in the first year £3,000,000, and has appropriated to the fund the Customs duty on motor tyres averaging £150,000 per annum, and the traffic fees, also averaging £150,000 per annum. Thus the New Zealand board have an income of approximately £300,000, apart from the loan money that Parliament granted. The Victorian Act provides for a board of three, who are a constructing authority. They are a corporate body appointed for a term of five years. They have established their own staff and created their own machinery, and they do the whole of the work, quite apart from any of the local authorities or Government departments. The New South Wales Act provides for a president and two members appointed under the provisions of the Public Service Act. Two members must be engineers. It was recently

announced that the chairman was to be paid £1,750 per annum, and the other two members £1,500 each. This board also is a body corporate and has constructing authority. The Queensland Act provides for three members, who apparently have full powers, as in Victoria and New South Wales. The New Zealand Act provides for three members, who must be Government officials, and two others, one representing the Counties Association and the other the owners of motor vehicles. The South Australian Act provides for a board of three, who must be members of the Public Service. The board are appointed for a term not exceeding five years, and are distinctly an advisory board to the Minister. They have no power to function without the authority of the Minister. They are not a constructing authority, and they have no power to raise or spend money without the authority of the Minister.

Mr. Sampson: Our local authorities prefer the Victorian system.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They do not. They prefer the Victorian system with modifications, but they did not indicate what the modifications were. I believe the motion was moved by the member for Swan after two days' debate.

Mr. Sampson: Not two days, but a long debate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This measure is somewhat similar to the South Australian Act, although it gives wider authority to the board. Provision is made for representation on the board of elected representatives of road boards and municipalities. The Government consider it advisable that for the present the board shall not have absolute power as a constructing authority. We do not think it desirable to duplicate the machinery. We propose that the roads and bridges branch of the Public Works Department shall be the constructing authority, and that the board shall operate with that branch.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then what is the use of the board?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall explain that presently. If we duplicated the machinery, we would be in a position similar to that of the State and the Federal Governments. We are complaining that the Commonwealth Government have decided to set up in Western Australia a Public Works Department of their own, which will mean a duplication of officers throughout the State, and in our judgment will entail unnecessary expenditure, resulting in additional taxation on the people for work which has been efficiently done by our Public Works Department. We do not want to cause duplication by establishing a board to do work probably in the same district and alongside other work being done by the Works Department. When the Works Department officials are in a given district doing departmental work, they can

look after the work on the board at the same time.

Mr. Sampson: Really, it will be controlled by Government officers

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is made clear that the Minister will have no power to declare any road to be a main road except on the recommendation of the board; nor will he have any control over the moneys to be spent, or the manner in which they are to be expended on any road without the recommendation of the board. But through him the Government will be fully in touch with the administration of the Act. That will meet the drawback that some people seem to fear of political influence creeping in. It is distinctly laid down that the Minister cannot act on the two important points—that of declaring main roads and the expenditure of money, except on the recommendation of the board.

Mr. Sampson: I hope the public officers advise the Minister properly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At least one engineer, and probably two, including the chief engineer for main roads, will be appointed under the measure to sit on the board. The board will be able to make use of any officer attached to the Works Department, even if such officer is not an officer of the board. Thus we shall be co-ordinating the work of the board with that of the roads and bridges branch of the Works Department. Only on the board's recommendation can a road become or cease to be a main road. The measure lays down the principles to guide the board in deciding which shall be main roads. They will not be able to declare any road a main road unless it comes within the provisions of the measure. Provision is made for main roads not yet built to be constructed by the board. All the powers conferred under the Public Works Act, and the Municipal Corporations and Road Districts Acts are conferred by this measure. These relate mainly to the securing of gravel and other material required for the construction of roads. The board will decide how the work is to be carried out—whether by the engineer or the local authority. The board will have power to say whether work shall be done through the department of roads and bridges, or whether the local authorities shall act as contractors, the same as we are acting for the Commonwealth in connection with the Federal grant. If the price obtained from the local authority for the work is satisfactory it will be handed to them to carry out. It will be within the jurisdiction of the board to say whether they will carry out the work or leave it to the local authority.

Mr. Sampson: Would it be competent for an outsider to tender?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The board will be free to say how the work shall be done, whether by private contract, by

the local authority, or by the Public Works Department, but will not have authority to establish a duplicate set of machinery for the employment of their own men. The Bill provides that in certain municipalities—this will apply mainly in the metropolitan area, particularly in Perth and Fremantle—the board may make allowances to the local authorities for the upkeep of any road that may be declared a main road. The board, for instance, might declare St. George's-terrace to be a main road.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Can they do that under this Bill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They could declare the whole town in that way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That thoroughfare is now a main road under the Traffic Act, as well as Hay-street, and the City Council collect the money from the Minister for Works.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is a different matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is the same thing now. The Bill provides that, instead of the board taking control as the constructing authority, they can make the municipality an allowance for the upkeep of the roads.

Mr. Sampson: And the distribution of license fees will cease?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that later. Provision is made to give the board full power to negotiate with the local authorities as to financial arrangements for the upkeep of such roads that may be left entirely to a local authority to maintain. Provision is made for experiments to be conducted as to material for roads. The results of these experiments will be available to all the local authorities. In all probability a laboratory will be established at the University where tests will be made of the different materials. One of the professors of the University, who has recently visited the Eastern States and made investigations there, very strongly urges that this should be done. The upkeep of the laboratory would be carried out at a nominal expense.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It should be done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is provided that the board may enter into arrangements with the University to have that done, and the results of the tests will be available to the local authority. Although the chief engineer will have his duties confined principally to main roads and development roads under the Commonwealth scheme, he will also control other roads and bridges work which will not come within the scope of the Act. He will inspect and report, and as far as possible give advice to the local authority. That is particularly necessary. I have found in my travels that the local authorities are handicapped because they cannot afford to pay for the

services of a professional man. If they had guidance and advice as to what to do, it would be of great assistance to them. It is provided that not only the chief engineer for main roads, but the staff should have their services made available where possible to road boards, but not to municipalities, which it is considered should be able to afford their own professional men. In reference to development roads, power is given to the board to declare these, subject to the provisions of the Commonwealth Main Roads Act. I refer to roads now being constructed under the Commonwealth and State grants. There will be a qualified board to advise the Minister, instead of as now the Minister having to rely almost exclusively on the report that he secures from the inspecting engineers when travelling through the State. It will be for the board, whose members will devote practically all their time to the business, to confer with the local authorities and advise the Minister with regard to development roads. It is proposed that the board shall control the whole of the money being spent in connection with the State and Commonwealth scheme. The difference will be that the board will not only have to construct main roads, but be charged with their upkeep. So soon as development roads under the Commonwealth grant are constructed, they will be handed to the local authorities to maintain. There the board's authority will cease. So far as the raising of money is concerned, the guiding principle I have tried to keep before me is that those who use the roads shall contribute most towards their upkeep. If the Bill is passed the scope of the Traffic Act, and the use of the money collected under it, will be extended beyond what is known as the metropolitan area. If the Bill does not become law the scope of the Traffic Act will require further consideration. Within the metropolitan area the whole of the traffic fees are pooled and distributed amongst the local authorities. It is essential that the money should be expended on main roads that are classed as such under the Traffic Act. We provide for the extension of the principle beyond the metropolitan area throughout the districts which will be proclaimed to be districts under the board's control. The Minister may declare districts only on the advice of the board. This extends the principle now operating in the metropolitan area to other parts of the State.

Mr. Latham: Only to a limited area?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To whatever area the board thinks fit. The board has unlimited authority in this direction.

Mr. Latham: They may take in the whole State?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I should think they will feel their way first, and gradually extend the principle as they have means and funds to meet the position. As they extend the area, they will collect

the traffic fees within that area, and will lump the sum as is done now in the metropolitan area. Every penny of the money will go to roads. Later on I shall move an amendment to the Traffic Act. If that passes it is estimated that there will be collected in traffic fees £75,000. Deputations have frequently told me that they would not complain about an increase in the traffic fees, and they would gladly pay more if they knew that the whole of the money was to be expended on the upkeep of roads. It would mean a big saving to them in the upkeep of their vehicles if they had decent roads. They may rest assured that the Bill provides for the whole of the fees collected, other than the mere charges for administration, to be expended on the upkeep of roads. It is provided that there shall be levied under the Land Tax Act a tax of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound on the unimproved land values. That will be provided for in a taxation measure to be brought down by the Treasurer.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Will that be an extra tax?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is an extra extra.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The tax is only $\frac{1}{4}$ d. all told.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will be taxing every orangery in the State next.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This should bring in about £60,000.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: From the farmers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Provision is made for the licensing of the sale of petrol. The licensees shall be the wholesalers. There are only four in the State. It is suggested that a license should be issued on the basis of 3d. per gallon of petrol sold, without regard for the purpose for which it is used. Payment will be made to the main roads trust account.

Mr. Latham: Will that include petrol used on farm machinery not travelling on the roads?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is practically no petrol used in such cases; it is nearly all kerosene.

Mr. Latham: In some cases.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are one or two instances where petrol is used for engines not travelling roads. There are motor boats on the river, aeroplanes, and a few stationary engines.

Mr. Latham: Petrol is used on nearly all stationary engines.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: On thousands of them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. Owners of such machinery will derive considerable benefit from the improved roads. Nearly two-thirds of the income under this Bill will be paid by the metropolitan area, and half the land tax will be so paid.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member cannot contradict the Taxation Department.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, I can and I will.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Considerably over half of the money will be paid in the metropolitan area.

The Premier: And be used in the country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The great bulk of it will be used there.

Mr. Hughes: More concessions to the farmers at the expense of the metropolitan area!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Although a man may use a little petrol on a stationary engine on his farm he will derive such advantage from having decent roads that he should be willing to pay the tax. The price of petrol has been reduced of recent years by about 50 per cent.

Mr. Sampson: It has been increased.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It fell from 30s. to 17s. or 18s., and during the last fortnight has, I believe, fallen another 10d. The tax on petrol would, therefore, be of no account because the price of petrol would merely be put back to what it was a fortnight ago. We would not be asking for any additional impost on the price.

Mr. Sampson: The Government are merely moving with the times.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Can you do this legally?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no constitutional difficulty in the way. A petrol tax has met with universal favour. In 35 of the States of America such a tax is levied. The Premier of New South Wales is strongly recommending it in that State. A committee, representative of the more interested parties, was appointed in Great Britain by the Imperial Government. This has been sitting for about three years and recently submitted a report. The minority report strongly favours a tax of 4d. to 5d. a gallon.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The minority?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, the minority. The majority saw difficulties as to the definition and the collection of the tax. However, those difficulties do not exist here. There are only four firms operating in Western Australia, and so there will be little cost in collection of the tax. As regards definition there will be no difficulty whatever. Moreover, the uses of petrol here are not nearly so varied as they are in Great Britain. Certainly motor boats and aeroplanes will obtain no advantage from good roads, but the small amount of tax which will be collected from them is immensely outweighed by the advantages which will result from the measure.

Mr. Sampson: Could not a rebate be made to those who will derive no advantage?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I examined that aspect carefully, but any system of rebates would leave the tax open to evasion and would enormously increase the cost of collection. Therefore I abandoned the idea of any rebate.

