brought into the matter, and he may be in a position to adjudicate upon it. I move—

That the Committee dissent from the Chairman's ruling.

The Chairman: The objection must be expressed in writing.

Hon. A. Thomson: The issue is a very important one to the health of people in a certain portion of the State. Seeing that this proposed new clause comes from another place, do our Standing Orders prevent us from passing it?

The Chairman: The Chief Secretary has moved that the amendment made by the Legislative Assembly shall be approved by this Chamber.

The President resumed the Chair.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I desire to report that, during the discussion on Message No. 41 from the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Secretary moved that amendment No. 5, to insert a new clause to stand as Clause 28, be agreed to. I have ruled that in accordance with Standing Order 191, taken in conjunction with the amendment of Standing Order No. 3 dealing with the definition of "subject matter," inasmuch as the Bill in its original form made no provision to amend the parent Act in the direction sought by the Assembly's amendment, the proposed new clause is not admissible, and the Chief Secretary has moved to disagree with my ruling.

The PRESIDENT: The decision I am asked to give will necessitate my reading right through the Bill. Perhaps it would not inconvenience the Chief Secretary if he took steps to report progress so that I may postpone giving any decision until tomorrow.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will do that.

Committee resumed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and passed; progress reported.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th November, 1932.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Minister for Lands and Group Settlement Administration.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [4.33]: By way of personal explanation, I wish to draw attention to a report that appeared in the "West Australian" this morning dealing with the Parliamentary proceedings last evening in which I am stated to have charged the member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) and a former Minister for Lands, the Hon. W. C. Angwin, with mal-administration. The report, which dealt with the speech of the member for Mt. Magnet, contained the following statement:—

The Minister for Lands during the debate on the Address-in-reply had the temerity to say that the expenditure and losses on group settlement were due to his (Mr. Troy's) and Mr. Angwin's mal-administration.

The second statement to which I take exception is the following:—

The statement had been made in the early hours of the morning when possibly the Minister was not normal.

I hope I have not conveyed to the House at any time that I made a charge of mal-administration against the member for Mt. Magnet, and more especially against a man who is not here to defend himself, in the person of the Agent-General, Mr. Angwin. I trust I have not given the impression that

I have laid any such charge against either of those gentlemen. I certainly take exception to the statement that possibly I was not normal when I made my speech on the Address-in-reply.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [5.35]: I accept the explanation of the Minister for Lands, and I am sorry that he was hurt by the use of the expression that he was not normal. I did not mean that the Minister was not sober, or that he was other than self-possessed.

Hon. P. Collier: He was weary after an all-night sitting.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister was exasperated at a statement I had made regarding the expenditure on group settlements. He replied to statements that I had made. I was not present, but I read his remarks in "Hansard." Had the Minister not been exasperated, he would have been normal. Being exasperated, I suggested he was not normal.

The Minister for Lands: So long as that is the sense in which you used the phrase, it is all right.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I am glad that the Minister did not reflect upon my administration.

BILL—JUSTICES ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Richardson in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2, paragraph (a) of new Subsection (6).—After the word "thereto" in line 5 of page 2, insert the words "and in connection with any steps or proceedings under this section."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The amendment is of no great importance.

Mr. Marshall: Nothing that comes from the Council ever is important.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Some are highly important. Sometimes they entirely alter the meaning of our legislation, but the amendment before the Committee does not do so. It will not make any difference to our intention, and it might be slightly better if the words were included. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to to the Council.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of 17 amendments made by the Council now consideed.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 9.—After the word "amended," in line 15, insert "(a)."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Council made two amendments to Clause 9. The first has the effect of converting the amendment embodied in Clause 9 into paragraph (a), and the second will have the effect of extending the time for nominations in the North-West. When the Bill was before the Committee in this Chamber, we extended the time by seven days, but North-West members considered that a longer period should be allowed, and the Council suggest an amendment whereby an additional seven days will be allowed in the North-West. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2. Clause 9.—At the end of clause insert a new paragraph, as follows:—(b) by adding a proviso, as follows:—Provided that in districts situated wholly or partly North of the 28th parallel of South latitude the nomination day shall be the twenty-eighth day next preceding the day so appointed for the election.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have explained the effect of the second amendment to Clause 9, and I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 15.—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I see no objection to the amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Road Boards Association are anxious that Clauses 15 and 16, which are related, should be retained. The clauses provide for a board or boards establishing an indemnity fund to guarantee against loss arising from defalcation, fraud or dishonesty of officers. The question was raised at a meeting of the executive of the Road Boards Association in January, 1930, and has received considerable attention from that body since. The position has been summarised by the secretary thus—

> Of the 127 road boards in the State, returns were received from 86 boards covering a period of three years. The average for one year had been worked out. The 86 boards for one year had insured for a total guarantee of £35,842, which was equivalent to £417 per annum per board, covering the officers of each of the boards to that extent. The cost to the 86 boards was £690, being 38s. 5d. per cent., including stamp duty. The claims during the period of three years were only three, and amounted to £374 11s. 4d., equal to £124 per annum. That showed a profit of £566 per annum in respect of the 86 boards who had furnished returns.

Consequently, the Road Boards Association were more than ever convinced that they should proceed to establish a fidelity fund. On the 16th July, 1931, following a decision on the legal aspect, a meeting of 40 delegates representing road boards throughout the State unanimously affirmed the desirability of establishing a fund. I am speaking as chairman of the Road Boards Association.

Hon. A. McCallum: I am glad you are seeing the light.

Mr. SAMPSON: Public bodies of the kind should have a right to provide their own fidelity fund to cover their own officials.

The Minister for Railways: What is the difference between a road board and the Government undertaking insurance? The road boards are only a portion of the government system.

Mr. SAMPSON: There should be no difficulty in giving effect to the wishes of the road boards.

Hon. A. McCallum: We will have no difficulty, but you will.

Mr. SAMPSON: Any apparent inconsistency is readily explained by the fact that the fund is to be established by the road boards for their own protection and to secure a great economy. The cost would be 6s. 8d. per cent. compared with 38s. 5d.

The Minister for Railways: It can be said that the Council are consistent.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister may envy that consistency. When the Bill was in Committee in this Chamber, I moved the amendment and it was accepted, if not with avidity, without the slightest objection.

The Minister for Railways: And it has been rejected with acidity.

The Minister for Works: It was not my amendment.

Mr. SAMPSON: No, but the Minister raised no objection to it.

The Minister for Railways: I do not object to it now.

Mr. SAMPSON: I did not expect the Minister to do so. I have not wavered in my attitude to State insurance.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Oh, oh!

Mr. SAMPSON: The indemnity fund would be in the nature of a utility, the object being to enable road boards to establish a fidelity fund at reasonable cost. I ask that the amendment be not agreed to.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I hope the Minister will not accept the amendment. The road boards have asked for the right to establish a fund and the Minister agreed to the clause. I have great confidence in road board officers, but defalcations have occurred. The road boards are prepared to establish an indemnity fund, and we should not agree to the deletion of the clause that will authorise them to do so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When I introduced the Bill I reminded members that the Act was urgently required and I told them that I had deleted all controversial matters from it, yet the Chairman of the Road Boards Association (Mr. Sampson) moved more amendments to the Bill than any other member, and this is one of his amendments. I do not know why the hon. member is changing his views now. This clause is not of very great importance; there are others of far greater importance. If a vital principle were involved, I would not agree to the Council's amendment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: As the Minister just said, there are some very important clauses in this Bill. One of the clauses concerns the

electors whom I represent. It is the intention of the road board in my electorate to start on some very important works involving an expenditure of £45,000. They want to start immediately, their desire being to give work to the unemployed in the district, so that they may get a little extra in order to spend a happy Christmas. There is another consideration, apart altogether from what I have just mentioned. I object to the subclause which it is proposed should be inserted. It provides an open door for road boards, of course subject to the approval of the Minister—and that might be obtained by accidental means——

Hon. P. Collier: That is rather ambiguous.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It gives road boards the power to keep in their employment, without any security at all, officers who are entrusted with money.

The Minister for Works: This is the amendment of the member for Swan.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes. To my mind, it is an amendment of a most objectionable character. Road boards should be required to take steps to insure ratepayers against any loss of their money.

Hon. P. Collier: Did the Council throw that out?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes.

Mr. SAMPSON: The member for Nedlands might very easily have voiced his objection when the Bill was before this House. It is a sad and grave reflection on this House that a clause should pass through without the slightest objection and that another place should say that it should be struck out. Then, forthwith, certain members of this House agree, because of some extraneous matter—Christmas is coming and work ought to be given to the unemployed. I am amazed at the illogical argument of the member for Nedlands. If the road board in his electorate are desirous that the unemployed should spend a happy Christmas, then let the board give them one or two days additional work before Christmas.

Hon. N. Keenan: Where is the money to come from?

Mr. SAMPSON: Nedlands is a district which produces a very heavy revenue. I respectfully disagree with the Minister when he says this House should agree to the deletion of the clause.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Without discussing the merits or demerits of the clauses, I cannot help expressing astonishment at the attitude adopted by the member for Swan. Road boards, like municipalities, are authorised by Act of Parliament to perform functions that ordinarily would be performed by the Government. It seems astonishing to me that some people will advocate the giving of additional authority to a local governing body to carry on enterprises of all kinds that they object to the Government carrying on. Yet that is what the member for Swan is doing.

Mr. Sampson: On a point of order, is my consistency in question?

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member explain this point of order?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have not discussed the hon. member's consistency. It does not exist.

Mr. Sampson: Oh, well!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In the circumstances, I think the matter can well stand over until a more opportune time, rather than risk other principles of the Bill which are more essential.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Seeing that the Government brought down a Bill to allow of their carrying on the business of insurance, I do not think they can reasonably object to a minor governing body carrying on the same business.

The Minister for Railways: We do not.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister for Railways accuses the member for Swan of being inconsistent. If the Mininster were consistent, he would oppose the proposition of the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: This is not my Bill.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: The Minister says that he agrees to the Council's amendment because he does not want to jeopardise the passing of the Bill, but are we to assume that the Council did not take that point into consideration? Is not the obligation as much upon their shoulders as upon ours? Why is it suggested that our proposals should not be insisted upon, and that the proposals of another place must be agreed to because the Bill is of importance in other respects? Why should road boards be called upon to subsidise the insurance offices to the tune they are doing, and pay exorbitant rates for their fidelity bonds when by a combination of the local authorities they would be able to save the ratepayers' money?

The provision which has been made is a good one, and should receive the Minister's support.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Road Boards Association does cover some metropolitan local authorities. The clause provides for the Road Boards Association doing something for themselves. The Minister for Railways compares this with general insurance, wherein he is on unsound ground. Road boards aim at providing a fidelity bond fund for themselves, whereas the Government Insurance Office makes provision for general workers' compensation insurance.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	20
A tie	0

AYES.