Mr. Latham: I like your definition of what petrol might be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The fees which will be collected in the proclaimed area, whatever that area may be, under the Traffic Act, will be collected by the Commissioner of Police; and a reasonable sum for cost of collection will be allowed. The committee appointed to take evidence on the subject from people interested suggested that we should provide about £180,000 annually for expenditure on main roads. In addition to the sums which I have mentioned, this Bill provides that Parliament may from time to time appropriate any amount for the purposes of the measure; and that amount will go into the main roads trust account, and will be operated on by the board to be constituted. The amounts enumerated, assuming that Parliament makes provision from loan account for the £25,000 a year now paid out of revenue in subsidies to road boards, will make available to the board under the Bill a total of £203,000 per annum.

Mr. Latham: It means cutting out subsidies to road boards.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It means that as road boards come into the proclaimed area, they will not receive subsidies. On the other hand, it will be recognised that the road boards in the proclaimed area will be relieved of all responsibility for the upkeep of main roads and for the construction of developmental roads. Further, we are assured by the Commonwealth Government that so soon as the developmental roads are completed, the annual grant will be expended on feeder or subsidiary roads. Thus there will be very little new work for the local authorities to do, in addition to which they will be enormously relieved as regards their present responsibilities. We are now expending out of State revenue £96,000 annually on roads. I should say that the State really expends considerably more than that amount, owing to its having to bear all the overhead charges. However, in the circumstances I have indicated, approximately £400,000 annually will be expended on road construction in this State.

Mr. Taylor: For how long?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Practically for all time. We are expending half that amount now. The present Bill proposes to do four times as much as has ever been done by any previous Western Australian Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you are expending the Commonwealth grant now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have had one year of the Commonwealth grant, and we are advised that there may be an enlargement of that grant. In any case, the substantial provision made by this Bill, together with the existing Commonwealth grant, must mean great improvement in the roads of Western Australia. There are numerous complaints concerning the valuations made and the rates imposed by road boards, but I am convinced that with fair valuations and reasonable rates they will experience very little difficulty indeed. The Government are informed, although not on absolutely definite authority, that in all probability the Commonwealth will next year double the amount of the grant to the States, but that the additional money will have to be expended on main roads. Instead of our getting only £96,000 for developmental roads, we shall receive from the Commonwealth an additional £96,000 for main roads. We shall, however, have to find from State funds a further £96,000 to meet the Commonwealth grant pound for pound. Therefore unless this Bill passes, we shall not be able to obtain the additional £96,000 from the Commonwealth. If the Bill passes, and if the Commonwealth make the additional £96,000 available, the total annual amount available for roads will be £296,000.

Mr. Latham: If you pool your traffic fees, you will get £75,000; and it would not take much to make up the difference between that amount and £96,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The traffic fees would not go very far.

Mr. Latham: They would secure the Commonwealth grant for main roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very nearly. The Minister in charge should have someone to advise him as to the position and condition of main roads throughout the State, and as to the best expenditure of these moneys. It is impossible for any one man sitting in Perth to know the position and condition of the roads throughout Western Australia, and to know what works should be done, and which particular work needs doing first. Someone must concentrate on that job, making it his particular business. In view of the results achieved in the Eastern States by boards similar to that proposed under the Bill, it may fairly be assumed that such a board would help considerably in the administration here and would effect great improvements in our roads, as well as tending towards economy in expenditure. The great factors to be considered in the expenditure of the money are the opening up of new country and the removal of difficulties in the way of getting produce to the nearest port or railway station, and also the providing of developmental roads to assist the mining industry. I am aware that many road boards hold the view that the money should be allocated on a pro rata basis to the various boards. Some of them go even so far as to suggest

that each ward of each road district should receive its share. That suggestion was put up to me in connection with the Federal grant. However, to adopt the course proposed would mean a patchwork job throughout the State, without the accomplishment of anything of a substantial nature. It will be far better to have a settled policy under which we shall know that every pound of money expended will go towards the accomplishment of something substantial.

Mr. Sampson: That suggestion was not made by the association, but by individual boards.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. Each time that the Commonwealth engineer has visited this State he has urged upon us the necessity for establishing some central control for the expenditure of the Federal money, as the Commonwealth are anxious to have the money expended to the best advantage, and as they have witnessed such good results from the establishment of central boards in the Eastern States. As Western Australia will be the last State to come into line, with the exception of Tasmania, it is desirable that the Bill should pass. The Bill proposes something between the Victorian and the South Australian system. We do not propose to set up an independent board with power to raise money or to levy on local authorities and create a duplicate staff, nor are we following the example of South Australia, and proposing merely to appoint an advisory board, under which system the Minister would be left to act for himself. The Bill proposes to clothe the board with wider powers and greater authority than the South Australian board possess. The Bill declares that the Minister shall be unable to act in important matters, such as the declaring of main roads and the expenditure of money, unless he is first advised by the board. At the same time, the Bill does not propose to grant the board the almost unlimited powers possessed by the boards of New South Wales and Victoria.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The board will be chiefly advisory.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In respect of the important matters I have mentioned the Minister will not be able to act without the advice of the board. The proposed arrangement should do away altogether with the cry that political influence is likely to creep in. I believe that we have within our Government service as capable and as good men as are to be found outside that service. If the Government are called upon to find the money and accept the responsibility for the construction and maintenance of roads, they must keep the control of the expenditure in their hands.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The people have to find the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The road boards and the municipalities, how-

ever, will each have a representative on the board. This piece of legislation must be regarded as purely experimental, as something from which to make a start. Doubtless, as time passes, defects will be disclosed in the measure, and we shall then be able to improve upon it; but I think that the House will agree that matters cannot be left as they are, that something must be done, that the present position, if allowed to continue, will mean that people will be unable to travel in Western Australia. The main roads are getting into a deplorable state, and are simply being left to wear out, as it is beyond the financial capacity of the local authorities to cope with the wear and tear now imposed on the roads. The source of revenue provided is an increasing one. With the progress of the years, no doubt a more substantial income than that now available will accrue to the proposed board. Perhaps £200,000 may be regarded as a small amount to expend on the main roads over such a vast territory as Western Australia, but we should be able to achieve something by the expenditure of that amount. I would like the local authorities and other people always to bear in mind, when they talk of the state of the roads and of the necessity for something being done to relieve the local authorities, that we cannot make or maintain roads without money. We must have the money. The whole of the taxation raised under the Bill must go on to roads. It cannot be used for any other purpose whatever. The Bill is strictly a non-party one, and will not in any way be treated as a party measure. The House will be free to deal with it as they like. I hope all members will help in making the Bill a workable one so that we may achieve the best results with the limited resources at our disposal for the making of roads to meet settlement scattered over such wide areas as we have in Western Australia. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message received from the Governor recommending the Bill.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [5.32] in moving the second reading said: This is mainly a machinery measure. It fixes the traffic fees, but it deals also with the control of traffic. The existing Act was passed in 1919, and, except for a few minor amendments, it has not since been reviewed. The extraordinary transport development that has taken place during

recent years requires that the Act be brought up to date. The use of the roads by modern heavy traffic vehicles and the consequent wear and tear on the roads, has created a problem that is not confined to Western Australia, but is world-wide. In England they have had a committee sitting for three years studying the problem and making recommendations to the Imperial Government. In America all the States have recently passed legislation modernising the laws of traffic, and new methods of taxation and control have been introduced. When, in 1919, our existing Act was passed, it was considered to be more up to date than any other in force in Australia. Now, however, it is considerably behind the times. The five years that have elapsed have created a considerable alteration in the mode of transport. The Bill amends the principal Act so as to provide that the Commissioner of Police shall be the licensing authority within the metropolitan area. At present he is acting as the licensing authority, but it is doubtful whether that is legally correct, and so the Bill legalises the position, and creates the Commissioner the licensing authority for the metropolitan area. The principal Act is amended also by the insertion of a definition of "metropolitan area," as meaning any area that may be declared by proclamation. The area that will be proclaimed will largely depend on the provisions of the Main Roads Bill, the second reading of which I have only just now moved. We are also providing for an interpretation of the words "motor bus," which mean a motor vehicle used as a passenger vehicle with a seating capacity of not less than eight passengers, and plying for hire at a fare for each passenger. It is interesting to look back to 1919, when the principal Act was passed, and to realise that there were then only three buses plying for hire in the metropolitan area, and that all three were horse-drawn vehicles. With the lapse of five years we now see hundreds of motor buses plying for hire throughout the State. So wonderful has the revolution been that the Act then passed is quite obsolete to-day. This new interpretation makes it clear that a motor bus is distinct altogether from a motor car. A clause in the Bill deals with the interpretation of "owner," and declares that "owner" includes any person who has the use of a vehicle, whether under a hire purchase agreement or under hire. Another section of the Act is amended to provide that the Commissioner shall be the licensing authority in the prescribed area, and Subsection 4 of Section 13 of the Act is deleted, provision being made elsewhere for the proclamation of areas. Section 14 of the Act is amended to make the conditions under which licenses can be granted to apply also to motor buses. Section 18 is amended by adding the words "and has not been previously used by him on a road."

This is to overcome the difficulty that road boards frequently find in respect of the licensing of vehicles. When they challenge the owner of a motor vehicle for not having licensed that vehicle, they are generally told that he is on the way to have it licensed. This amendment will throw on the owner the onus of proving that he has not previously had the vehicle out on the road. Provision is made that the Minister may appoint any person to be an inspector of any road. At present the Minister has such power only in respect of Government roads or roads not within any district. The Minister desires power to deal with and control traffic on any road under construction. Only a week or so ago some other members and I were visiting the South-West when we found that new roads constructed out of the public funds were being very seriously damaged by heavy traffic running on them while they were wet and green. Already those roads are practically impassable. The member for Leonora (Mr. Heron) can tell the House that on one stretch of road he twice had to use his weight and strength to lift the car out of a bog, and that for the rest of the journey he had to wear his overcoat. It is a shocking waste of money to spend thousands of pounds on new roads and then, before those roads are set, allow heavy traffic to run over them in the wet months. At present no power exists for the control of heavy traffic upon such roads, and as a result, many of them are absolutely impassable, although it is less than 12 months since they were constructed. There are some small amendments. The licensing fee for the driver of a motor car is increased from 5s. to 10s. Section 25 of the Act is amended by the omission of the word "motor." At present only the person riding or driving a motor vehicle can be dealt with for any irregularity. That is made to apply to other classes of vehicles. Section 33 of the Act is amended by providing that the driver of a locomotive or traction engine shall exercise care when a horse in a vehicle is passing or when horses or other animals are being driven past. At present there is no power to enforce that control. I have a letter from the ex-member for Beverley, who informs me that a motor car driver drove through a flock of sheep on the road, refusing to pull up to allow of the sheep being moved to the side of the road. With his car he killed one sheep and mutilated others. At present there is no law to prevent that sort of thing, but the Bill will provide against it in future. Section 41 of the Act is amended by the provision that the Commissioner of Police may appoint and control stands and temporary stands for vehicles. When the original Act was drafted it was not contemplated that the police should have the control of traffic in the city, but when the Bill was

before the House this control was provided. Certain provisions of the Municipal Act were taken and embodied in the Traffic Act, but they did not contain the authority to fix and control stands. Consequently the control of stands is still under the jurisdiction of the municipality. Therefore the Commissioner of Police, while controlling the moving traffic, has no power to fix stands or control them. The principal Act is amended to give power to prohibit heavy or obstructive traffic over a road for the whole of any portion of a year. It is urged that particularly in the South-West heavy traffic should be controlled during wet months of the year. The Bill further provides the addition of words that will give power to the court not only to fine a person who engages a vehicle and refuses to pay the legal fare, but also to compel him to pay that fare into court. Provision is made for the addition of words giving power to regulate or restrict the driving or hauling of agricultural machines on roads if such machines are likely to cause serious damage to the roads. Some of the local authorities complain that ploughs are being drawn over the road, and that there is no power to prevent that being done.