Mr. Barnard	Mr. J. I. Mann
Mr. Brown	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Church	Mr. Parker
Mr. Davy	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Doney	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Wells
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. North
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Panton
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Piesse
Miss Holman	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Troy
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Millington	Mr. Withers
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Wilson
	(Teller.)

The CHAIRMAN: I give my vote with the Ayes, according to the usual custom of the Chairmen of Committees.

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 16.—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 5. Clause 26, paragraph (a), at end of new Subsection (3)—Add the words "provided that nothing in this subsection shall apply to land outside any townsite."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This deals with the subdivision of land. The Lands Department have advised me to accept the Council's amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. SAMPSON: The acceptance of the Council's amendment will cramp the activities of road boards. Each case should be decided on its merits. A subdivisional plan should not apply only to townsite areas. There are other portions of districts where the proposed amendment should apply.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is proposed under the clause, as it went to another place, to compel people who made subdivisions to put up sufficient money for the building of roads if called upon by the local authority to do so. This was done to prevent go-getters from being able to subdivide land, put up a decoy building to induce people to buy land, and then call upon the local authorities to build a road into the property. This clause could have no effect outside a townsite or the metropolitan area, because any subdivisions there would hardly necessitate the construction of a road. Another place has asked that this clause should not apply to land outside any townsite. It is quite proper to exclude agricultural or pastoral areas.

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

No. 6. Clause 6, (Page 11), paragraph (c) at the end of new subsection (4)—Add the words "Provided also that this subsection shall not apply to any land the subdivision whereof had been approved prior to the commencement of this subsection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The effect of this amendment is to prevent the clause from being made retrospective. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 7. Clause 27, paragraph (c)—After the word "building" in line 16, insert the words "erected on land situated within a townsite."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The idea is to prevent the owners of land from demolishing their premises until the rates

and taxes are paid. This, of course, applies to buildings erected on land within a townsite. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. SAMPSON: On the goldfields buildings are usually erected on mining leases, and if the buildings are removed the local authority can get nothing out of the land itself. In my opinion the addition of these words will weaken the clause, and I hope the amendment will not be agreed to.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Houses erected on the goldfields are usually built on leases or Crown land. The hon. member's remarks will therefore not apply to them.

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

No. 8. Clause 28 (Page 12) paragraph (h), line 34—Delete the words "and cooling chambers."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is not a very important amendment.

Hon. J. Cunningham: It is important, because the cooling chambers are associated with electric lighting plants.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Council's amendment be not agreed to.

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

No. 9. Clause 31 (page 14), proviso to new Subsection (2).—Delete all the words after the word "decision," in line 9, and insert the words "may on appeal be determined by the provisions of the Arbitration Act, 1895."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think this would be an improvement to the Bill, for the Minister should not be called upon to decide disputes. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 10. Clause 37 (page 17), paragraph (e).—After new paragraph (46A) insert a new paragraph, as follows:—(46B) Enabling the board to declare specified areas in any portion of the townsite of their road district, in which only buildings of specified value and approved design may be erected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the Bill left this House, the provision was that the Minister might declare areas on which wooden houses could be built. The Council's amendment provides that the local authority should have that power. It is a controversial question, but another place favours giving the power to the local authority. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope the Committee will not accept the amendment. A road board should not have power to declare areas for specific types of houses. It is giving them too much authority. Frequently road board members get it into their heads that a man should not be allowed to erect any but a very expensive building.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: During recent years there has been a lot of trouble over local authorities prescribing brick areas. I do not think we should hand back to the road boards the authority this House proposed to take from them. The Council's amendment, if agreed to, would restore to road boards the right to declare brick areas as against wooden areas. That authority should rest with the Minister. The amendment, if agreed to, will mean getting back to the old position we thought we had left. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In the Perth Road Board area are localities in which it would be undesirable to permit wooden houses to be erected, while there are other localities in which it would be highly desirable to have wooden houses built. To insist upon brick houses exclusively creates tremendous hardship for men who cannot afford that class of house. Under the Council's amendment the local authority would have the right to declare portion of its area for the erection of wooden houses, and could still have its brick area. Many local authorities want the right to restrict the building of wooden houses in certain localities. Some wooden buildings of proper design are quite as good and attractive as are the best brick houses, and so long as power is given to the local authority to declare an area for wooden buildings, the ratepayers will be sufficiently protected. As the metropolitan area extends and local authorities continue declaring brick areas, working men are either being driven into a class of house which they cannot afford, or to greater distances from their work, thus adding to their expenses in getting to and fro. The Coun-

cil's amendment merely gives power to local authorities to declare an area for wooden buildings.

Hon. J. Cunningham: They already have that power.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: But they can be overridden by the Minister. Heartburnings have occurred, not only over the declaring of wooden areas, but also over the declaring of brick areas. Almost invariably the first request for a brick area is made by the owner of the land, whose desire it is to increase the price of his land. The Perth Road Board received an application that a brick area be declared out beyond the Mt. Yokine golf links, the desire obviously being to increase the price of land out there. What we ought to concern ourselves with is the enabling of people to get homes at a reasonable price, including the land. If a local authority decides to declare a brick area or a wooden area, it can only be done by by-law, which must be approved by the Governor-in-Council and also by Parliament. Such a by-law would certainly not be approved if it declared either a brick area or a wooden area in an unsuitable locality. As between the Minister and the local authority, in my opinion the decision should lie with the local authority.

Mr. PIESSE: I hope the Committee will agree to the Council's amendment. It does not discriminate between brick buildings and wooden buildings, but permits of the declaration of an area for either. In my electorate the road board objected to workers' homes of a certain type being built alongside brick residences. The board at that time said they would not object to wooden houses so long as they were of an approved design. The amendment will give the board power to carry out this.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Notwithstanding the remarks of the Minister for Railways, the road boards at the present time have authority to prescribe brick and wooden areas. Now the Legislative Council asks this House to accept the amendment they sent to us, and which I declare is not desirable. It is all very well for a road board to make preparations in connection with brick or wooden areas, but they are mostly concerned with brick areas to the detriment of people with limited capital. When one realises how difficult it is for people to find the necessary cash with which to build, it stands to reason they will turn to cheaper material, which will be just as serviceable and just as presentable. The Committee should not agree to the amendment suggested by another place.

Mr. SAMPSON: The road board conference considered this matter at great length and the ultimate result was definitely in favour of the amendment as sent to us by the Legislative Council. It does not relate to brick or wooden houses, it enables a board to declare a particular area in which only buildings of a specified value and of approved design may be erected. Houses of freak design are sometimes erected in brick or wood or other material and boards want the right to see the plans and to approve or reject them.

Mr. SLEEMAN: Road boards have power at the present time to refuse to approve of plans. The Minister for Railways, in the course of his remarks, used arguments against what is desired, and he showed it was possible to drive a wage earner out into distant parts by declaring that certain areas of a road board district should have houses of a particular value. He said that landowners often did that sort of thing. We know that in many cases members or road boards are landowners, and as such are anxious to enhance the value of their own property.

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

Ayes	26
Noes	14
Majority for	12

AYES.

Mr. Barnard	Mr. J. I. Mann
Mr. Brown	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Church	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Davy	Mr. Parker
Mr. Doney	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Scaddan
Mr Johnson	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Wells
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. North
	(*Teller.*)

NOES.

Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sleeman
Miss Holman	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Troy
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Millington	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Munsie	Mr. Withers
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Wilson
	(*Teller.*)

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 11. Clause 39.—Delete, and insert in lieu therof the following—

39. Section two hundred and two of the principal Act is amended by inserting therein a subsection, as follows:—

(3.) The Governor may, upon application by a Board at any time, by Order in Council, declare that in any district or any portion of a district it shall be lawful to use wood in the construction of the external and internal walls of any building intended for use as a dwelling-house, and notwithstanding that the provisions of the said Second Schedule have been extended to and are in operation in such district, or portion of a district, and until such Order in Council is revoked, any of the provisions of the said Second Schedule (save and except regulations twenty-nine to thirty-three, both inclusive), and of any by-laws made thereunder which are inconsistent with or repugnant to the authority granted by such Order in Council, shall be suspended and have no force or effect in relation to any such building aforesaid.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When this clause went to another place it set out, "The Governor may at any time and from time to time by proclamation declare." The amendment substitutes, "The Governor may upon application by a board at any time . . . . declare." It seems rather like dictating to the Governor.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: If they were not in favour, they would not make the application.

The Minister for Lands: This is dictation to the Governor.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It reserves the right to the local body to do what they like.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should like to amend the amendment by striking out the words "upon application by a board."

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why not disagree with it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very well, I will. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. PIESSE: This will give the Minister power to over-ride the authority of the board. It naturally follows that the Minister would first of all receive the request.

Hon. P. Collier: And he would act on the request.

Mr. PIESSE: Exactly. Someone outside might think there should be wooden houses and the Minister would not act without making an investigation. The idea of the road board is to be in the position to say, "You shall not do this unless we give you permission."

Mr. SAMPSON: Does the amendment mean that if no declaration is made by the Governor, it will be unlawful to use wood in the construction of external and internal walls of a dwelling-house?

Hon. P. Collier: Yes.

Mr. SAMPSON: Then the Council's amendment should not be agreed to.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I cannot understand the desire to maintain the present system that exists in many road board districts. Vested interests secure the subdivision of an area and decide that buildings of a certain design, constructed of specified materials only, may be erected on the estate. By that means there is created an increased value for the blocks and the balance of the estate is unloaded at the inflated values created by the buildings the owners themselves require. Purchasers of blocks may not be able to afford houses of the type required, but the owners of the estate will urge the board not to depreciate the value of the district by allowing the erection of wooden buildings.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the very thing that happened in connection with the subdivision of the Mt. Lawley estate.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Government should have power to direct a local governing body that their attitude, should they maintain the pleas of the owners to adhere to certain types of buildings only, was not in the best interests of the people or of the development of the district. Within reason, owners of blocks should be allowed to erect the type of buildings they desire, and they should not be restricted as in the past. No Minister would force his individual opinions on the board, but he would require strong reasons before taking any action. It is wrong to allow the local governing authorities to have the final say.

Hon. J. Cunningham: But by the vote you just recorded, you gave them the final say.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will not argue the point, but I am convinced that Opposition members voted against their real views when dealing with the last amendment.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Last year the Government introduced two Bills to amend the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act respectively, and the objective was to wipe out the prohibition

on wooden houses. It always seemed to me ridiculous, especially in Western Australia, that such a prohibition should be tolerated and I agree with the attitude of the Minister for Works in refusing to accept an amendment that has been made only in the interests of those selfish people who desire to build up a special value for land they own, to the inconvenience and expense of persons owning portions of their estate. Recently we had the agitation at Nedlands against the erection of wooden buildings of any sort on the property vested in the University. That institution has increased the value of land at Nedlands to a large extent.

Hon. P. Collier: To at least 50 per cent.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, perhaps by 100 per cent. in some instances. Yet some of the people who own property there, got it into their heads that the erection of any sort of wooden structure on any part of the University land would depreciate the value of their own properties.