Mr. Latham: There is power under the Traffic Act to prevent it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am advised that there is no power to control this traffic. This amendment will give authority for such control. A section is taken from the Victorian Act providing for motor bus traffic. Regulations that may be made under the existing Act do not go as far as is necessary in the prescribing of routes within the metropolitan area to be observed by motor buses. This section gives power to prescribe routes, to prevent motor buses from running on any other routes, to fix section and terminal points of routes, to compel owners to provide and adhere to time tables, to prescribe the maximum and minimum fares that may be charged, and the number of motor buses that may be permitted to ply for hire on any prescribed route. The second portion of the section provides that the Minister may take certain facts into consideration, namely the maximum number of buses proposed to be licensed for any route; that he shall confer with the Minister for Railways and the City Council and other local authorities, and further that the Minister must satisfy himself that the condition of the roads included in the route renders them capable of taking bus traffic without unreasonable damage. Another clause, also taken from the Victorian Act, provides for vehicle licenses to be issued for regular service or for special service. In Victoria, if a person has a vehicle which is licensed for regular service, that same vehicle will not be granted a special service license, but the Bill provides that a special permit may be

obtained for a vehicle with a regular service license, from time to time, upon issue of permits to carry passengers on excursion trips, such as to Mundaring Weir or other public resorts. I have had brought under my notice that certain vehicles, licensed to run between Perth and Fremantle, and along one particular route only, have departed from their time tables on Sundays or holidays, when it was seen that there was an opportunity of making more money by sending the vehicle somewhere else. In that way the regular clients have looked in vain for the vehicles to come along. It is also provided that no licenses or permits shall be issued if it can be shown that the facilities already offering to the public are reasonably sufficient. The police are becoming perturbed about the greatly increased traffic on some of the roads in the metropolitan area, and they are urging that no further motor traffic should be permitted along certain thoroughfares. Whilst we are being pressed to issue new licenses, the police are telling us that if we do so the danger is bound to be increased.

Mr. Latham: I suppose the police have in mind the Horseshoe Bridge?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The road mostly complained about is that between Perth and Fremantle. We also propose to take power to provide by regulation for the maximum height, length, and breadth of motor buses, the maximum weight and the maximum load, that tyres other than rubber tyres shall not be used, and the thickness and condition shall be controlled. It is also important to note that full power is taken to secure the safety, comfort, and convenience of passengers, and to minimise the danger to roads by control of design and construction of motor buses. It is most important also that there should be proper means of entrance and exit from buses in case of fire. Some that are now in use are positively dangerous. If hon. members have examined any of the buses in case of fire. Some that are they must have been struck by the difficulty that would be experienced by passengers attempting to escape in the event of the vehicle catching fire. Only one exit has been provided in most instances, and passengers would have no chance at all were a fire to take place. We propose to take the power to regulate the construction of buses.

Mr. Mann: You have been doing that.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are doing it to an extent, but we have not the authority that is necessary.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You cannot get out of the trams except at each end.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Further power is taken to see that motor buses are properly maintained and repaired, that the brakes and steering gear are efficient, and that owners shall furnish the Minister with any statistics he may require. The maximum speed limit of 20 miles for motor buses fitted with pneumatic tyres, and 15

miles for motor buses using other tyres, is settled. We have appointed a departmental committee consisting of responsible officers to carefully consider the question of speed limits for motor vehicles, and also to go carefully into the question of the issue of licenses and the routes that motor vehicles shall take. At the present time the Minister is given certain powers, such as the granting of permits to motor cycle clubs to run races on roads. We are transferring that power to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Teesdale: You should run the motor cycles off Hay-street on Saturday night.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is proposed to substitute for the words "motor wagon, locomotive, or traction engine" the word "vehicle." At present the local authority can only recover damages when such are occasioned by the owner of a locomotive or traction engine, but other classes of vehicles also occasionally cause extraordinary damage or injury to roads, and so the Act is amended to provide for damage done by any class of vehicle. The Act now provides that "where, by a certificate of an inspector, it appears to a local authority," such local authority can secure payment for damage done to roads. It is proposed now to delete the words "by a certificate of an inspector" so as to give power to a local authority that when convinced damage has been done, to take action without the certificate of an inspector. Authority is also given that where a person unlawfully takes charge of a motor vehicle, the penalty imposed can be enforced. It is proposed also to enlarge the meaning of the words "locomotive" or "traction engine." The Bill provides that the words "motor wagon" shall include a wagon driven by steam fitted with wheels similar to those of a motor vehicle. The "Sentinel" wagon is driven by steam and is not adequately provided for as a locomotive traction engine, or as a motor wagon. With regard to fees, it is proposed in connection with motor buses that ply along regular routes to charge £2 for each passenger the vehicle is licensed to carry over a prescribed route, in part, or wholly within two miles of the Town Hall, Perth, or the Town Hall, Fremantle. In the case of buses fitted with no tyres other than pneumatic tyres, the fee will be £1 10s. per passenger. In the case of motor buses licensed for a route, any part of which is not within two miles of the Town Hall, Perth, or the Town Hall, Fremantle, the fee per passenger will be at the rate of 2s. 3d. or £2 or £1 10s., according to the class of tyres used. This distinction is made because the earnings of a motor bus which comes right into the city will be greater than those of buses plying out of the limits of the city. By the proposed Victorian legislation the fee varies from £5 10s. in the case of motor buses on a route wholly or partly within three miles of the Melbourne Town Hall, when fitted with solid tyres. When pneu-

matic tyres only are used the fee proposed is £4 2s. 6d. The municipal conference recently held in Adelaide urged the Government to impose a fee of £6 per passenger. Members will therefore see that I have been very moderate in my proposals. It is something new for me, I know, but in this instance I have been extremely moderate in asking for the imposition of fees of £2 and £1 10s. In all probability in the course of a year or two we shall find it necessary to increase the amounts now proposed, but perhaps I should point out that we have not the population to shift, similar to that existing in the capital cities of the Eastern States, and therefore it would not be possible for us to levy a bigger fee. Let me quote the license fees that are levied elsewhere. In London, motor buses seating more than six people and not more than 14, pay a fee of £30 per annum; seating more than 20 but not more than 26, £60 per annum; seating more than 26 but not more than 32, £72 per annum; seating more than 32, £84 per annum. The departmental committee which sat in London for three years reported to the Minister of Transport and recommended that these fees should be retained, but provision is made for large types of motor buses. For instance, a bus seating more than 56 people but not more than 64 will be required to pay £120, and £1 10s. for each additional seat over 64. I am not suggesting anything approaching that. Under the existing legislation in Western Australia, buses pay only 1s. per passenger per annum for each passenger over and above eight. That is not regarded as a fee; there were no motor buses running when the law was passed. To illustrate what a paltry contribution this is, I may mention that the total fees collected from 58 buses which were licensed up to a recent date, and which have seating accommodation for 1,185 passengers, was only £36 per annum. The greatest number carried by any licensed bus is 30, and many of them carry only 25, 19, and 14 passengers. Taking an average of 25 passengers at £1 10s. will make the fees per passenger payable per annum £37 10s. The fee to be paid per passenger when a special license is issued will be prescribed by regulation. I am not yet in a position to learn what applications are likely to be made under this head, and therefore it is impossible to prescribe any fees by the Act. The third schedule provides for the fees to be paid. The fee for a carriage or sulky, now 5s. a wheel, will be increased to 7s. 6d. For carts, the basis of taxation is now 5s. per wheel, except when heavy traffic fees are imposed. In such cases fees of £5 for a 2-wheeled vehicle and £6 for a 4-wheeled vehicle are charged. The Government have determined that the basis of taxation per wheel is not equitable. For instance, a light 2-wheeled vehicle pays as much as a heavier vehicle carrying a much greater load, and a 4-wheeled vehicle pays twice as much and does no more damage

than a 2-wheeled vehicle. Even under the heavy traffic fees system, a cart with weight and load carrying say, two tons only, would pay £5, and a dray weighing, with its load four tons, would pay no more. The present system does not take into account the weight of the vehicle or the load it carries, but simply takes cognisance of the wheels. In the judgment of the Government that is not an equitable basis and we propose to charge on the weight and load. The basis proposed by the Bill is a rate at per cwt. of the weight of the vehicle, plus load weight, commencing with 1s. up to 20 cwt., with a minimum of 15s. for any one vehicle. Thus, the ordinary spring cart will not pay more than £1 per annum. The rate at present is 10s. For carts exceeding one ton and not exceeding two tons, the rate is 1s. 6d. per cwt. The tip-dray, carting bricks and other materials would usually come under this scale, and would pay a maximum of £3 as against the heavy traffic fee of £5. But all carts throughout the State will pay on this new basis and the heavy traffic fees will be abolished. For a cart exceeding two tons, the rate will be 2s. per cwt. or £6 for three tons. Regarding motor cars or motor buses fitted with pneumatic tyres, we have also provided for increased fees. Those fees are set out in the schedule. To give hon. members some idea of the proposals, I will quote the scale—

MOTOR CARS OR MOTOR OMNIBUSES.

Fitted with Pneumatic Tyres.

	Present Fee.	Proposed Fee.
Up to 20 power weights	£2	£2 10s.
Up to 20 " " and not exceeding 25	£2	£3
Up to 25 " " " 30	£3	£4
Up to 30 " " " 35	£3	£5
Up to 35 " " " 40	£4	£6
Up to 40 " " " 45	£5	£7
Up to 45 " " " 50	£6	£8
Up to 50 " " " 55	£7	£9
Up to 55 " " " 60	£8	£10
Up to 60 " " " 70	£10	£13

For every additional power weight ... 7s. 6d.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: What is the maximum proposed for ordinary vehicles?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Minister said it was 2s. per cwt.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will have to spend all your time writing out cheques to pay taxation.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The present heavy traffic fees are charged throughout the State apart from the metropolitan area. Those fees will be abolished, and the proposed fees will mean a reduction.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The vehicles carrying the heavier loads will be let off.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government's proposal is to put the tax on to the vehicles that carry the greater

weight. A tip-dray has paid 5s., but in the country districts that vehicle would have to pay £5. I am doing away with that provision and now say that vehicles throughout the State, irrespective of whether they are in the metropolitan area or in the country, will have to pay on weight. Where such carts were paying £5, they will pay £3, so that we are reducing the charge on those carts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And putting the impost on to all parts.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And the charge will have to be paid in the metropolitan area where it is not imposed now. For every additional power weight, motor cars and motor buses will be charged 7s. 6d. The present scale makes no provision for fees for those exceeding 60 power weights, so that no matter how great the power weight may be, the maximum fee is only £10. It will be seen later on that if any motor car or bus is fitted with other than pneumatic tyres, this scale is plussed by 20 per cent., and if with metal tyres, by 40 per cent. In England the power of a motor vehicle only is considered, and the motor car is charged £1 per horse power. Under their method of ascertaining the horse power, the ordinary two-seater Ford car would pay £23 per annum, whereas a similar car here would pay only £5. A Buick 1920 model would in England pay approximately £30, and, by the scale I refer to, the payment would be £9.

Mr. Latham: They have wonderful roads in England and the wear and tear is not so great. If our roads were as good here, it would not matter so much.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: People have to pay to get good roads.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You enjoy taxing people.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am surprised at my modesty. If we had taxation such as is imposed in London we would be able to go in for proper road construction.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It would be scandalous if you tried that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At any rate, we cannot have good roads unless the money is provided. Reference has been made to the fee per passenger to be charged for motor buses, and it has been pointed out that 1s. per annum only is paid at present for all over eight. In addition to the fees per passenger prescribed by this measure, many motor buses that average 70 power weights will pay £13 per annum, whereas they are now paying only £10. Adding to this, say, 25 passengers at £1 10s., the charge becomes £50 10s. per annum compared with £10 13s. now paid. Thus it will be seen that these vehicles are being brought up considerably above the existing arrangements,

which are absolutely ridiculous. They are to be made to pay in respect of the damage they are doing to the roads.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The whole tax will not amount to what the tramways have to pay to keep their portion of the road in repair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under the existing conditions 58 buses pay license fees totalling £480 per annum and £36 in respect of the passenger fees, which are fixed at 1s. Under the proposed scale, the vehicle fees will be £690, and the passenger fees, assuming that all buses come within two miles of Perth or Fremantle, will be 1,185 at £1 10s., equalling £1,777. In addition to that, if the Main Roads Bill be passed, the owners will also have to pay the petrol tax. Of all the brazen effrontery I have encountered, that of the owners of motor traction vehicles is the worst. When the Midland abattoirs were closed, for reconstruction purposes, and the whole of the killing was done at South Fremantle, there was a Government railway running right to the abattoirs where the stock were being slaughtered. During the first morning that killing took place, I was rung up by these people and they said that the roads were in such a condition that it was impossible for them to get their motor trucks to the abattoirs. They wanted to know what I was going to do about it and wanted me to put the road into order, although the railway was running right to the works. There we had a Government railway, yet the owners of the motor lorries wanted me to construct a road to allow them to compete with our railway and make that line a dead proposition. The brazen effrontery of them!

Mr. Sampson: Is there a record of your reply.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Perhaps not.

Mr. Teesdale: Did you reply by phone, or did you go down?

The Premier: They will not get any Government funds for roads in such circumstances. I will not find the money for such purposes unless people are prepared to pay.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Deputations have waited on me and protestations have been made to me that good roads are necessary. People have emphasised the point that they are prepared to pay for roads by way of increased taxation if they are assured that the extra taxation will go into the roads. I have given them a definite assurance on that point. I have told them that the taxation will be used for that purpose. No State can afford to construct railways and allow them to become a dead letter and at the same time allow people to knock the roads to pieces without paying for the damage. Motor carriers fitted with pneumatic tyres and used for the carriage of persons are now

charged £1 10s. and the proposed fee is £2. When they are not used exclusively for the carriage of persons of a gross weight, with a load, not exceeding 10 cwt., the present fee is £1 10s. and the proposed fee £2 10s. When they are of a gross weight with a load exceeding 10, but not exceeding 15 cwt., the present fee is £1 17s. 6d. and the proposed fee is £2 15s. When the motor carrier is of a gross weight, with a load, exceeding 15 cwt. but not exceeding 20 cwt., the present fee is £2 5s. and the proposed fee £3. For motor cycles the present fee is 15s. and the proposed fee £1, with 10s. extra per wheel when there are side car attachments. Regarding motor or steam wagons, using only pneumatic tyres, the fees have been substantially increased, particularly in regard to the heavier vehicles. The lighter wagons, instead of paying £4 10s., will have to pay £5 10s., but when it comes to vehicles exceeding 140 power load weights, but not exceeding 150 power load weights, the present fee of £13 is to be increased to £22. The maximum under the existing schedule is 200 power load weights and for this, £21 is prescribed. There are a number of wagons much heavier than 200 power load weights, but as no provision was made for a payment beyond £21, those vehicles have escaped the payment of an adequate fee in the past. It is now proposed to stop at 150 power load weights, and further provision is to be made as follows:—For each additional power load weight up to but not exceeding 200, 7s. 6d. per power load weight, equal to a rise of £3 15s. for each 10 power load weights; for each additional power load weight in excess of 200 and up to 300, 10s. per power load weight, equivalent to £5 for each 10 power load weight; for each additional power load weight beyond 300, 12s. 6d. Thus, as the weight increases, the rates become heavier. We are advised that some firms are contemplating procuring 10-ton trucks. There are no roads here that will permit of such trucks travelling over them with loads. Such trucks would simply smash up all the roads we have. If this is so, it is essential that steps be taken to make sure that such vehicles pay for the damage they do to the roads.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: A wagon of 60-horse power weighing 70cwt. with a carrying capacity of 160cwt., equal to 200 units, would pay for the first 150 units £22, for the next 50 units £18 15s., and for the next 90 units £45, a total of £85 15s. If it were fitted with solid rubber tyres it would pay 20 per cent more, and if fitted with metal tyres 40 per cent. more. Although that may appear high in comparison with the charges on motor buses, it is not excessive considering the wear and tear occasioned to the roads by these vehicles.

In the metropolitan area particularly, but extending out to country districts, even to Northam and York, motors are competing with the railways, and these heavy wagons are destroying the roads wherever they go. While the people have to keep the railways in order, they are expected also to keep the roads in order for motors, which are severe on the roads and serious competitors with the railways. Of locomotive or traction engines there are seven using the roads in the metropolitan area. The total fees paid by the seven are £162. These vehicles are probably doing as much damage to the roads as are all the other motor tractors. We propose to increase the fees as follows:—Not exceeding three tons in weight, with load, if any, per wheel per ton £1 (rate for three tons) £12, as compared with the present fee of £4 10s.; for three tons in weight but not exceeding five tons, per wheel per ton, £1 10s. (rate for five tons) £30, as compared with the present fee of £10; for five tons in weight with load, if any, not exceeding seven tons, per wheel per ton, £2 (rate for seven tons) £56, as compared with the present fee of £14; exceeding seven tons, per wheel per ton, £3 (rate for 10 tons) £120, as compared with the present fee of £28. Some firms are talking of getting 10-ton wagons, but we have not the roads to carry them. Some of the tractors do not use petrol. Some use kerosene, and some are driven by steam. Those doing the greatest damage on the Fremantle-road are driven by steam. Where petrol is not used the tractor will pay 20 per cent. in addition to the prescribed fees. All motor vehicles using solid rubber tyres will be charged an additional 20 per cent., and all motor vehicles other than motor buses, wagons, etc., using metal tyres will be charged an additional 40 per cent. No discrimination is made as regards motor buses because the fee per passenger varies according to whether solid or pneumatic tyres are used.

Mr. Sampson: There is a new tyre, more of the cushion type, claimed to be equal to the pneumatic.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not heard of it. The carrier's license is to be increased from 5s. to 10s., and there are slight increases for transfers. Those increases range, roughly, from 2s. 6d. to 5s., and from 5s. to 10s. The fifth schedule defines the metropolitan area as recently extended to include Armadale and the district to a little beyond Midland Junction.

Mr. Sampson: You do not propose to include Kalamunda yet?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The board will prescribe the area. Some members of the Opposition seem to think that the proposed new taxes will operate heavily on the country districts. I have said that in my judgment two-thirds of the income will be paid in the metropolitan area, and I am advised that not less than half will be paid in the metropolitan area. The

number of vehicles licensed in the old metropolitan area last year was:—carts and carriages 8,000, passenger vehicles 375, hand carts 141, motor cycles 2,215, motor cars and tractors, etc., 4,693. It was estimated that on the 30th June last the number of vehicles in use outside the old metropolitan area was:—carts and carriages 34,000, motor cycles 500, motor cars and tractors, etc., 5,000. Thus carts and carriages predominated outside the metropolitan area, and there were 5,500 motor vehicles, compared with 6,900 in the metropolitan area. The metropolitan area since that date has been extended.

Mr. Sampson: I am afraid a lot of vehicles in the State are not licensed.

The Minister for Railways: I am sure of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So am I. That is why I think it better to place the administration in the hands of the police. In compiling the figures for motor cars and cycles, we have not relied upon the number licensed, but have had our estimates confirmed by the Automobile Club. The license fees collected last year from within the old metropolitan area totalled £27,300 and the estimate for this year is £31,000. It is certain that the local authorities, who are charged with the duty of collecting fees, miss a proportion of what should be paid. If the Main Roads Bill be passed, the area under the control of the Commissioner of Police as the licensing authority will be extended, and a much larger sum would be collected, even on the fees now being charged.

Mr. Sampson: The police will collect all over the State?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is what we propose.

Mr. Sampson: It will be a difficult job in some of the far-flung areas.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the fees prescribed in this Bill are adopted, it is estimated that within the metropolitan area the fees collected next year will be not less than £55,000 out of the £75,000 estimated for the State.