Hon. P. Collier: I am glad you have overridden them.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think the original clause in the Bill went far enough. I would be in favour of repealing Clause 14 of the model by-laws entirely.

Mr. Marshall: Then let us do it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We tried that the year before last, but the Legislative Council did not understand what we desired and we could not get our way.

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

No. 12. Clause 43, lines 28 and 29—Delete the words "on appeal by the taxpayer":

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill originally provided that should the Commissioner of Taxation reduce the valuation of a block, the road board would automatically reduce the board's valuation accordingly, if the ratepayers appealed with that object in view. The Council propose to do away with the necessity for the appeal by the taxpayer, which will mean that the Taxation Department's reduced valuation will apply automatically to the road board valuation. The amendment will improve the Bill. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 13. Clause 52, paragraph (b)—Delete all the words after the word "follows," in lines 28 and 29, and insert in lieu thereof the words, "provided that no person who, as being trustee of any estate by virtue of any proceeding under the Bankruptcy Act, 1924-1932, or the liquidator in the winding up of a company under the Companies Act, 1893, has become the owner of any rateable land, shall on that account be personally liable to pay out of his own moneys or otherwise than out of the estate in his hands any rates due on such land when he becomes owner thereof as aforesaid, or be so personally liable as aforesaid to pay any rates assessed on such land thereafter if he proves to the satisfaction of and obtains a certificate in writing from the Minister that a continuance of his ownership of the said land is essential in the interests of that estate, or that he is unable to dispose of the said land."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A little while ago the Attorney General introduced a Bill to amend the Municipal Corporations Act and we embodied a similar clause to that set out in the Council's amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. SAMPSON: It has been urged that if the amendment be agreed to, it will mean that a liquidator will not be responsible for a claim for wages against the estate, should it be brought under the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: All the amendment means is that the liquidator will not be personally liable, but the claim will still stand against the estate.

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

No. 14. Clause 63.—Delete paragraph (b).

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not propose to accept the Council's amendment, but I shall move a further amendment to paragraph (b) of Clause 63. Under the provisions of the Bill, we proposed to divide the State into districts and to appoint extra Government auditors to cope with the work of auditing the books of local governing authorities. The local governing authorities who availed themselves of the services of Government auditors were to shoulder half the cost. In small towns duly qualified auditors are not available and very often the ratepayers' auditor is, perhaps, a

business man with no knowledge of bookkeeping. Under the old system the Government auditors could not audit the books of every local authority each year, and certainly better control is required. To overcome the difficulty, the proposal I have outlined was put forward. Under that scheme one auditor in a district could deal with the books of a number of local authorities. In some of the larger centres, the local authorities are able to procure the services of qualified auditors. In the Perth Road Board district, for instance, the service of many duly qualified auditors can be procured. In fact, the Perth Road Board have a continuous audit.

The Minister for Railways: We could not get on without it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In such districts, if the local governing authorities do not avail themselves of the services of the Government auditors, they will not have to pay for them. The whole clause has been deleted by the Legislative Council.

Hon. P. Collier: Leaving the position, as it is now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not quite, because there remains the provision for one auditor to be appointed by the Minister for each district. There are many local governing authorities such as those at Perth, Katanning and other large centres that can appoint their own auditors and they will be allowed to do so. I move an amendment on the Council's amendment—

That the Council's amendment be amended by striking out "delete" and inserting "amend" in lieu, and by adding after "paragraph (b)" the words, "by inserting after "Act" in line 5 the words "provided, however, that no such auditor so appointed shall be removed without the consent of the Minister."

A road board will be able to appoint their own auditor but should that official become unpopular because, perhaps, he told the truth, my amendment will have the effect of rendering it impossible for that auditor to be removed from office without the consent of the Minister.

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

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

No. 15. Clause 64.—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: For reasons already given, I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

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

No. 16. Clause 74.—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was proposed that certain documents including rate books might be destroyed. The Council have decided that rate books should not be destroyed. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 17. Insert a new clause to stand as Clause 19, as follows:—

19. Section one hundred and thirty-two of the principal Act is amended by deleting subsection two and inserting in lieu thereof a new subsection, as follows:—

(2.) Each member, including the chairman, shall have one vote only, and in the case of an equality of votes on any question, such question shall pass in the negative.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At present the chairman of a road board has a deliberative as well as a casting vote. The amendment proposes that the chairman shall have one vote only, without a casting vote. I move —

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

Resolutions reported and the report adopted. A committee consisting of the Minister for Works, Hon. W. D. Johnson and Mr. Sampson drew up reasons for disagreeing to certain amendments and for agreeing to one with an amendment. Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read, notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1, Financial Emergency Tax Assessment.

2, Financial Emergency Tax.

3, Government Ferries.

BILL—BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Message from the Council received and read, notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Assembly.

BILL—ROCKINGHAM ROAD DISTRICT (LOAN RATE EXEMPTION.)

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Exemption from loan rates:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1 of Clause 3, the words "on the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-nine, comprised in the group settlements as then recorded in the Department of Lands and Surveys and enumerated," be deleted, and the following words inserted in lieu:—"more particularly described, defined and delineated."

During the second reading of the Bill, the member for South Fremantle suggested that that was what was required. We have now amended the Bill in such a way as not only to carry out the wishes of the board, but also of the ratepayers in the district. In the original Bill, provision was made for the exemption of certain land. The idea was to exempt all land that was not rateable in July, 1928. The amendment deals with the loan rate. At the time the money was borrowed, a large area of land in the district was not on the rate book. The owners of that land had not the right to vote upon the question of whether the money should be borrowed or not, and the object of the Bill is to exempt them from payment of the rate.

Hon. M. F. Troy: They were not consulted?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. They were not ratepayers.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That the words "said date" in line 8 be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"first day of July, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-nine."

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That all the words contained in the first schedule be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"All that portion of the Rockingham Road District bounded by lines commencing on the district boundaries at their junction with the production north of the east boundary of Cockburn Sound Location 650, and extending east and southward along part of said district boundaries to the south-western corner of Peel Estate Lot 1090; thence west to and along the south boundaries of lots 1085, 867, 869, 870, and 900 and part of the south boundary of lot 901 to the eastern side of road No. 6104 (Mandurah Road); thence northward along said side of road No. 6104 to the north-western corner of lot 283; thence north to the northern side of the Rockingham Jarrah Timber Company's railway and eastward along said side of the railway to the south-west corner of lot 608; thence north along said production and west boundary, part of the east boundary of Cockburn Sound location 350 and the east boundaries of reserve 1485 and locations 635, 467, and 650 and their production north to the starting point, exclusive of the townsites of Balmanup, Wellard, and Karnup, and that part of Millar's Railway within the east ward of the said district, and also exclusive of the following lots:—

Location.	Lot.	Title. Vol. Fol.	Plan.
Part of Cockburn Sound loc. 16	709	...	4921
	758		
	100	834/116	3950
	618	778/135	3475
	604	614/86	3475
	582	760/7	3475
	583	760/7	3475
	584	760/7	3475
	1	840/66	3950
	2	840/66	3050
	610	777/156	3475
	652	1024/766	4746
	605	614/86	3475
	739	642/35	3893
	776		
	777		
	Pt. 616	781/52	3475
	613	777/154	3475
	569	777/118	3475
	570	777/118	3475
	571		
	572		
	573		
	574		
	575		
	576		
	577	777/158	3475
	733	684/133	3893
	603	477/133	3475
	578	777/132	3475
	581	770/125	3475
	585	816/119	3475
	732	809/2	3893
	606	820/112	3475
	608	614/86	3475
	609	709/188	3475
	595	825/21	3475
	579	812/59	3475
	580	812/59	3475
	3	...	3950
	615	777/157	3475
	611	757/127	3475
	612	616/127	3475
	607	780/125	3475
	619	780/126	3475
	682	777/155	3475
Pt. 16	...	Memorial Book 1, Vol. 438. Memorial Book 2, Vol. 451.	

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

Second Schedule, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [7.56]: This Bill, in my opinion, is an entirely non-party measure. It has always seemed to me that measures amending the electoral law should be dealt with on their merits and in accordance with the individual views of members. This is essentially a Committee Bill. The proposed amendments deal with details of the electoral law and not with its basic principles. There are six amendments. The first provides that the Chief Electoral Officer shall be given independent tenure of office. At present, that officer is ranked in the clerical division of the civil service and is under the jurisdiction of the Attorney General's Department. I consider his position so important that he should be an officer appointed by Parliament and removable from office only by the determination of Parliament, in the same way as are the Commissioner of Railways, the Auditor General, and other similar officers. By the next amendment we go from the sublime to the ridiculous, as it were. It deals with the necessity for a person who takes a claim form from an elector giving a receipt to the elector for the form. It has frequently been said, and I fear rightly so, that partisan canvassers will take claim forms from people and if they suspect that those people have political views opposed to those of the candidate for whom they are canvassing the claim forms are lost on the way to the electoral office. I cannot say that I know of such a case, but I think it has happened.

Mr. Wansbrough: It shows a very poor spirit.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. In the heat of an election people become intensely partisan, and do things they perhaps would not do in ordinary life. Although I cannot vouch for such things having happened, I have no doubt they do happen, and this is intended to be a safeguard against their recurrence. Then we come to a rather more important subject.

Hon. A. McCallum: Do you provide for the department giving a receipt?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No.

Hon. A. McCallum: What protection would the individual have? Suppose you gave a receipt to the elector and handed the card into the department where it was lost, what protection would you have?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: None.

Mr. Sleeman: There have been allegations of losses of cards in the department.

Hon. P. Collier: There are partisans connected with the Electoral Department.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not know of any means whereby you could overcome that difficulty.

Hon. A. McCallum: It could be stopped if you got a receipt from the department when you handed in a card.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I suppose that could be done. At present there are no means whereby a person handing over a card can demonstrate that he has done so. The law makes it an offence for any person who receives a claim form not putting it in forthwith. We know these forms are frequently not put in forthwith, although it would be almost impossible to prove that such was the case. If it is directed that the claim form shall have a perforated receipt attached to it, and that anyone who checks the claim card shall himself give a receipt, it will make it easier to detect any failure to deliver the form to the office.

Hon. A. McCallum: If a man swears that he handed the form into the office, where are you then?

Hon. P. Collier: It is one man's word against the other.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Can the hon. member suggest some means of overcoming the difficulty?

Mr. Marshall: The registrar should give a receipt and get one from the Chief Electoral Officer when he passes the forms on.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Does the hon. member wish to reduce the thing to absurdity?

Hon. P. Collier: I know of more than one officer who handles claim cards in country districts, and they are out-and-out partisans.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That may be so.

Hon. P. Collier: I have known men quite capable of destroying cards in the office after those cards have been received.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In order to eliminate the possibility of partisans having anything to do with the matter we should provide machinery which will prevent people exercising their partisanship.

I desire the closest scrutiny of these proposals. I want the House, whose members are peculiarly the only persons really competent to express an opinion, to bring its collective wisdom to bear upon the Bill and make it the best possible out of the proposals that are put forward. The next alteration to the law is that dealing with claim forms and objections, and enrolments and objections thereto. At present objections may be made to a claim form either by the registrar or by a private individual who is an elector of the district or province in respect to which the claim is made. When the objection has been made the onus of pursuing the appeal to that objection is put upon the registrar. To-day before the appeal is heard the writ is issued, the persons who have claimed to be put on the roll, go on the roll, however absurd their claims may be, or however good they may be. The Bill will alter that. It is proposed that no one can object to a claim for enrolment except the registrar. We take away from the private individual the right to put in an objection to an enrolment. That really does not greatly alter the law. In practice there are seldom any objections to enrolment. The elector does not know that the claim for enrolment has been made. The claim cards are open to scrutiny, but it is a laborious business to examine them. Objections to claims for enrolment are almost always taken by the registrar. Owing to the habit of people leaving their enrolment to the death knock the writ is frequently issued before any objection can be taken, and the result is that the claims which would have been objected to if there had been time are not objected to, and the people go on the roll and are entitled to vote. This proposal is that as soon as a claim is put in, the registrar examines it, and if it seems to be a proper one he forthwith enrols the claimant without waiting 14 days. If things are all right, the name is put on the roll. If he thinks there is an objection to it, the registrar refers the claim to the Chief Electoral Officer. If the first amendment proposed in the Bill is carried, the Chief Electoral Officer will become an independent person without fear or favour, and will be in the best position to exercise judicial discretion in determining whether a claim is good or not. If the Chief Electoral Officer says that the claim is good, the applicant is enrolled there and then. If he says the claim is not good, the claimant must appeal. Unless the claimant then pursues his appeal and succeeds in it he is not enrolled, even if the writ comes along whilst the appeal is waiting to be heard.

Hon. P. Collier: To whom does he appeal?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: To the nearest magistrate of the local court, as is the case under the existing law. A man has got to be enrolled, however bad his claim may appear to be, if the writ is issued before his claim is decided by the court of appeal. The Bill says that the first decision shall be with the Chief Electoral Officer, and if the Chief Electoral Officer says the claim is not good, the claimant does not go on the roll unless he successfully pursues his appeal. Although that is a change in the existing law, it is in operation in most of the other States of Australia and in the Federal arena.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: How would his claim appear to be bad? He either has got a claim, or he has not one.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It would appear to be a bad claim if it was a bad claim.

Mr. Hegney: If he is over 21 and is living in the electorate, he is entitled to be put on the roll.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: He may be on some other roll; he may be under 21; he may be a foreigner, and not entitled to vote, and in other ways his claim may be bad.

Mr. Hegney: All these things are checked up thoroughly now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: And after these things are checked up, the Chief Electoral Officer may not admit the claim. As the law stands now it may be perfectly apparent that a man is not entitled to enrolment and yet if, before the appeal can be determined, the writ is issued, he must be enrolled and will be entitled to vote.

Mr. Withers: That would happen with the Legislative Council more than with us.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. It does not often happen that anyone who claims to be entitled to enrolment for the Legislative Assembly is not so entitled, because every adult male and female is entitled to be enrolled, if he or she has lived in the district for a month and is otherwise eligible to vote. The position is more com-

plicated in the case of the Legislative Council.

Mr. Hegney: I had a different case before me. The party was enrolled on the last Legislative Council roll, and went in to vote. When she came to exercise her vote, she found her name was struck out. The reason given for this was that in the printing office a girl said this woman was not living in the house, whereas she had been living in it all the time. She was told that the only thing to do was to see the Chief Electoral Officer, who was inaccessible that day. I am wondering how you are going to put it.

Mr. Marshall: That is very doubtful.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am telling hon. members what the Bill proposes. Section 46 of the Act will go out entirely. It has been combined with Section 45. We are proposing to make a new Section 47 which will deal with objections to enrolment. I ask members to remember the difference between objections to claims, and objections to people already on the roll. Under this proposed law the only person who will be able to object to a claim for enrolment will be the registrar. We still give the elector a right to object to an existing enrolment; that is, to suggest that the man in question ought not to be on the roll, and that his name ought to be struck off. Then in addition to the elector, the registrar will have the right to object, and we propose that where the objection is taken to the enrolment of a person already on the roll, whether it be taken by the elector or by the registrar, the first decision shall be with the registrar. That is if the objection appears to the registrar on the face of it not able to be sustained, he dismisses it on the spot. If he has any doubt about it, he sends the objection on to the Chief Electoral Officer, who examines the situation and says either that it is a good or a bad objection, and the registrar must give his decision accordingly, and that decision must be notified to the person objected to, who shall have the right to appeal in the same way as a person whose claim is objected to.

Mr. Kenneally: Will it involve any financial responsibility to the objector?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, as in the existing law he will have to put up 2s. 6d., which may be forfeited by the registrar if he thinks the objection a frivolous one, and the registrar may award costs against him if he pursues his course and the registrar decides that he is wrong in his objection. The principle of the new clause will operate firstly in favour of the person on the roll, since it provides against frivolous objections, and secondly it will put on him the onus of appealing and will put the decision in the hands of the registrar, who will be in an independent position without possibility of fear or favour. There are several clauses dealing with this question, the details of which will be understood by members if they study the Bill. Then we come to another important matter, namely, voting postally, the question of postal votes. I do not think any candidate of the past is entirely satisfied with the present postal voting provisions of our Act. The objections are of various kinds. First, I regret to say that my observation leads me to believe that postal vote officers are not always impartial. It is easy to obtain the appointment of postal vote officers and frequently they become partisans for one particular candidate. Then there is what might be described as the tame postal vote officer, who will go wherever required to get the votes of persons who may or may not be sick, or may or may not intend to be absent.

Hon. P. Collier: They have a splendid system in the North-West, where each candidate takes a postal vote officer around with him.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am not making any accusations, but I think members will agree that the partisan postal vote officer is by no means unknown.

Hon. M. F. Troy: There are partial electoral officers, and partial magistrates and partial judges are by no means unknown.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not agree with the hon. member.

Hon. P. Collier: But I have known some elections where the postal vote officer has been secretary and agent for a candidate.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I regret to say that such things do happen. But they are not right. The postal vote officer is prescribed under the law to be an entirely impartial person, but it does happen that postal vote officers are partisans. In the outback country it frequently happens that the postal vote officer is the boss on a station, and the employees of the station have to record their votes with him; and although theoretically the postal vote officer hands out

a ballot paper and the voter goes away and votes by himself in a corner,——

Hon. P. Collier: The boss stands over him while he fills in the ballot paper.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There is a possibility of that. The proposal in the Bill is to wipe out postal vote officers entirely. They will no longer exist. The provision follows the postal vote provision of the Commonwealth Act, where there are no postal vote officers. It provides that if a man desires to vote postally, he must apply to the registrar for a postal voting paper, and the paper will be sent to him and then he will vote on it quite privately, and will put it in an envelope and seal it and post it back. That is the general principle of the proposition.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But he must have a witness to his voting.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, he will not have a witness to his voting, but only to his application. There must be a witness to his application, who must be a householder in the electorate for which he wishes to vote.

Hon. P. Collier: A householder?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. I do not care about that, for it is merely a detail which can be altered in Committee. But a responsible person must witness his application for a postal vote, and that responsible person must not be either a candidate or an agent for a candidate. The elector receives the postal vote and votes without interference by any outside person, puts his vote in an envelope, seals it up and sends it back to the registrar. It will immediately occur to members that that machinery might not always be easy of application. There are various provisions made to meet difficulties which might occur. For instance, if normally a man lives more than 50 miles from the nearest registrar—there again if members do not like the 50 miles, the distance can be reduced, and with my concurrence—then he can record himself as a permanent postal voter. For instance, in the electorate where the Leader of the Opposition and I——

Hon. P. Collier: Foregathered.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, foregathered, more than half the votes are permanently recorded postally. That is in Roebourne, and I suppose the same position exists in Pilbara, and perhaps in Kimberley. In electorates like those, any man living more than 50 miles from the nearest registrar can have himself recorded as a permanent postal voter, in which case, without any application from him, the moment the writ is issued a postal vote paper will be sent to him and he will record his vote and despatch it back through the ordinary channels.

Mr. Marshall: From whom will the ballot paper be sent?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: From the registrar.

Mr. Marshall: Then you will require 20 men in the post office at Meekatharra if this comes off.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Nonsense! Why, there are not 2,000 people in the hon. member's electorate.

Mr. Marshall: There are 2,000 and more out in the bush, who will be persecuted under this.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: How is it possible for them to vote at present?

Mr. Marshall: Because I can get postal vote officers appointed under the existing Act, but will not be able to do that under your Bill, which will persecute the electors at a distance.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I suggest the hon. member does not jump to conclusions until he has read the measure, and does not talk about persecution until he has suggested practical amendments to the Bill and they have been refused. I invite him to exercise his ingenuity and his solicitude for his constituents in framing any amendments he thinks will help to meet cases. This measure is not desired to prevent people who ought to vote from voting, but to prevent such abuses of the electoral system as we suspect to go on at the present time.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There should be a witness to postal voting. If 50 votes are sent out to a station, one man could fill in the lot.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Possibly. All sorts of difficulties as to postal votes arise in those northern electorates. For instance, one question arose when the Leader of the Opposition and I were up there. It was as to whether the mail contractor could properly act as postal vote officer, because it was said the postal vote officer could only take a vote in his place of residence or in his place of business. It was put to me, and I said, "Perhaps strictly speaking your

place of residence is sometimes in Roebourne, but I suggest that, like the digger, you are at home when your hat is on, and you could reasonably take votes while proceeding in your mail cart." Still, there is the difficulty. And there is a difficulty at a station, where you appoint the station manager as postal vote officer and then have to appoint another postal vote officer in order that the first postal vote officer may cast a vote. I suggest that the general principles of the Bill will be an improvement, and if members have any objection to the details I shall be glad to listen to them. There is one other matter of change which is proposed. At present no offence against the electoral law can be proceeded against after six months from the date of its commission. It is proposed in this measure that the six months shall be increased to 12 months. Quite frequently some considerable time elapses before offences against the electoral law are discovered.

Mr. Sleeman: In many cases you could not prosecute after six months.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Under the law as it stands we cannot prosecute for any offence after six months. At any rate, I propose that that six months be extended to 12 months. I ask members to examine the measure. There are in it some defects which I have already discovered, and so I will put on the Notice Paper certain amendments. I am not going to indicate what those defects appear to me to be, for it will be interesting to see whether other members detect the same things. But I do ask that the Bill be approached in a non-party spirit, for I shall be glad to see whether we cannot improve our law. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. C. Willcock, debate adjourned.

BILL—COLLIE RECREATION AND PARK LANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 16th November of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—BULK HANDLING.

Joint Select Committee's Report.

Debate resumed from the 23rd November on the motion by Hon. N. Keenan—

That the Bill, as amended by the select committee, be recommitted to a Committee of the whole House and its consideration in Committee be made an order of the day of the next sitting of the House.