Mr. Lindsay: That means £20,000 from the rest of the State.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Not one penny of this money will be handled by the Government. Every penny of it will be paid into the main road trust account, to be operated on by the board and used for the construction and maintenance of main roads. There should be no objection to finding money for the upkeep of roads. Roads are wanted. Motor traffic has increased and doubtless will still further increase. Motor traffic is of immense benefit in a State of vast distances such as Western Australia; but the Government simply cannot provide the money under existing conditions, and unless something in the nature of this Bill is adopted, the roads must continue to be neglected and must go from bad to worse. I think members gen-

erally are sufficiently apprised of the position throughout the country to determine that something must be done. This is our proposal. We invite the House to give its best consideration to this Bill, along with the Main Roads Bill, and treat it strictly as a non-party measure. We ask the House to do its best to make the Bill one that will meet the necessities of transport in this State. I am advised that this is an exceptional attitude for a Minister to adopt when dealing with a taxation measure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have to take the responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Anyhow, I am asking that members treat it in a non-party way and frame the measure as they think fit.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then we shall alter its appearance considerably.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th November.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford) [7.45]: There has been brought forth a debate out of all proportion to the size of the Bill. The criticism of the Bill is due to a desire on the part of members to protect the employees of the Fire Brigades Board against the introduction of a system which is viewed with disfavour by the employees. I share with members the desire to protect the employees against the introduction of a system that should not be supported by this House. The employees are entitled to some home life. It is impossible for them to get this in central homes where all the families would meet and associate. I want to see them have the right to possess homes of their own, and to be able to beautify the surroundings, as other people in the community can do. The employees are justified in appealing to this chamber for protection against any action of the kind now suggested. Evidently it is the intention of the board, if they can borrow money without restriction, to purchase property and upon it build compounds or something of that nature for the housing of the employees. While I agree with the objections that have been lodged against such a proposal I want to see the Bill passed. There are many country towns requiring fire brigade establishments and equipment. Towns like Narrogin are growing very fast, and should be modernised in the way of fire fighting appliances. If we

were to defeat the Bill we should be doing a great injury to many towns that now deserve consideration at the hands of the Board. The board cannot carry out any such work unless they have power to borrow money at a higher rate of interest than 6 per cent. If possible the board may, out of the money borrowed, equip in a better manner the fire bridges in the metropolitan area. I support the second reading of the Bill, but ask the House to see that a limitation is placed on the board with respect to the expenditure of the money. I wish to protect the employees in the manner referred to. In Committee it will be necessary, if we wish to do a fair thing by the employees, to amend the Bill in such a way as to prevent the board from spending money in the direction that has caused so much alarm to the men.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Subiaco) [7.50]: I have heard this Bill described as an innocent measure. No doubt when the Premier moved the second reading he did not know all that was at the back of it. The Fire Brigades Board must raise money, but cannot do so at the present rate of interest, namely, 6 per cent. I have no objection to offer to the Bill from that point of view. Other questions, however, have been raised, and having had some experience in fire brigade matters I feel I must make some comments. I understand from the tenor of the debate that it is proposed to spend some of the money on the building of homes for firemen engaged under the board. It is quite wrong to suggest that a fireman's job is an easy one, and a task that anyone can undertake. I have had about 25 years' experience in volunteer and permanent fire brigades, and I know that the life of a permanent fireman is not one after which anyone need hanker. First and foremost, he has to be physically fit, and must have a certain amount of mental capacity before he can be installed as a permanent fireman. That being so, we should give these men every facility to make their lives comfortable. Unlike other employees, these men may be said to be employed for 24 hours continuously. There is no question of a 44 or 48 hour week, or an eight hours day for them; they are given their duties at 6 in the morning, and conclude them at 6 the next morning. Because of that we should extend to the men every possible consideration. It is difficult to decide which is the better course to take in this matter. I understand the money is to be borrowed for the purpose of building new fire stations, as well as providing accommodation for the firemen employed by the board. The idea of building barracks or flats for firemen is wrong. In a State like this, where we have plenty of land available, there are other means of housing the men and their wives and families. If I knew it was the intention of the board to use the borrowed money

solely for this purpose, I would oppose the Bill. Having read the arguments raised in this House no doubt the board will reconsider their decision, and perhaps give some thought to the building of cottages with sufficient yard room to enable these people to be properly housed. The two platoon system has been referred to. It seems to me this would lead to considerable expense. Probably the Government would find themselves paying much more than they are doing to-day if that system were instituted. The same thing would apply to the local authorities, and also to the insurance companies. I do not know that it is possible for the local governing bodies or for the Government to find sufficient funds for the inauguration of the two platoon system, but I do know that if proper homes were provided for the firemen a considerable amount of the opposition now shown to the building of barracks would be removed. I think the firemen would be prepared to remain as they are under the present system if the board were willing to provide cottages, with yard room, etc., in which they could live.

Mr. Hughes: The objection to the Bill is the barracks.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Yes. I hardly think the two platoon system would be any longer advocated if the board agreed to erect separate cottages for the men. Naturally every married man with a family desires to secure a home of his own. The two platoon system would enable him to do that. He could live away from the fire station in one of the suburbs. The time, however, is not ripe for the establishment of the two platoon system. We are not sufficiently advanced in this State for it. The present proposal of the board appears to be to erect barracks or flats with a common yard, a common washhouse, a common kitchen, etc., but if they would adopt the cottage system I think there would be no further opposition. Even as a permanent fireman and one of the officers of the brigade I always advocated that the men should have an opportunity of enjoying home life. I am very pleased to say that during my time in the fire brigade service we found the then Chief Officer prepared to give all the men every possible facility in connection with their home life. In those days the men were mostly single, but to-day the majority of them are married. Therefore it behoves us, and also the Fire Brigades Board, to see that the men and their wives and children are properly housed. I can quite understand that firemen necessarily must seek homes as near as possible to the fire station, but I was surprised the other evening to hear the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) say that all these men live within half a minute of the station. I do not think the hon. member was quite correct in that statement.

Mr. Hughes: That applies to the men at the central station.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I know that some of the men employed at the central station live at East Perth.

Mr. Hughes: But within half a minute of the station.

Mr. RICHARDSON: If that is so, there is not much necessity for the board to build quarters for the men any nearer to the station. After all said and done, an ordinary man cannot travel more than 250 yards in half a minute.

Mr. Hughes: A circle of a radius of a quarter of a mile from the station would get 99 per cent. of the men.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I have been at the game, and I say that the average fireman does not run 100 yards in 10 seconds.

The Premier: He runs about three yards outside evens.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I think the member for East Perth was rather optimistic in his statement. I am rather dubious about it because I have served at that fire station, and have slept there; and I know very well that it took some of the men five or seven minutes to come along when a fire call occurred. Apart from that aspect, the Government are paying a quarter of the cost of upkeep of the fire brigades in Western Australia, and the Government therefore want to know that when a fire call takes place the men are within easy distance. I would call a minute to 1½ minutes an easy distance for a fireman. The question arises whether the Fire Brigades Board can secure within a reasonable distance sufficient land to build cottages for all their men. After all, the question is one of finance.

Mr. Hughes: If you made the limit two minutes, they could get any amount of land for double the number.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Two minutes would be a reasonable time, because there are always sufficient men, principally single men, on the station to see that everything is in order when the fire alarm goes. Ordinarily, no fire brigade turns out under 2 to 2½ minutes—I mean the full brigade. I speak from knowledge. I think at the central station we once turned out in 10½ seconds, but everybody knew, though nobody was supposed to know, that there was going to be a call; and so everything was ready. In the ordinary course the full brigade does not turn out in less than 2½ minutes. There should always be sufficient single men available to have everything in order by the time the married men arrive. If the member for East Perth is right in stating that plenty of land is available, then I would urge the Premier to instruct the two representatives of the Government on the board to see that flats or barracks are not built for the firemen, but that cottages are built, with plenty of yard room for the men and their wives and children. I feel sure the Premier will realise that it is not advisable to house 25 married men with families in flats. Unquestionably, bickering and ill-feeling would be engendered in such circumstances.

Mr. Teesdale: Would the position be any different from the position in the flats we have in Perth to-day?

Mr. RICHARDSON: There would be a considerable difference, because these men would be compelled to live in the flats. Suppose the Premier or myself elected to live in a flat. If we found the flat inconvenient, or not to our taste, we could remove; but once a fireman took a flat, he would not be allowed to move. If he desired to move from a flat which had been built for him, he would most likely be asked to leave the service.

Mr. Hughes: And flat tenants do not like young children.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That is so. In a young country such as this the thought of living in a flat seems abhorrent. In older countries it is necessary to live in flats because of the want of room.

The Premier: In the Eastern capitals flats are more popular than detached cottages, though I don't know why.

Mr. Davy: People tumble over themselves to get the flats that are available in Perth.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Many women desire to live in flats because of the common cookery, the meals being provided.

The Premier: Oh, no!

Mr. RICHARDSON: There are quite a number of flats of that description in Perth.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am very sorry to have to interrupt, and especially at so very late a stage of the debate, because this has been the subject of discussion all the way through. However, it is entirely irrelevant to the Bill as it comes before the House.

The Premier: And has been irrelevant from the commencement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. I do not want the debate now to degenerate into a discussion of flats in general.

Dissent from Speaker's Ruling.

Mr. Hughes: Surely when this House is going to authorise a semi-public institution to borrow money—

Mr. Speaker: What does the hon. member wish to do—raise a point of order, or dissent from my ruling?

Mr. Hughes: If you put it that way, Sir, I certainly wish to dissent. I am very sorry that you tell me to move to disagree with your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will please hand up his reasons for dissenting.

Mr. Hughes: Very well, Sir. I move—

That the House dissents from the Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The member for East Perth objects to my ruling on the ground that discussion of uses to which moneys proposed to be borrowed under the Fire Brigades Act are to be applied is irrelevant to the debate. My ruling is, not that this

Bill gives power to borrow, or deals with borrowed money, but that it simply increases the rate of interest that may be paid on debentures. My object now is to save the time of the House. The whole Bill is to amend Section 50 of the Fire Brigades Act, 1916. Clause 2 of the Bill says—

Section 50 of the Fire Brigades Act, 1916, is hereby amended by the insertion, in Subsection 2, of the words "and a half" after the word "six."

That is the substance of the whole Bill. The section proposed to be amended will be better understood if I read the first subsection as well. Subsection 1 is as follows:—

The board may, with the consent of the Governor, from time to time borrow such moneys as may be deemed necessary to enable the board to carry out and perform the powers, authorities, and duties vested in or conferred or imposed on the board by this Act, or to redeem by debentures lawfully issued under this Act or any Act hereby repealed.

Subsection 2 reads—

The board shall have power, with the like consent, to issue debentures under the seal of the board for the amount so borrowed, with interest thereon at a rate not to exceed six per centum per annum.

That is all there is to the amendment. By parity of reasoning whatever is said of an amendment applies to the matter advanced in the course of the discussion on the motion. The matter must be relevant. The object is to enable the board to borrow at $6\frac{1}{2}$ instead of 6 per cent. The whole power to borrow exists now under the principal Act. The board can borrow with the consent of the Governor, not without it, under the principal Act. Under this Bill, if it be passed, they can still borrow, with the consent of the Governor, which means the Executive Council, for the purposes set forth in the section, with the same limitations exactly; but they will be entitled, having regard to the state of the money market, to pay $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. more than 6 per cent. in their issue of debentures.

Mr. Hughes: Well, now you have had your say—

Mr. Speaker: I will not take any impertinence from the hon. member.

Mr. Hughes: While I give every deference to the Chair, the Chair should pay deference also. I regret it should be necessary for me to move this motion, but I think you have taken a mistaken view of the procedure. It is a long story, going back to the 16th and 17th centuries, when it was agreed that Parliament, before it approved of expenditure, should ascertain the manner in which the money was to be spent. That was the first time Parliament achieved the right to say that before any appropriation was made, or approval of money being spent—

Mr. Speaker: I must call the hon. member to order. This is not a question of appropriation, not a question of spending money or of granting money. It is simply the authorising of a body that already has borrowing power to alter its conditions of borrowing. It has no relation to appropriation by this House whatsoever.

Mr. Hughes: Once again I must disagree with you. The object of the Bill is to allow the board to borrow money for a specific purpose.

Mr. Latham: They already have it under the existing Act.