MR. H. W. MANN (Perth) [8.35]: I intend to oppose the motion, and I shall give substantial reasons for doing so. I will put before the House the report of an investigation made by a gentleman who is well established in the wheat handling business, and I think I shall be able to show that much of the evidence which was given before the select committee, and which was overlooked or discarded when the report was framed, was substantiated by the report, extracts from which I intend to quote. The question of bulk handling is not new; it has been receiving the attention of those interested in the wheat business and members of Parliament for the past two or three years. It is interesting to know that one of the first to interest himself in the question was the present Minister for Works, and that he had a Bill prepared to submit to Parliament, but that it was not that particular Bill that was eventually introduced. I shall show that that gentleman, on his own initiative investigated bulk handling, and that he put up a report to the Primary Producers' Association. That association also investigated bulk handling, and it is on their report that I am going to base my remarks. I shall put before the House a report made by Mr. Monger the president of the association. Mr. Monger has been connected with the wheat industry for many years, and is, I think, the present chairman of the pool that is handling a great percentage of the wheat being grown in the State. Mr. Monger went to considerable trouble to investigate the position of bulk handling in Western Australia, and those of us who know that gentleman are aware that anything he takes in hand is carried out thoroughly. Apparently he did thoroughly investigate this question and he made a very exhaustive report. In that report he condemned bulk handling from start to finish, and he gave sound reasons why it should not be instituted in Western Australia and why it would not be of advantage to the wheat

growers but rather a distinct disadvantage to the State.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: When was this?

Mr. H. W. MANN: During the investigation of bulk handling, and since the present Minister carried out his first investigation. We are all aware that inquiries have been going on for a period of over three years. The report to which I referred is dated 1928. Mr. Monger in his report was speaking on behalf of the trustees of the Wheat Pool; it was not a personal report, it was made as chairman of the trustees of the Wheat Pool of Western Australia. Mr. Monger condemned bulk handling in no unmistakable terms, and he also gave what appear to me to be very sound reasons for his condemnation. The report begins with a statement by Mr. Lindsay, and I will read what Mr. Lindsay said. Then I will move along with the arguments put up by Mr. Monger and I will show that those arguments have been supported by Mr. Tomlinson, secretary for Railways, Mr. Fox, of the Lumpers' Union, a Japanese buyer, and several others who gave evidence before the select committee. The remarkable thing is that the evidence of those gentlemen is absolutely ignored in the report that was submitted to this House.

Hon. P. Collier: Not quite ignored; it was disbelieved.

Mr. H. W. MANN: It was not featured in the report of the chairman of the select committee. I shall read the report of the 1928 proceedings. It is headed "Committee to Investigate Bulk Handling of Wheat," "Lively Discussion at the P.P.A. Conference." This is Mr. Lindsay's speech—

> One of the problems that is exercising the minds of wheatgrowers at present is whether the existing system of handling grain in bags should be continued, or whether the bulk handling system should be adopted. On a motion introduced by Mr. Lindsay, M.L.A., and seconded by Mr. Richards, the matter was discussed in all its phases at the Primary Producers' Conference. Mr. Lindsay said that his views were expressed in the report that had been printed and circulated amongst members. It had been prepared with the assistance of Mr. Griffiths, M.L.A. The Government had a scheme for harbour extension, and before that work was undertaken a decision should be reached as to whether the new wharfing accommodation should be suitable for bag or bulk handling. His idea was to have a board appointed to consider the matter. However, according to a reply by the Minister to Mr. Griffiths, the Cabinet at a meeting on the 9th July had appointed the Director of Agriculture (Mr. Sutton), the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Stileman) and the Secretary of the Fremantle Harbour Trust (Mr. Stevens) to inquire into bulk handling, and the committee was now at work. (A delegate: They stole your thunder.) Mr. Lindsay said that he did not think that the Government had treated him fairly. On mentioning the matter to Mr. Sutton some time previously he had been advised to approach the Premier and that the Government would bear the cost of printing his report. He handed the report to the Minister for Agriculture who kept it for three weeks and then handed it to Mr. Sutton, who would not recommend that the Government pay for the printing. Eventually the report was returned but he had never been informed that the Government were investigating the matter until Mr. Griffiths received the Minister's reply on the floor of the House. He hoped that the conference would pass a resolution for or against bulk handling. (Mr. A. J. Monger: Don't you think you had better move that a committee be appointed to inquire into bulk handling, or are you prepared to accept the position that the Government have appointed a committee?) Mr. Lindsay: My only objection is that the question, which is a very big one, is being inquired into by three officials who have other duties to perform. You cannot get all the facts in Western Australia; you must go at least to New South Wales.

Mr. Lindsay stated that the facts were not all obtainable by a committee in Western Australia and that to investigate the matter they must go to New South Wales. This committee did investigate the question, but in a loose and slipshod manner. The investigation was not carried on in the manner that such a big question demanded. The committee could have gone to New South Wales or brought to this State from New South Wales experts to offer advice.

Hon. A. McCallum: They should have gone to Canada.

Mr. Richardson: It was not our fault that we did not go.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Lindsay declared at the conference that we should at least go to New South Wales and get all the available information. The information that was eventually obtained by Mr. Lindsay was not made available to the select committee. If there was anyone who knew anything of the position in New South Wales, it was the present Minister, Mr. Lindsay. But the select committee did not think it worth while to call him to give evidence. The information that Mr. Lindsay had was not made available to the select committee. Why did not the select committee call Mr. Lindsay to give evidence based on the knowledge he had acquired of the position in New South Wales?

Mr. Doney: Did not Mr. Lindsay have an opportunity to offer to attend?

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am not making any excuses for the select committee.

Mr. J. J. Mann: You are making excuses for Mr. Lindsay.

Mr. H. W. MANN: It is the select committee's funeral, not mine.

Mr. Patrick: The select committee advertised for witnesses.

Mr. H. W. MANN: It is my duty as a member of this House to point out the lax and loose manner in which the select committee conducted the inquiry. They should at least have asked Mr. Lindsay to place before them the information at his disposal. They did not do so. In the course of his remarks at the Primary Producers' Association Conference, Mr. Monger said—

> The question was one of the most important that farmers of Western Australia had ever had to consider. He did not think that the matter could be dealt with properly unless the committee of inquiry were assisted by practical men. He was keenly desirous of supporting an inquiry of the fullest nature so that when any change was embarked upon it would be a properly considered scheme, and mistakes would be avoided. He had known for some time past that a committee was inquiring into the matter. Mr. Lindsay had not been treated fairly by the Government.

Here we have Mr. Monger declaring that Mr. Lindsay's information and knowledge had not been availed of by the committee of departmental officials. The same error has been repeated. The members of the select committee from this Chamber knew that Mr. Lindsay had investigated the question, that he had been to New South Wales on several occasions and had gone into the whole scheme.

Hon. P. Collier: They also knew that he had put up a scheme, which was not this scheme.

Mr. Patrick: Did not the select committee advertise for witnesses?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The point is that no request was made that Mr. Lindsay should appear before the select committee. Was it the committee's desire to ignore the knowledge that Mr. Lindsay possessed, and that a Bill should be framed without his knowledge and information being availed of?

Hon. P. Collier: It is just as well he did not attend before the select committee. He would have been placed in the same category as the Railway Department's witnesses.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger read a report he had prepared on the subject in the course of which he said—

> In 1925 the Victorian Government appointed a board to inquire into the system of handling wheat in New South Wales. The report of this board affords valuable information to anyone desiring to study the subject. Everyone will admit, I think, that the handling of wheat in bulk with up-to-date machinery is a more efficient method than handling wheat in bags. But is it a cheaper method?

Mr. Monger raised that question specifically.

Mr. Marshall: Then he was doubtful.

Mr. H. W. MANN: No, as the House will find as I proceed with these extracts. At that stage he merely raised the query. He asked—

> Is it a cheaper method, or even as economical?

Those were the two main points he raised before the conference. He also said—

> And can we in Western Australia afford, at this stage of our development, the cost of installing the machinery and buildings necessary for handling wheat in bulk?

We have to remember that at that time wheat was a valuable asset of the State. It was bringing good prices, and wheat production was profitable. At a time when it was worth while growing a commodity that was profitable to both the farmers and to the State, Mr. Monger actually raised the question whether Western Australia could afford to enter into a scheme of bulk handling. He went on to say—

> In determining whether bulk handling is more economical than bag handling, one of the first and most important points to consider is the quantity of wheat passed through the elevators to their total storage capacity.

Later on Mr. Monger said—

> The yearly interest charge at five per cent. would be 2d. a bushel, and, with a sinking fund at 2½ per cent., the yearly charge would be 3d. a bushel.

So from that standpoint, Mr. Monger showed that the alleged profit or saving of 3d. a bushel which the select committee declared would be saved by the installation of bulk handling, was already wiped out.

Mr. Doney: Do you not realise that he based his figures on the capital outlay in New South Wales, and in the circumstances it could not be otherwise?

Mr. H. W. MANN: The hon. member will have an opportunity to explain what Mr.

Monger meant. I am putting before the House what Mr. Monger actually said. Under those two headings alone the alleged saving of 3d. a bushel was wiped out.

Mr. Doney: He was probably quite right then, too.

Mr. H. W. MANN: If he was right then, he is right now.

Mr. Doney: Not by a long way.

Mr. H. W. MANN: There has been no change in the handling of wheat. I shall show that in his calculations Mr. Monger took the cost of bags at 11d. They have not cost 11d. for a long time. This year they have been about 8d.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you not appreciate that you are dealing with a scheme that cost millions as against a scheme that will cost tens of thousands of pounds?

Mr. H. W. MANN: I will give the House the figures on which Mr. Monger based his calculations.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I know the figures.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The House will find that they are within a few pounds of those arrived at by the departmental committee of experts who inquired into the matter.

Mr. Doney: I do not know that you are quite right in saying that.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I will come to the figures directly. Next Mr. Monger, after referring to the interest charge at 5 per cent. and the sinking fund provision at 2½ per cent., continued—

> This charge of 3d.—

That is the sinking fund charge—

> —per bushel or any higher or lower charge has to be met whatever quantity of wheat passes through the elevators, and if receivals in one year are only half the total capacity, this charge would represent 6d. per bushel of wheat received. On the other hand, if the quantity that passes through the elevators is double the bushel capacity, then the overhead cost is only 1½d. per bushel.

That shows that Mr. Monger was giving a fair and reasonable statement of the position. He showed that if it was to cost 3d. a bushel on the basis of his calculations, then if double the quantity of wheat went through the elevators, the cost would be reduced to 1½d. a bushel. If but half the quantity went through, then the cost would be increased to 6d. a bushel. The production of wheat in New South Wales and Victoria, and even in Western Australia, shows tremendous variation. In one year there may be an output of 50,000,000 bushels and the next year the total may be 30,000,000. In the year that the harvest is down to 30,000,000 bushels, the charges must inevitably be so much higher. In his report, Mr. Monger gave the figures showing clearly what had happened in New South Wales from the inception of bulk handling until the 1927-28 season. In 1920-21, the total harvest in New South Wales was 55,000,000 bushels. The next year it dropped to 42,000,000 bushels, and in the next year to 28,000,000 bushels.

Mr. Doney: We do not have such variations in Western Australia.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The hon. member will have an opportunity to answer these statements later on.

Mr. Doney: I am merely pointing out that we do not have those variations here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask members to allow the member for Perth to deliver his speech without interruption. Members will have an opportunity to refute his statements afterwards.

Mr. Kenneally: If possible.

Mr. H. W. MANN: If Mr. Monger's figures are wrong——

Hon. P. Collier: Even if they are wrong, the member for Williams-Narrogin will not dare say so.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I think they are right.

Hon. P. Collier: The member for Williams-Narrogin could not say that his high priest was wrong.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger pointed out that in New South Wales the yield dropped from 55,000,000 to 28,000,000 bushels. That lends strength to the point he made earlier in his speech when he said that with the reduction of receivals, the cost would go up 50 per cent., while if the receivals increased, the charges would drop accordingly. There is no alternative. Mr. Monger emphasised that point in connection with the erection of bulk handling facilities in Western Australia. Mr. Monger referred to the investigations carried out by Mr. F. W. Box, the Assistant Chief Engineer in Victoria. That very fact goes to show how thoroughly Mr. Monger investigated this question. He brought from the various States information that had been obtained by those States that had been interested in the problem for longer periods than had Western Australia. Years before any such

scheme was contemplated here, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia investigated the problem. Those States did not carry out their investigations as the select committee here did, by merely calling as witnesses those who were within the sound, so to speak, of the Town Hall clock, but sent officials to Canada, the United States of America, and elsewhere, to get information. Mr. Monger availed himself of the information they had at their disposal, and placed it before the meeting in his statement, in the course of which he also said—

> Mr. F. W. Box, assistant chief engineer for railway construction in Victoria, who some years ago visited the United States of America and Canada to investigate and report on the bulk handling of wheat in those countries, and who for years has made a close study of the subject, said:—"On present costs of construction and operation it would not be profitable to erect a country elevator at a station from which in a normal year less than 150,000 bushels were transported over the railway."

To me that is a very important point and I am appalled to think that the select committee did not give some attention to that phase of the question. The report also contains a table dealing with the wheat received in Western Australia during the season and says—

> Only 71 sidings out of 356 received more than 50,000 bags.

Members will appreciate the fact that 50,000 bags represent 150,000 bushels. Surely that information should not be ignored, and this State should not be put to the tremendous expense it is anticipated bulk handling will involve, without a more thorough investigation. When we have information at the disposal of experts sent by neighbouring States to countries where bulk handling is in operation for the purpose of thoroughly investigating the scheme, their information should be availed of. Mr. Monger also made a point regarding the small number of sidings and said—

> Of these 71 sidings, 50 were in the Fremantle zone, 13 in the Geraldton zone, eight in the Bunbury zone and none in the Albany zone.

Should not that information, coming from such a source, have been placed before the House? Should not the committee have considered such information before asking us to adopt their report? I think they should have done so. Coming from a man like Mr. Monger who is thorough in his undertakings and who has had so much experience in the handling of wheat, the information should have been made available by the committee to the House. In view of that, I think I would be justified in opposing the adoption of the report. Mr. Monger went on to say—

> Another point of difference between Canada and Western Australia is that our wheat is much more uniform in quality than Canadian, both in its moisture content and purity of sample. There is not the wide difference in quality here and mechanical mixing of different grades done in Canada is not necessary.

Then he goes on to deal with the position from the point of view of a developing State. Farmers to-day may be carting wheat 30 miles to a siding, which may be receiving more than 50,000 bags of wheat. But another railway loop may be constructed and the siding would then be deprived of much of the wheat, which would go to a new siding. Consequently the capital expenditure at the siding would not be warranted because sufficient wheat would not be available to fill the silo. He says the time is not ripe for the establishment of such a costly system in this State and adds—

> As development takes place, probably each year new sidings will be opened. Deliveries at those sidings for the first year or so will be small but then might suddenly increase. Some old sidings would have their receivals reduced by wheat going to sidings on a new line. For example, a great deal of wheat formerly delivered at Pithara, Ballidu, and Ejanding will in future be delivered to sidings on the new Ejanding line, and receivals at the former sidings reduced. Then an old established siding might be replaced by two, the better to serve the needs of the district. Consequently we must consider whether, at the present stage of the State's development, the installation of a bulk handling system would be as practicable and economical as in those countries where development is further advanced.

No fair comparison can be drawn between Western Australia and Canada because the conditions attending wheat growing and wheat handling in the two countries are quite different. Canadian farms are far more highly developed than are Western Australian farms, and the Canadian farmers are in a better position to bear the cost of installing bulk handling facilities than are the farmers in this State. Mr. Monger emphasised that point and said—

> Would an elevator system be sufficiently elastic to meet those variations? If an abnormal quantity of bagged wheat is being delivered at a siding, it can still be stacked on

dunnage and roofed if necessary. If a greater quantity of bulk wheat than the silos can hold is being delivered, it can only be heaped on the ground. This actually happened in the United States, and I have photographs of large heaps of wheat on the ground outside the elevator. The waste must have been enormous. The only way to obviate this is for the total bushel capacity of the silos to bear a high relation to the volume handled, but the overhead charges per bushel would be correspondingly greater and, in some cases, prohibitive.

The member for South Fremantle made that point when speaking the other night, and here we find it emphasised by the chairman of the Wheat Pool of Western Australia. Could we have any higher authority than the chairman of the Wheat Pool? He says that bulk handling is not practicable, that it would be too costly and would be uneconomic in this State.

Mr. Wansbrough: That was said when wheat was bringing a higher price.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger continued—

> When comparing the cost of bag and bulk handling, it must be remembered that all the cost of the bag, say 11d., is not lost to the grower.

So he based his estimates on the bag costing 11d.

Mr. Patrick: What is a bag worth as wheat now?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger continued—

> Actually he gets back 5d. per bag, which represents the full value of the secondhand bag.

That point was raised by the member for South Fremantle, and I noticed that a correspondent to the Press since then also quoted the price of secondhand bags at 5d. So Mr. Monger's valuation of 5d. was apparently right. Mr. Monger added—

> At present secondhand bags cannot be sold at more than 4s. 6d. per dozen. In selling the grain, the bag is weighed as wheat, and bagged wheat is worth at least 6d. per quarter more than bulk wheat.

The select committee failed to make that point. Rather did they endeavour to show that bulk wheat was of greater value than bagged wheat. Mr. Monger also said—

> Two-and-a-half lbs. per bag as wheat at 1¼d. per lb. was equal to 2¾d.; 6d. per quarter would equal 2¼d., a total of 5d. per bag.

The Minister for Works: Did he mention the price of wheat?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Yes, 1¼d. per lb.

> The farmer then pays about 2d. per bushel for a container for his wheat . . . . Bagged wheat in Western Australia increases in weight after it leaves the farm. In the 1925-26 season the pool had an increase in weight of 25,000 bushels, equal to .289d. per bushel on the quantity pooled. In the 1926-27 season the increase was 132,000 bushels, equal to .439d. per bushel on the quantity pooled. The Victorian report states that wheat does not increase in weight in the elevators.

There is a disadvantage. It increases equal to ½d. per bushel in bags and yet it does not increase in bulk. In fact, it is said that in America an allowance of ½d. per cent loss is made in the turnout from the elevators. A country that has been handling its wheat in bulk for many years finds it necessary to allow for ½ per cent. loss in the turnout from the elevators. Should that point have been missed by the select committee who investigated the question for us? Do the farmers know that if they adopt a bulk handling scheme, they are going to lose a ½ per cent. of their wheat?

Mr. Doney: You are overlooking the climate in this State.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger gives it as a fact that the loss occurs.

Mr. Doney: It would not apply here.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The hon. member seems keen to defend the scheme. He will have an opportunity to attack Mr. Monger's report later on. I am reading the whole of Mr. Monger's report.

Mr. Patrick: Bring it up to date.

Hon. P. Collier: What is wrong with Mr. Monger's statement?

Mr. Patrick: It is not up to date.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger, in opposing bulk handling, made the point that ½ per cent. loss had to be allowed for in the turnout from the elevators. Dealing with costs he said—

> The pool costs for the 1926-27 season amounted to 2.863d. per bushel. This includes the following services and charges:—Receiving, stacking and maintaining at country sidings; stacking in and loading out of port depots; sampling at depots and ships' side; stacking sites costs in country and at ports; expenses due to storm damage, mice and weevil prevention, etc.; fire and flood insurance; depreciation.

There is the total cost from the farmer's wagon to the ship's side—2.863d. per bushel. According to the Victorian report the total cost per bushel including interest and de-

preciation is 2.587d. per bushel. Mr. Monger continued—

It should be noted, however, that the Pool cost given is the average for all sidings. The figures given in the Victorian report refer only to the 132 larger sidings where elevators would be installed.

If the Victorian costs had been based on all sidings, the figure would have been much higher.

Mr. Brown: That is only supposition. Victoria has not adopted bulk handling.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am quoting Mr. Monger's statement.

Mr. Brown: Give us some of your own figures.

Hon. P. Collier: He is quoting the highest authority.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I do not profess to be an expert in bulk handling, but I am putting forward the experience of the highest authority in the State, excepting the Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: I do not pose as such.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger is chairman of the Wheal Pool which has been actively engaged in handling a large quantity of wheat in this State for years. If he is not an authority, shall we accept the member for Pingelly as such?

Mr. Brown: I have grown more wheat than you have, anyhow.

Mr. Patrick: You quoted the Minister for Works as a higher authority.

Mr. H. W. MANN: He has investigated the question and, in my opinion, he knows a good deal about it, but he was ignored. Mr. Monger went on to say—

Then consideration must be given to contingent costs to be met by the farmer due to the alterations to plant on the farm and rolling stock on the railways. Even if the farmer did not erect a grain bin or a portable granary, and did not purchase a bulk wagon, but continued to cart his wheat to the siding in bags, he would still have to meet, either directly or indirectly, the cost of converting a large number of railway trucks to carry wheat in bulk. In the Victorian report the estimate for construction of new, and alteration of old, trucks was £560,000.

Have hon. members read the comment by the Chairman of the select committee on Mr. Tomlinsons' evidence? He described it as being a staggerer. Yet Mr. Tomlinson's evidence is practically the same as the Victorian estimate. I will read Mr. Tomlinson's evidence and members will see how close his estimate is to the Victorian estimate.