Mr. Hughes: They have no power to borrow money at more than six per cent. They want additional power to borrow at $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. a large sum for two purposes, one of which is to put the men into quarters. That is the very object of the Bill. Without it there would be no necessity for the Bill. Probably they could get at six per cent. the small sum they may require for station appliances. On the second point it decidedly is a question of spending money; because a portion of the interest and sinking fund on this money will have to come out of the State Treasury. The Treasurer is obliged to stand in for 25 per cent. of it. So it is a question of spending money. There are two points involved: First of all, authority is being asked to borrow a large sum of money, and portion of the interest and sinking fund on that money will be in part a charge on Consolidated Revenue. It was a long struggle to the time when Parliament first achieved control of the purse. That was looked upon as the achievement that placed parliamentary government on a sound basis. When the people of England won that they thought that for the first time they had parliamentary control. In view of that, whenever a question of authorising the raising of money came before the House, it was the custom to have full discussion of the purposes for which the money was required. If we were simply to take the Bill and say it is an authority to raise more money at an increased rate of interest, and did not discuss the object for which the money was to be raised, we should be lacking in our duty. I contend that your ruling is wrong, because the object for which the Bill is necessary is the building of flats. To limit the discussion in that regard seems to me taking away the right won in the 17th century. I regret that I am obliged to disagree with your ruling, but it is my duty to do so in order to preserve the right that has been established for so many years.

Mr. Speaker: There being no seconder to the motion, I cannot put it. But I wish to inform the House on the subject. "May," eleventh edition, page 85, distinctly says—

Amendments are out of order that are irrelevant to the Bill.

And in the "Manual of the Public business of the House of Commons," it is stated—

An amendment must be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill and to the subject matter of the clause to which it relates.

I need not give a definition of "relevancy." It means pertinence, helpfulness to the Bill, not anything that is foreign to the Bill. In the principal Act power to spend money is governed by an entirely different section. The powers of the board are given in an earlier section, Section 5, Subsection (2) of which reads as follows:—

Such board shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession, and shall adopt and use a common seal and shall be capable in law of suing and being sued and of taking, purchasing, holding, exchanging, leasing and disposing of real and personal property.

The talk has been all in relation to this Subsection 2 of Section 5 of the principal Act, whereas the Bill is confined entirely to Subsection 2 of Section 50 of the Act. There is no relevancy, no pertinence whatever between the suggested amendment and the Bill as it stands. We can deal with only one question, namely, whether it is right to give the board power, not to borrow—for they have that power already—but to increase the rate of interest. The principal Act limits the interest they have to pay on the money borrowed to six per cent. They cannot get money at that rate now, and the Bill simply enables them to pay $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., no more. All the other talk, while it is illuminative and interesting and no doubt instructive, is not pertinent to the measure. As for the limitation of the power to spend, it is governed by the principal Act; for in the very section the Bill continues, the necessity for the consent of the Governor-in-Council—which means the Executive Council—must be obtained before the money can be borrowed.

Debate resumed.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I regret that I touched on matters that were irrelevant, but I certainly was following the tenor of other speeches. It appears to me that after your ruling, Sir, I am in a circumscribed area dealing with the question of whether the rate of interest shall be 6 per cent. or $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I said in the beginning that I realised we have to vote for the Bill, because I appreciate the fact that the board are in need of money, and the only means they have of getting it is to borrow it. Because of that I support the Bill. But I certainly thought members would be able to say something in regard to the spending power of the board, seeing that we have to provide a certain sum of money and that we give them the benefit of the doubt in allowing them to borrow at $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. instead of the 6 per cent. provided in the Act. I intend to leave the proposed flats alone, for there are enough flats already,

and I do not wish to see any more created. But let me say a word in regard to fire brigades generally. It is not widely recognised by the people that a fireman's life is not a happy one.

The Premier: I thought that applied to the policeman.

Mr. RICHARDSON: No, the policeman's life is a happy one, as recorded in song and verse; but the fireman's life is by no means a happy one. So if the board intends to borrow money for the housing of the firemen, I desire that the board shall get the best that money can provide. For the fireman's life is a very strenuous one. It is full of danger, and the fireman never knows when he will be called out to protect life and property. Somebody compared the fireman's life with that of a policeman. Only on one point are they alike.

Mr. Sampson: Both look well in uniform.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That is a point that did not occur to me. But the more serious point is that they are both called upon to preserve life and property.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Will a half per cent make the life any better?

Mr. RICHARDSON: I do not know, but I want the men to get the best the board can give them. In the near future a new fire brigades board will have to be created. It is essential that the Premier should immediately inquire as to the two men whom he is entitled to appoint to the board. It is for him to see that those men shall know something about fire brigade work and something also about finance. Very soon we shall have to reorganise the fire brigades in the metropolitan area. In the suburbs to-day we are simply playing at fire brigades. Take Subiaco, with a population of 17,000 or 18,000. We have there three firemen. It is impossible for those men to cope with the fires that might occur in the district. For instance, if a fire call is received at the Subiaco Station, of the three men engaged there one is probably down the street on short leave, and two are on duty. The two work the tender, which should be manned by four, and should another fire call be made no one is left in the place to receive it, and the building that may be in flames can burn on. It is necessary that the Fire Brigades Board should raise more money, and that they should have a system different from that which is in operation to-day, but I certainly advocate that the Government representatives should press for a combination of some of the municipalities. Leederville, Subiaco and West Perth could easily be combined and there could be ten or twelve men in the one fire station, and in that way have an efficient brigade. Volunteer days are over, so far as the metropolitan area is concerned, and the reasons need not be enumerated here. Volunteers have gone out for good. It remains for the Fire Brigades Board to reorganise the whole system between South Fremantle and Midland Junction, and institute a service effi-

cient and commensurate with the heavy expenditure entailed. In the years gone by thousands of pounds have been wasted on fire brigades throughout Western Australia. Stations were built and pulled down again, and in that way a considerable sum of money was wasted. It remains for us to-day to either pass the Bill now before us or see that the present board reorganise the whole of the brigades throughout the State. I believe we can get an efficient service with very little added cost and I feel that the Government, when making the new appointments to the board when it comes into existence on the 1st January, and when the local authorities do likewise, they will see that the delegates have some knowledge of the ordinary working of fire brigades. Then in all probability some benefit may accrue. I intend to support the Bill. There are many other things that I should like to have said, but which according to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I may not say. I desire to emphasise the fact that if the Fire Brigades Board are going to build quarters for their men they will not build barracks or flats, but that they will provide something that will be in keeping with the rest of Western Australia. Something that will provide comfortable surroundings for the wives and families of the men employed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short Title:

Mr. HUGHES: I move—

That the Bill be referred to a select committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the Standing Orders will permit the motion to be moved at this stage.

Mr. HUGHES: Perhaps I can save the time of the Committee by drawing attention to Standing Order 271, which reads—

After the second reading, unless it be moved "That this Bill be referred to a select committee" the Speaker shall put the question "That the Speaker do now leave the Chair, and the House resolves itself into a Committee of the whole for the consideration of this Bill."

My Motion is therefore out of order and I shall not press it.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 50:

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to the clause: "Provided that money raised under this Act shall not be used for the erection of barracks or flats for the firemen within the metropolitan area."

That will get over the difficulty that I referred to on the second reading. The Premier, in introducing the Bill, said that a large proportion of the money would be required for the erection of barracks or flats. If we can insert the proviso I have submitted, the difficulty I foresee will be overcome. I recognise, of course, that the board must have money for other purposes.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule the amendment out of order for the reason that it goes beyond the scope of the Bill and is irrelevant. The Bill deals only with the amount of interest that shall be paid by the board; the amendment imposes restrictions on the powers of the board conferred by the principal Act.

Mr. Sleeman: Then I shall have to content myself by opposing the clause.

Mr. HUGHES: Notwithstanding the warning that has been given the tendency of the Committee is to allow the board to build flats. The flats are not wanted by the men.

Mr. Mann: You are voicing only the opinion of the minority.

Mr. Sleeman: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member does not know that the firemen had a vote on this question, and two-thirds were in favour of turning down the flats. Later a meeting was held and the meeting was unanimously against the flats proposal. I happened to be there.

Mr. Latham: Leave you alone to be there if there is any trouble about.

The Premier: I do not see how you can make trouble when all are unanimous.

Mr. HUGHES: The Board are determined that they will force the men into flats. The board are spoiling for a fight and no doubt they will get it.

The CHAIRMAN: We do not require a second reading speech from the hon. member.

Mr. HUGHES: I am discussing whether the board should be allowed to borrow money for the purpose of erecting flats.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order. The clause reads—"Section 50 of the Fire Brigades Act, 1916, is hereby amended by the insertion, in Subsection 2, of the words 'and a half' after the word 'six.'"

Mr. HUGHES: If we cannot discuss it here we shall have to fight it elsewhere.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It seems that we are unable to do anything at this stage. I did think we would get an assurance from the Premier that the board would not spend money in certain directions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot see any difference regarding the raising of the money whether the clause be agreed to or not. It simply permits the board to borrow money at a slightly increased rate of interest. If the clause were struck out

it would not prohibit the board raising the money. What the board will do with the money I cannot say. That will be a matter to be submitted to the Minister controlling the Act. I understand the board have asked for a Crown grant respecting land close to the station. I do not agree with that proposal myself. The land is in the centre of the city and is property belonging to the municipality and will be required as additional security for raising loans.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There has been sufficient discussion regarding the provision of flats or barracks to cause the Government to exercise some discretion regarding the powers vested in them. Although the Bill gives the board power to borrow money at an increased rate of interest they can borrow it only with the consent of the Governor-in-Council. There is nothing to say that the Governor-in-Council shall permit the board to borrow money for any purpose the board may desire. It will be possible for the Governor-in-Council to direct how the money shall be borrowed and expended. We have a safety valve in that way and we can appeal to the Government to exercise their discretion by advising the Governor-in-Council that the money shall not be raised or expended in a manner of which the Government disapprove.

Mr. HUGHES: I believe that the board have already received the approval of the Government for the borrowing of the money. If that be so, the board can borrow the money at 6½ per cent. interest and erect the barracks.

The PREMIER: In view of the discussion that has taken place regarding flats, I feel somewhat of a flat myself for having introduced the Bill. I merely gave the information regarding the intentions of the board innocently and I realise now that I gave too much information! If I had told the House that the measure was an innocent little one conferring power upon the board to raise money it would probably have been passed without any difficulty.

Mr. Teesdale: As usual your own supporters are the cause of the difficulty.

The PREMIER: Hon. members who have expressed such concern regarding the flats have made their fight in the wrong place.

Mr. Hughes: We shall fight it outside.

The PREMIER: Representations on this question will be best placed before the Minister concerned before the consent of the Governor-in-Council is obtained.

Mr. Hughes: Has it not been obtained already?

The PREMIER: I undertake to say that it is not too late for representations to be made in the proper quarter. While I cannot give any promise as to what will be the decision of the Governor-in-Council, I can say that representations made to the

Minister along the lines indicated by the debate relative to the flats, will receive consideration.

Mr. Hughes: But representations were made before the Bill was introduced.

The PREMIER: The Bill has nothing to do with the question. The Government were in duty bound as a Government, to introduce the Bill giving the board the powers sought. That is to say we are bound to do that if we are to preserve to the board the powers conferred on them by the original Act. We would have no right to refuse to introduce legislation to enable the board to raise money for the requirements of the board—I understand that the money is required for purposes other than the erection of flats as well—because if we did so it would be tantamount to repealing an Act passed by Parliament years ago. If it be desired to take away the power to borrow money from the board, the proper way would be to amend the Act in that direction. At any rate it is not too late for representations to be made to the Minister so that they may receive the consideration of Cabinet before the matter is dealt with by the Governor-in-Council.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I oppose the clause. I am well aware that the Bill has been introduced for a definite object, despite what the Minister for Lands has suggested regarding the raising of money. I object to the policy of the present board and I will not be a party to facilitate the raising of money for objectionable purposes. In view of what has been said and of the fact that there is no need to pass the Bill hurriedly, I suggest the matter be postponed until we get an assurance that the board will alter their policy or that the Governor-in-Council will see that this scheme is not proceeded with. It is utter nonsense to endeavour to discuss this important question in connection with the Bill. The Bill is utterly inadequate because necessary amendments to the Act could have been introduced. I suggest to the Premier that he agree to postpone the consideration of the clause until we find out where we stand.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Premier has suggested that we should approach this matter in another quarter in order to get what we desire. According to the information I have received, part of the money has already been spent, inasmuch as a deposit has been paid on some land. The Premier cannot make any promise to us respecting our desires, and I intend to oppose the clause.

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

Ayes	29
Noes	9
<hr/>			
Majority for	20
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AYES.

Mr. Angelo
Mr. Angwin
Mr. Barnard
Mr. Clydesdale
Mr. Collier
Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Davy
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. E. B. Johnston
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Lambert
Mr. Lamond
Mr. Latham
Mr. Lindsay

Mr. Mann
Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Munsie
Mr. North
Mr. Richardson
Mr. Sampson
Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Thomson
Mr. Troy
Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brown
Mr. Chesson
Mr. Corboy
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Heron

Mr. Millington
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Withers
Mr. Hughes

(Teller.)

Clause thus passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

MOTION—ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRAL MARKETS.

Debate resumed from the 11th November on the following motion by Mr. Mann:—

That in the opinion of this House it is advisable that legislation be introduced this session empowering the Perth City Council to establish markets for the wholesale disposal of vegetables, fruit, produce—other than grain and chaff—meat, fish, poultry and game under the conditions recommended by the select committee on the establishment of markets in the metropolitan area.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.7]: I intend to move an amendment to delete the words "Perth City Council to establish" and insert "Government to appoint a trust composed of representatives of the primary producers, consumers, and distributors, to arrange for the erection and control of"; also to delete "other than." The House is under a debt of gratitude to the select committee for having conducted the inquiry. The marketing of our products is a very important question. My amendment is designed to conserve the interests of those most vitally concerned in markets. It is essential that the producer, whose products are to be sold, should have adequate representation on the body controlling the markets.

The Premier: I have a prior amendment to delete the words "this session."

Mr. THOMSON: If the Premier has no objection, I am prepared to include those words in my amendment.

The Premier: I have no objection.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better move first of all to delete the words "this session."

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That the words "this session" be deleted.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member wishes to speak at this stage, he must confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. THOMSON: I have nothing to say on this amendment.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [9.15]: I would point out the urgency that exists for the introduction of legislation designed to give effect to the wishes of the select committee. The committee had before it different producers, several of whom stressed the importance of the early introduction of legislation. There is no subject connected with the marketing of fruit or the fruit-growing industry of greater urgency than the establishment of markets in the metropolitan area. The representative of the Swan Grape Growers, Mr. Conroy, pointed out to the committee some of the disabilities under which the grape growers of that area were suffering. The story told by him is one that could easily and with as much truth be told about every fruit grower in the State. The disabilities under which the growers suffer are well known, but there has been no alleviation of them. The committee has recommended after full inquiry that the desired legislation should be introduced this session. That was one of the most important recommendations of the committee.

The Minister for Mines: It does not say that. It refers to the establishment of markets.

Mr. SAMPSON: Legislation is required before this can be brought about. The marketing of fruit and other products has in the past been spread over a wide area, with the result that there has been a heavy increase in the cost of handling. This is bad for the producers as well as for the consumers. It is, therefore, our bounden duty to see that legislation is passed this session to overcome the present difficulty. I hope the House will agree immediately to give the City Council authority to establish markets in Perth. The member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) will perhaps reconsider his decision to press this amendment. The position of the growers is so bad that at the recent Fruit Conference in Perth it was shown that unless there was some improvement many of the returned soldiers now working gardens, orchards and vineyards in the Upper Swan would be forced off their holdings. I must vote against the amendment.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [9.2]: It is peculiar that out of the 50 members of this Assembly the member for Swan (Mr.

Sampson) should be the one to urge the Government to introduce legislation in connection with marketing.

The Premier: And especially the ex-Colonial Secretary.

Mr. LAMBERT: If there is one member who must accept the full responsibility for the backward state of the markets, it is the member for Swan.

Mr. Sampson: You have been in Parliament for many years.

Mr. LAMBERT: When he was speaking upon the subject some little time ago he adopted the wait and see policy.

Mr. Sampson: You are on the wrong question.

Mr. LAMBERT: He was questioned with regard to the operations of a certain Act governing markets in one of the other States.

Mr. Mann: Do not go back to the electioneering campaign.

Mr. LAMBERT: This party at the last elections made a great feature of the necessity for providing marketing facilities. At that time the soundness of the system suggested was challenged by the present Opposition.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No.

Mr. LAMBERT: Particularly was the foster father of it, the member for Swan, concerned.

Mr. Sampson: This may be humorous, but it is not truthful.

Mr. LAMBERT: When the hon. member was asked his opinion on the marketing question he said, "Wait and see."

The Premier: But he first of all approved.

Mr. Sampson: You must not prompt the member for Coolgardie.

Mr. LAMBERT: He gave a guarded approval to legislation which he believed emanated from a Socialist Government.

Mr. Mann: What has this to do with the motion?

Mr. LAMBERT: What has it to do with the hon. member? Why this magpie-like attitude on the part of the member for Perth?

Mr. Sampson: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is discussing something that is not before the House. At the moment the question is the establishment of markets by the Perth City Council.

Mr. LAMBERT: This is a discussion on the question of eliminating certain words from the motion.

The SPEAKER: The discussion is not on the matter presently to be outlined by the member for Katanning, but on the question of introducing legislation this session, and the striking out of the words "this session." Anything relative to the urgency or the inconsistency of urging urgency would be in order.

Mr. LAMBERT: The member for Swan protests, knowing that we are in the last month of the session. Why this fireworks

display? I do not like the lack of sincerity in the protestations of some members. After being a Minister of the Crown for some time, and after assuring the electors of Swan that their salvation was wrapped up in the proper marketing of their goods, and after halting and hesitating month in and month out, he now wants the thing done at once.

Mr. Teesdale: I rise to a point of order. Is there anything in connection with the salvation of the Swan electorate in the words "this session"? There must be some limit to the ravings of individual members.

The SPEAKER: I trust also there will be a limit to the interruptions to the speaker. The hon. member is not out of order in endeavouring to show that the speeches he has heard are inconsistent with the urgency that is urged for the introduction of legislation.

Mr. LAMBERT: Possibly there are members who could really protest that this is a matter of sufficient urgency to cause us to meet after Christmas.

The Premier: There might be 49 of that opinion.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, but imagine the member for Swan urging that we should do this in a hurricane-like fashion after he has hesitated so long himself, and after he assured the residents of the Swan electorate that they would have to leave their orchards!

Mr. Teesdale: Gone again.

Mr. LAMBERT: I thought it would have been sufficient that the member for Roebourne should write letters to the papers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. Sampson: You are expecting too much of him.

Mr. LAMBERT: How can we accept the assurance of the member for Swan when almost at the point of the pistol he first of all gave a qualified approval to certain legislation that was operating in another State? It was pointed out to him that this legislation emanated from a Labour Government, and had been operating to the advantage of the growers of the State concerned.

Mr. Sampson: That is one of the things that surprises people.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is accepted to-day as a sound principle. It is essential that the perishable commodities, so often referred to by the hon. member, should be properly controlled by legislation. But to try now, in the last months of the session, to make the country believe—

Mr. Sampson: There are two or three months to go yet.

Mr. LAMBERT: No. To try within two or three weeks of Parliament proroguing—

Mr. Sampson: You are an optimist.

Mr. LAMBERT: To try to make the country believe that legislation should be introduced within two or three weeks of prorogation is, to say the least of it, a

matter of distinctly bad grace on the part of the hon. member. I regret that he should have so far forgotten the history of the past few years as to seek to make a public parade of his great interest in the primary producers. He had his opportunity years ago; he had an opportunity until the last general election gave it to him where the turkey got the axe. Every member of this party made the matter of statutory control of marketing, particularly the marketing of perishables, a feature of the last general election. Dozens of speeches were delivered in the Swan electorate educating the hon. member's constituents on the necessity for such a step.

Mr. Sampson: I am afraid those speeches were wasted on the desert air.

Mr. LAMBERT: The urgency of this matter has not been lost sight of by members on this side, even though they recognise that it is too late to introduce a measure this session.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [9.33]: I am very sorry indeed that the suggestion to delete the words "this session" should have been left to the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson), who represents a district that is vitally affected by the motion. Their deletion would delay what the select committee ask for.

The Premier: The select committee did not ask for the measure to be introduced this session. The motion of the member for Perth asked for it.

Mr. LATHAM: I presume the member for Perth had the support of the select committee in asking for a Bill this session.

The Premier: The deletion of those words will not delay the matter.

Mr. Lambert: The hon. member wishes to suggest that we have broken faith.

Mr. LATHAM: I am not at present dealing with the remarks of the member for Coolgardie. When such an amendment comes from a member of a section of the Country Party, I must protest against it. Every member representing a country constituency should impress upon the Government the necessity for prompt action. One might almost imagine that there has been collusion between the member for Katanning and the member for Coolgardie.

Mr. Teesdale: An unholy alliance!

Mr. LATHAM: I regard the distribution of the products mentioned in the motion so seriously that I would like to see other legislation which appears on the Notice Paper set aside in favour of the measure for which the motion asks. I am sure the select committee had it in mind that something should be done at the earliest possible moment. If the Premier says it cannot be done, I shall be satisfied.

The Premier: The hon. member knows perfectly well that it cannot be done this session.

Mr. LATHAM: That is good enough, coming from the Premier; but that it should be left to the member for Katanning—

Mr. Thomson: That is the sting!

Mr. LATHAM: I am anxious to see legislation introduced expeditiously. Undoubtedly to-day there are immense quantities of surplus products on our markets, products for which the producers get almost less than the cost of production, but for which consumers pay double that amount. Some years ago a Bill was drafted—

Mr. Lambert: By whom?

Mr. LATHAM: By the Perth City Council.

Mr. Lambert: I wouldn't mention that if I were you.

Mr. LATHAM: It contained some objectionable clauses, but it could have been knocked into shape, and possibly it would have provided means for benefiting the primary producers. Every opportunity that presents itself to me of doing anything for the primary producers of this State I shall make use of, in defiance of everybody else. I shall vote against the amendment.

Mr. MILLINGTON (Leederville) [9.38]: As a member of the select committee which inquired into this question, I now begin to see how it comes about that the question of city markets is invariably so productive of oratory. Are we going to waste time over the deletion of two words when we could devote our time to the discussion of matters of importance? I suggest that the mover of the motion get over the difficulty, and avoid giving some members opportunities, which they seem eager to grasp, for further delay, by accepting the amendment. Indeed, he seems to have no choice in the matter, since the Premier has said that there is no chance of the legislation being introduced during the current session.