Mr. Brown: I hope you will read some evidence in favour of the scheme.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The hon. member can do that directly. Mr. Tomlinson said this—

If we were dealing with bagged wheat, we could handle it as we are doing now with our 13,000 trucks, for we have had no difficulty to date. Thus we estimate that bulk handling will require 2,000 more trucks. The traffic officials will be able to support that statement with their reasons later on. They advise that 2,000 additional steel wagons of 14 tons capacity will be required. Those trucks will cost in the vicinity of £275 each. Our last 14-ton trucks cost £260 each, but the new ones for bulk wheat will require some extras, and therefore we put the figure down at £275 each, which means an addition to our capital cost of £550,000.

The chairman of the select committee said that evidence was a staggerer, yet we find the Victorian authorities, quoted by Mr. Monger, estimated the cost at £560,000 or £10,000 more than Mr. Tomlinson said that it would cost the Railway Department. What justification is there for describing Mr. Tomlinson's evidence as a staggerer?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What were they going to do in Victoria for the £560,000? You did not give us the details.

Mr. H. W. MANN: What justification is there, I ask again, for describing the evidence of an expert like Mr. Tomlinson as a staggerer? Mr. Tomlinson is Deputy Commissioner of Railways and has given his life to the study of railway management. Surely he spoke as one with authority. He spoke in the interests of the State and with a sense of the responsibility of his position. He said the cost would be £550,000. The Victorian estimate is £560,000.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Mr. Tomlinson gave details showing how the £560,000 was made up. Give us the details of the Victorian estimate.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger goes on to say—

Could the Railway Department give the service required for the system? At present the railways are fully employed in bringing the wheat to ports and mills and taking superphosphate back. The superphosphate traffic has the effect of distributing trucks over the whole of the wheat areas, and it would be difficult to send trucks to any point where elevators were choked owing to deliveries in excess of capacity.

That is an important matter, because the economic working of our railways requires that while they bring the wheat down to the ports they should carry the superphosphate back. That is the reason we get such cheap freights. Mr. Monger proceeded—

> With the rolling stock in this State as it is at present, it would be quite impossible to run trucks back empty to the elevators, and the wheat would have to be stored in the country for as long a period as it is now under the bag system.

We are still using the same number of trucks. Our traffic is the same as it was when Mr. Monger made this statement. If it was impossible then, it is impossible now. I deplore the fact that the select committee ignored the evidence of the railway officials, who are experts, and that the chairman described the evidence as being a staggerer.

Mr. Doney: There is not the slightest point in comparing the Western Australian rolling stock with the Victorian rolling stock.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger dealt with the rolling stock in this State.

Mr. Doney: You cannot compare the conditions in the two States.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger went on to say—

> In my opinion Western Australia is the last of the Australian States that should embrace bulk handling. Our many sparse and distant areas must be worked cautiously, and during our developmental stage a large portion of the State cannot, I consider, for years to come be favourably worked other than by the elastic bag system.

Hon. P. Collier: We are pretty safe in following Mr. Monger, I think.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Can there be any doubt about the correctness and soundness of that statement? I repeat that Mr. Monger is chairman of the trustees who for some years have been handling 45 per cent. of the wheat produced in the State.

The Minister for Railways: When did he make that statement: since he has been handling the wheat?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Yes. Mr. Monger proceeded—

> If bulk handling is finally approved of and adopted by Victoria and South Australia, we can follow suit when it is proved beyond doubt that it is a step in the right direction.

What is the position? Both those States have investigated the bulk handling system and both have turned it down.

The Minister for Works: They have not.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Both those States investigated the system long before we did and they have not adopted it.

Mr. Doney: Are you quite sure Victoria has turned it down? I do not think you know much about it.

Hon. P. Collier: Don't be so cross.

Mr. Marshall: No, look crossways.

Mr. H. W. MANN: This is what the expert in Victoria said about the proposed Victorian scheme—

> A scheme recently placed before the Victorian Chamber of Agriculture provided for country station silo capacity of 7,750,000 bushels, with a terminal at Geelong holding 3,500,000 bushels. In New South Wales, on the average of the last four seasons, country silos were not filled once a year—only 85 per cent. of capacity was used. On that basis the scheme would handle on the average only 7,000,000 bushels a year, less than one-fifth of the average crop. The estimated cost, £1,250,000, is equal to 2s. 2.6d. a bushel of total capacity of country and terminal silos. The cost to New South Wales is 3s. 6d. a bushel.

In New South Wales, on the averages, only 85 per cent. of the silo capacity was used, whereas in Canada the silos were filled up four times with wheat, and then filled with oats, barley and linseed. That is a continuous process; it is not merely a question of storing the wheat. The report continued—

> The capital cost of the scheme at 2s. 6d. a bushel would be £1,406,250 . . . . . Interest is allowed at 6 per cent., depreciation and amortisation at 2½ per cent., agents' commission at ¼d. a bushel, and working costs at 1d. a bushel, as against the New South Wales average in the last four years of 1.09d. Bags are needed for harvesting and carting, about one half of the number required in the bag system. They should last 2½ years on the average, and at 9s. a dozen would cost 0.6d. a bushel. Total costs a bushel would be as follows:—

8,000,000 bushels.

	d.
Working expenses, silo	1.00
Interest	2.53
Depreciation and amortisation ..	1.05
Total silo costs	4.58
Agents' commission	0.25
Bags	0.60
Total costs	5.43

Comparative costs of the bag system would be with wheat at 3s. a bushel:—

	d.
Bags	3.00
Agents' commission	1.25
Costs wagon to f.o.b.	0.75
	5.00
Less value of bag sold as wheat ..	0.45
Net cost	4.55

There is an apparent saving of 0.15d. a bushel under the bulk system, provided that country silos handled on the average of good and bad seasons 11,250,000 bushels—an unlikely event, judging from the New South Wales experience. . . . . These estimates assume that bulk and bagged wheat are of equal value. That is not so. Bagged wheat enjoys the widest possible market.

That is another point. Mr. Monger deals with it later on. The Victorian report continued—

It can be shipped to any port in the world. Bulk wheat is practically restricted to ports equipped with elevators. China, India and Japan last year took 44 per cent. of Australian wheat exports and this year they will probably take 50 per cent. A distinct preference is shown for bagged wheat at a premium of about 1d. a bushel.

Mr. Doney: Eighty-five per cent. of bulk wheat goes to Great Britain.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The hon. member can put that up directly. We all know that those who are handling the wheat industry in Australia are endeavouring to foster the Oriental market. We are looking to the Orient as the future market for Australian wheat, because other countries are competing with us in the Home market. The report continued—

Japan has only one port equipped for bulk handling, and even were bulk wheat imported most of it would have to be bagged on arrival. China and India have no bulk equipment, hence bulk cargoes have to be bagged before discharge, a very costly process.

Mr. Doney: Your authority is shown to be wrong there.

Mr. H. W. MANN: The report continued—

This year Japan has purchased only one bulk cargo. China has purchased 62 cargoes, of which only four were in bulk. Undoubtedly a lower price would have to be accepted for Australian wheat if it were all shipped in bulk.

The hon. member asked me what the position in Victoria was.

The Minister for Works: Who is the author of that report?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Professor S. M. Wadham and Associate-Professor G. L. Wood.

The Minister for Works: That is not the report. You are only giving extracts.

Mr. Doney: What do you know about their bona fides?

Mr. H. W. MANN: I do not know the gentlemen at all.

Hon. A. McCallum: Everybody that differs from them is a bad character.

Hon. P. Collier: Their evidence is no good; it is staggering!

Mr. H. W. MANN: Here is a report written by Mr. F. S. Alford, who investigated the position in South Australia—

In summing up the bulk handling scheme recommended by Messrs. Metcalf and Co., it becomes more and more obvious that the system is not all it is represented to be. The first capital cost of installing elevators makes the proposition top-heavy; the interest, depreciation, maintenance, and sinking fund provision charges on an expenditure of over a million pounds is a direct charge of 2½d. per bushel on the maximum average of 12,000,000 bushels the system would deal with. That alone is more than the entire cost of bag handling. Bulk handling will involve a direct loss to the farmer of 2¾d. per bushel up to the time the grain is stored on board ship, and giving no compensating advantages in return, while freights for bulk cargoes will positively be from 1½d. to 3d. per bushel dearer than for bagged shipments. No more scathing comment is conceivable than this in condemnation of the whole proposition. Not only would bulk handling prove a heavy burden on farmers, but would also affect working men now employed in lumping and stevedoring wheat. Money that would otherwise be paid in wages to lumpers would be largely mopped up in meeting interest, depreciation, and upkeep etc. of the elevator installation.

That is a point which must not be passed over lightly. The member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum) gave some figures that Mr. McCartney quoted to the Commission and which Mr. Fox, the secretary of the Lumpers' Union, also gave. Those figures showed that many hundreds of men would be thrown out of employment. In view of the present industrial position can we afford to throw several hundreds of men on to the labour scrapheap?

Mr. Doney: Many hundreds will be provided with employment.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Suppose that bulk handling proved to be as economical as bag

handling, and suppose there was no loss to the railways, and that the farmers broke even, there would still be the consideration of throwing hundreds of men on to the industrial scrapheap.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Thousands, you mean.

Mr. H. W. MANN: That is going to be a direct loss to the State, and should be taken into consideration before the House adopts the report of the select committee which failed to give due importance to this point. Mr. Monger added—

> Under bag handling two thirds of the actual cost is represented by wages for labour. The comparison is then a mechanical system against a manual one. A mechanical system is bound to be more efficient, is not affected by fluctuations in wages, nor by those labour troubles which unfortunately so often occur in Australia.

This point was not put up by the committee. Suppose we were in the middle of our harvest and we had just such a season as this one, and the crops were dead ripe and inclined to fall over, and some industrial trouble on the wharf occurred.

Mr. Wansbrough: Or in connection with shipping.

Hon. P. Collier: Or there was a hold-up on the part of the farmers. Where are they to-day with their bulk handling?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Suppose there was a shipping hold-up, or a strike amongst the seamen, or a strike on the wharf or on the railways.

Hon. P. Collier: Or on the farm.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Every harvester must stop working.

Mr. Doney: You need not worry about that.

Mr. H. W. MANN: It is an undeniable fact. If the trucks would not run and the ships did not come to take the wheat away, where are farmers going to put it? They would not have silos on the farms where it could be stored, and they would have to stop taking it off.

The Minister for Lands: Canada deals with 550,000,000 bushels.

Mr. H. W. MANN: But the farmers have silos.

The Minister for Lands: Not at all.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Their harvesting is done under conditions different from ours. In Canada the wheat is cut, bound and stooked.

The Minister for Works: You are talking of years ago.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Mr. Monger went on to say—

> Storage of wheat in concrete silos secures it from damage by mice and deterioration by weevil, and loss by weather—important advantages. The cost of sewing bags, which is a little over ½d. per bushel, would be saved, as if bags were used to cart wheat to the silo they could be fixed with wire. Having touched briefly on what appears to be the principal factors for and against bulk handling, and drawn attention to the outstanding difficulties which would have to be overcome, while I am neither for nor against bulk handling, I am strongly of the opinion that a critical investigation of the possibilities of the bulk handling of wheat is desirable, and I will give earnest support to any move in that direction.