The Premier: There should be a declaration that markets should be established.

Mr. MANN (Perth) [9.40]: I accept the amendment.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.40]: As one who accepted the Premier's suggestion—

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no right of reply.

Mr. THOMSON: I want to discuss the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Discuss what?

Mr. THOMSON: I want to discuss the words.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member moved the amendment. He could have discussed the matter then. That ends it.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.41]: I move a further amendment—

That the words "Perth City Council to establish" be struck out, with a view to the insertion of other words.

We want to arrive at a definite principle. I regret that certain members, and particularly the member for York (Mr. Latham), should have seen fit to seek a party advantage by attacking me and representing me as one who is not concerned to look after the interests of the primary producer.

Mr. Sampson: On a point of order, I do not think the hon. member is in order in stating that the member for York attacked him.

The Premier: That is no point of order at all.

The Minister for Mines: The member for Swan has not been attacked.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Swan will be right in drawing attention to any wrongful use of words or procedure, but I fail to see that there has been any personal reflection, in a political sense. The member for Katanning is in order.

Mr. THOMSON: I am entirely sincere in my desire to look after the interests of the primary producer. In moving the amendment I have an honest intention to preserve the interests of three sections of the community. The first of these sections is that in which I am vitally interested, the producers. I take second place not even to the member for York or the member for Swan in point of conserving the interests of the producers. It is astounding that certain members should endeavour to impute motives, and to suggest that we who sit on the cross benches are negligent of our duties. The question raised by the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) is not affected by the local market at all, since 80 per cent. of our dried fruits have to be sold oversea. How can the member for Swan assert that we on these cross benches are desirous of delaying the establishment of market facilities for our producers because in all sincerity one of us has moved a motion for the purpose of conserving the interests of the producers? If the motion of the member for Perth is carried and legislation is enacted giving the Perth City Council authority to erect markets, they will be able to charge whatever they like. If they construct those markets, they will be out to make a profit from them.

Mr. Mann: That can be controlled by the Act.

Mr. THOMSON: It cannot. I want to conserve the interests of the producers and those of the consumers as well. If we have a trust, as suggested by my amendment, it will be more in the interests of the producers than the proposal of those claiming to be the only representatives of the pro-

ducers here. Because when we have a trust, and the Government bring down legislation authorising that trust to construct markets, we shall have control. So long as the trust can get the interest and sinking fund necessary to pay for the markets, we shall be able to market the producers' commodities at a minimum cost, while the consumer will get his requirements as cheaply as possible, and the distributors also will be able to get their products at a minimum price. So it will be a benefit all round. I commend the select committee for the time and attention they devoted to this question. They were sincere in their desire to do something for the benefit of the State. I hope the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) will accept my amendment. I can assure him it is not moved with any idea of injuring his motion. We should approach this question without any desire to make political capital out of it. Let us occasionally be above party politics, and do that which is in the interests of the State. When the Premier says he cannot see his way to doing a certain thing, surely it is only reasonable we should accept that intimation. Even if the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) advocated the compulsory provisions of the Queensland Act, it would not affect the motion, for we are now dealing with a local question.

Mr. Mann: Rather more than that; it applies to the whole of the State.

Mr. THOMSON: Perth does not supply the requirements of the whole of the State.

Mr. Mann: In this instance it does.

Mr. THOMSON: Nothing of the sort. The object of the amendment is to allow the producers to get into close touch with the consumers, and to allow the consumer to secure his requirements as cheaply as possible. I commend it to the House.

Mr. MILLINGTON (Leederville) [9.50]: As a member of the select committee that presented the report, I object to the amendment. I assume that the only question under discussion is that of control, whether it shall be by a trust, as proposed in the amendment, or whether it shall be by the Perth City Council, as proposed in the motion. The committee did not seriously consider this alternative. They recommended that either the Government or the City Council should control. What induced them to recommend control by the City Council was the belief that there was no possibility of the Government's financing of the markets in the near future. Having regard to the urgency of the matter, we had to bring down a proposal that could be put into practice at an early date. I regret that it is impossible to introduce the necessary legislation this session. When it comes to the provision of a site and the raising of the funds necessary for the building, there is a far greater prospect of getting the City Council to undertake the

responsibility than of forming a trust for the same purpose.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why?

Mr. MILLINGTON: If the amendment be carried we shall see the strings being pulled. Notification will be served on financial institutions, allegedly representative of the primary producers, and there will also be an attempt made to discover influential representatives of the distributors. At about the same time we shall have an investigation to determine who are the representatives of the consumers. When found, they will form themselves into a solid association and will approach the Government, as did the Fremantle Freezing Works people, with a request that the Government provide the necessary money. That is about as far as the proposed trust will go. If it is desired to kill the proposed markets, by all means start prospecting for this holy trinity representative of the producers, the consumers, and the distributors. If, on the other hand, anything of a practical nature is to be done, it will have to be done by the City Council or by the Government. We have given full consideration to the question of control. Those vitally interested are the producers, the distributors, and the consumers. The directing of the policy of the markets is provided for in our recommendations. But in the first place it is necessary to find someone who will undertake the responsibility of financing the concern. The City Council already have a suitable site, and they have also power to raise funds for the erection of markets. When it comes to the policy of control, full consideration can be given to the producer, the distributor, and the consumer. Although realising the difficulty of getting cohesion of forces, we have recommended the appointment in an advisory capacity of representatives of those three bodies with a view to controlling the policy of the markets. We shall have done something if we can get an advisory body representing those three interests. That is an entirely different matter from organising, through those bodies, the raising of the necessary funds, and securing the necessary legal status to acquire land, to erect the markets, and to act as landlords. To those who really want to see markets established, the only prospect is to get the City Council to undertake the responsibility of the erection of the markets. As for the fear expressed by the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) that the City Council will be rack-renters, it is not justified on the record of that body. It would be totally opposed to their interests. Acting as landlords, they would naturally have to give consideration to those operating the markets. The three interests would be represented in an advisory capacity, and the City Council would act in co-operation with the advisory committee. I do not see any difficulty there. The City Council would be perfectly satisfied if they could make the markets finance themselves. It would not be a profit-making

concern at all. Up to date we have not been able to get any estimate as to the probable cost of erecting the markets. A considerable sum of money will be required and the City Council are the only body in a position to accept the responsibility. In view of this, and of the urgency of the matter, we have made the recommendation embodied in the motion. If it could be shown that a trust, who will have great difficulty in raising the necessary funds, could do it earlier than could the City Council, we should have no objection to the amendment; but of course no such contention can be established. As to the objection raised in respect of control, that can be overcome. The representatives of the bodies already named in the amendment can be appointed for the purpose of controlling the policy to be carried out regarding the sale and distribution of commodities. Regarding the landlord, the select committee maintained there was only one body that could assume that position and that was the Perth City Council. It was for that reason that the recommendation contained in the select committee's report was made. I shall oppose the amendment.

Mr. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.2]: As one of the select committee, the member who has just resumed his seat is in a position to speak favourably and with authority on the subject. I do not doubt that the House generally will support the view that has been taken by him. Statements have been made that if it is desired to destroy any possibility of securing the metropolitan markets, the amendment should be carried. I endorse that. In Melbourne and Sydney the provision of metropolitan markets is largely the function of the municipality of the capital. In my opinion the municipal council of Perth should be the controlling authority here, and should be given power to borrow money. Of course authority could be given to a trust, but I doubt whether such a proposal would be seriously considered by the House. It is no innovation for a local authority in a capital city to provide marketing facilities, and unquestionably that should be done here. The whole matter hinges upon the provision of money. As pointed out by the member for North-East Fremantle when the Perth Marketing Bill was before the House two years ago, the amount required would be approximately £200,000, and the only authority that could provide that was the City Council.

Mr. Lambert: We can create the authority.

Mr. SAMPSON: I recall the Bill that was before the House on that occasion, and how vigorously it was attacked. I always regretted that that Bill was not referred to a select committee.

Mr. Lambert: Why this deathbed repentance?

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not regret the Bill having been thrown out then because it was an unworthy measure, but before its defeat a select committee should have been appointed to go into the whole question of marketing. I am grateful that the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) persevered at the beginning of this session and secured the appointment of a select committee. We have now before us a report that is very informative and which reflects the opinions of producers and traders. The representative of the port of Manchester, Mr. Wade, gave particularly interesting evidence.

The Premier: He had a fund of knowledge.

Mr. SAMPSON: The questions put to him by the chairman elicited just the information that was required. Valuable evidence was also tendered by Mr. Harper, Mr. Lantzke, and Mr. Langley. Personally I am grateful to the member for Perth for the work he carried out on that committee. I hope that the member for Katanning will not press his amendment, because if it is carried it will be the death knell to any possibility of securing markets for some time to come.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.10]: I am pleased that the amendment has been moved. The marketing question is a serious one and involves broad principles. I do not know what has prompted the member for Perth to tackle it and to persist with the idea that the necessary power should be vested in the City Council other than the fact that he is the member for Perth. The first thing to determine is whether it is desirable by statute to control the marketing of goods. If we establish that principle then it is a matter for Parliament to take up. I am not convinced that the City Council has the knowledge, or may I go so far as to say the ability, to control a matter of such importance to the economic life of the State. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) said that the City Council would be the only body that would have power to borrow money.

Mr. Sampson: Subject to the Bill being passed. It is properly the function of the council.

Mr. LAMBERT: Why does the hon. member consider that to be so?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He is not permitted to answer you.

Mr. LAMBERT: Was it the idea of the framers of the Municipal Corporations Act that a municipal council should be set up as a small Parliament to deal with questions other than those of purely local or parochial concern? Why single out the metropolitan town council as the body that should deal with this matter. It is absurd, and for that reason I agree that the words should be eliminated as the amendment proposes to do. As for allowing three elements of the

community to be represented, that is equally absurd. We shall come to the time when, in the administration of justice, we shall have a barristers' association and also a burglars' association.

Mr. Mann: You will be president of that.

Mr. LAMBERT: I expect then the hon. member will recognise me. Anyhow his remark was not particularly brilliant. Parliament should determine how far it is necessary to go. To give effect to such a proposal in a practical way by means of an Act of Parliament is quite a different matter. What would such a board lead to? We had an incident in connection with the Karrakatta Cemetery Board showing how differences of opinion may arise between different parties interested. We also know what happens in the Arbitration Court. If we have a board to deal with all goods marketed by our primary producers, where are we likely to get to? Parliament should hesitate before curbing the free marketing of goods. Once we do that, we aim a blow at the foundations upon which all business is carried on. In other countries we have splendid organisations handling perishable goods without interference by Parliament. In America they have built up the finest system of marketing perishable goods that the world has known.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is news! It is the most disorganised market in the world to-day.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Mann: You should be sure of your facts.

Mr. LAMBERT: We should educate the people to recognise the benefits of co-operation. The growth of the co-operative movement in Western Australia is a significant sign. Parliament should hesitate a long time before agreeing to such a proposal as that now before us. If the municipal authorities keep within the four corners of their Act, no one will find fault with their efforts.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.24 p.m.