If the investigation which Mr. Monger desired was the one that was made by the select committee, it was not very far-reaching or searching, and was not the kind of inquiry that was anticipated. Mr. Monger started off by saying that we must go outside Australia to get first-hand information of the effect and benefits of bulk handling. He concluded his statement by saying—

> This paper has been prepared for you. We want to take you into our confidence. A feeling has got abroad that the trustees are opposed to bulk handling. That is not so but we do not want a scheme to be embarked upon until it has been proved to be the correct one. It has been suggested that opposition is partly due to the claim that the Westralian Farmers would lose its jute trade if bulk handling were adopted. Westralian Farmers would not care two straws if the scheme were brought in to-morrow.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: They would at this stage.

Mr. H. W. MANN: That statement was made by Mr. Monger with a full knowledge of his responsibilities. No one has a better knowledge than he of the wheatgrowing industry. He has been chairman of the trustees who have been handling 45 per cent. of the State's wheat for years. If I have done nothing else but emphasise his speech I think I have raised in the minds of members a grave doubt as to the advisability of adopting the report of the select committee.

Mr. Doney: I do not think you have done that.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I did not think I could influence the hon. member. There is another point which has not been touched upon by either Mr. Monger or the member for South Fremantle. The four wheat-buy-

ing merchants of the State have between them over 400 agents. Their business has been operating for many years. If bulk handling is put into operation, these 400 agents will be thrown out of work. Many of them are small storekeepers, some of whom are in the electorate of the Minister for Lands.

The Minister for Lands: If wheat does not fetch a better price they will be thrown out of work in any case.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Many of them depend to a large extent upon the commissions they earn in the handling of wheat.

The Minister for Works: Do you not believe in the principle of one man one job?

Mr. H. W. MANN: If the Bill goes through, the Westralian Farmers will have a monopoly.

Mr. Withers: And thousands of men will be looking for a job.

Mr. H. W. MANN: Instead of the money going through many channels, it will go through only one. The money that is benefiting many to-day will benefit only one company. In his pamphlet Mr. John Thomson says—

> Bulk handling, instead of having a monopolistic result, will open wide the field of wheat buying to merchants and traders who at present are unable, or unwilling, to arrange and maintain an organisation sufficiently extensive to enter the business of wheat buying under existing conditions.

I will show how impossible that is. The pool would have control of the whole of the wheat in bulk. The commission the Westralian Farmers will receive will be sufficient to cover all costs of the organisation, including their agents at all country sidings. They will get, say, 1d. per bushel. If another buyer comes into the field, he will have to pay his commission in order to establish his agencies, and this will mean a disadvantage to him of at least ½d. per bushel. In the wheat buying business that will put him out of the market. It is an enormous sum when it comes to handling the season's wheat. The effect of this is almost beyond anything that could be imagined.

Mr. Doney: If that had been the effect, the merchants would have put that up in evidence.

Mr. H. W. MANN: I am putting that forward as a fact. The Westralian Farmers will have a monopoly of wheat handling. This year many farmers were financed by the merchants for their super.

The Minister for Lands: They can give a lien over their wheat and get exactly the same thing.

Mr. H. W. MANN: They cannot do so. Many of the merchants who were buying wheat financed the farmers to the extent of £300,000 to enable them to put in their crops. Is it to be imagined that the merchants will do this again in times of stress?

The Minister for Lands: Bulk handling will not prevent it.

Mr. H. W. MANN: If they are not in the business they will not do it, and they will be put out of business by this Bill.

The Minister for Lands: Do you say that Dalgetys will be put out of business?

Mr. H. W. MANN: Yes, so far as wheat buying is concerned. The wheat buyer will be at a much greater disadvantage compared with the Westralian Farmers and will not be able to buy wheat. If they are out of business many farmers who have had financial assistance from that source will not get it. The Minister knows that there have been times when the Government were not in a position to find money, and the merchants provided the necessary assistance to enable farmers to put in their crops. So I feel it my duty to put this phase of the position before members, and I hope they will give serious consideration to the condition of the wheat industry and the effect this report will have on the community before they adopt it.

On motion by Minister for Railways, debate adjourned.

BILL—RESERVES.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [9.47]: in moving the second reading said: This is the usual annual Bill. This year it comprises nine reserves, some of them representing mere rearrangements, while others are Class A reserves being transferred back to the Crown. I propose to lay on the Table a litho. setting out the position of these reserves. The first one is a Class A reserve at Subiaco, near the Karrakatta Cemetery, at present set aside for a children's playground. It is now proposed to convert it into a general recreation ground. The second proposal is to give the Rottnest Board of Control authority to grant building leases for a term not

exceeding 21 years. During the past year the number of visitors to Rotnest has been so great that the board have been unable to find the necessary accommodation. It it proposed to enable the board to lease certain pieces of land as building sites for 21 years.

Hon. J. Cunningham: A similar Bill was brought down ten years ago, but was defeated.

Mr. Sleeman: This is not for the land sharks, I hope.

Hon. A. McCallum: The board has been after that for years, but has never been able to get it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are merely trying to meet the wishes of the board. Until recently the board were indebted to the Government for a considerable overdraft, which has since been transferred to one of the Associated Banks, so it is impossible for the board to erect the number of buildings urgently required.

Mr. Sleeman: They have just finished erecting some houses.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Only three or four, and those represent all the money the board have been able to raise. They propose also to acquire from the Commonwealth a piece of land with a cottage already on it. However, the whole proposal is entirely with the House. It has been submitted at the request of the board. It is of no use condemning the proposal, for land sharks are able to do this along our foreshore now.

Hon. A. McCallum: You want to keep your eye on them.

Hon. P. Collier: There should not be one acre of that island given away, nor any exclusive rights, not ever for 21 years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Further accommodation is needed. For the coming holidays, 57 premises are available and 281 applications have been received. It is preferable to get people to spend their holidays within Western Australia, and I know of no better place for a quiet holiday than Rottnest Island.

Hon. P. Collier: You have dozens of unemployed carpenters on sustenance, and timber already cut, so the buildings could be put up at the lowest possible cost.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If I were to ask the Treasurer to make an advance of £5,000 or £6,000 for the erection of holiday cottages, I know what he would say to me.

Hon. P. Collier: But you have your timber and material already.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There must be a roof to each cottage, and electrical connections, and stoves for the kitchens, and a lot of capital expenditure.

Hon. A. McCallum: Through the local authorities you are paying sustenance to those men to keep the grass off the footpaths.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What about the cost of the galvanised iron?

Hon. A. McCallum: You would soon get that back in rent.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But money is not available for the purchase of galvanised iron.

Hon. A. McCallum: You are paying out money to men chipping grass off footpaths.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Still, there is no money for stoves and other things for holiday-makers. However, the matter is entirely with the House.

Hon. P. Collier: You must keep that island for the State.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At the end of 21 years, these cottages will revert to the board.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Why not make it 99 years, as in the case of the Waroona milk contract?

Hon. P. Collier: People would be glad to get a 21 years' right to erect cottages in National Park or at Yanchep. Why not let them do it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I may submit that to the Parks and Gardens Board, and we may come down next year with the necessary Bill.

Mr. Sleeman: They have been trying this for Rottnest for the last 12 years.

Hon. P. Collier: I would not mind having the right to build a nice cottage in King's Park for 21 years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is far too young to go up to King's Park to live. The next proposal is merely a transfer from the trustees of the Wagin Mechanics' Institute to the Wagin Municipal Council of a block of land held in trust. Next we propose to ask the House to agree to the deletion of part of a Class A reserve at Cottesloe for recreation, and set it aside for town blocks for sale by the Crown. This piece of land is too uneven

for a sports ground, and the town hall is built on one corner of it. Any revenue from the sale will go to the Crown, not to the council. The local road board complains of the large aggregate area of Class A reserves in their territory, in addition to all the ocean frontage. The next proposal is to transfer from the trustees of the Armadale Rifle Club a small piece of land at Cockburn Sound. The block is held in fee simple by them, and it is proposed to transfer it to the Crown, who will then transfer it to the Commonwealth military authorities. This is one of those blocks of land which have been sold and held by trustees, and it is now asked that it should become ordinary Commonwealth property. The next proposal deals with the opening of one of the King's Park roads. The Leader of the Opposition probably will know something about it, since he is a member of the King's Park Board. It is at the entrance near the University. The late Mr. Lovekin had the park road closed. It runs parallel to the Fremantle road, and is just alongside the entrance to the park Although officially the road is still closed, it is being used by the public, and so it is proposed to ask the House to agree to its re-opening. I do not know how Mr. Lovekin succeeded in getting Parliament to agree to the Bill by which the road was closed.

Hon. P. Collier: But you say it runs parallel with the Fremantle-road.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, but it is right up near the park, with buildings running along it. The hon. member will understand the position better when he looks at the litho. which I intend to lay on the Table. There is a piece of land acquired by the King's Park Board outside the park itself which is alongside the road I referred to, and it is proposed to ask the House to agree to its being made again a Class "A" reserve. The eighth proposal is to take away a small piece of land from the King's Park Board and exchange it for a piece of land that has been handed over to the Swan Brewery. This has been agreed to by the King's Park Board, the City Council and the Lands Department. It is in connection with the work of widening Mount's Bay-road in the vicinity of the Swan Brewery. The work is being done by the Perth City Council and at no expense to the Government. The Crown Law Department thought it necessary to ask the authority of the House to have this ratified. The ninth and last item is a proposal to widen Mounts Bay-road to 80 feet in the vicinity of the brewery. It has been necessary to arrange with the Swan Brewery authorities to give up portion of the land which they at present hold in fee simple. This has necessitated the removal of certain of their buildings from what will be a part of the new road, and in consideration of that expense and the release of the portion of the land required, the Swan Brewery will be granted a certain area which is being reclaimed adjoining its present premises. It is on this that the buildings that are being removed from the roadway will be re-erected. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—CATTLE TRESPASS, FENCING AND IMPOUNDING AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that the amendments made by the Assembly had been agreed to.

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [10.7] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual type of Bill that is introduced each session for the purpose of closing certain roads. It embraces several different proposals. It is sought to close certain of the "Parkway" at Nedlands on the Esplanade to enable the Water Supply Department to erect a sewerage pumping station. The land will be reserved and vested in the Minister for Water Supply. There is no objection to the proposal on the part of the Subiaco Council. The second matter deals with the closure of portion of Havelock-street in the townsite of Narrogin. This has been requested by the adjoining holders. The portion to be closed serves no particular purpose and there is another street four chains to the west which leads in the same way to the railway crossing. There is no objection to this on the part of the local council. When closed, the land will be made available for

sale to the adjoining holders. The third matter deals with the truncation at the corner of Eliot and Victoria streets in the townsite of Bunbury. The survey was effected in accordance with the provisions of the Town Planning Act and a 20 feet truncation was provided, whereas in a business area a 10 feet truncation is all that is necessary. The larger truncation cramps the corner for business purposes and it is therefore proposed to close a width of 10 feet and throw it back into the title of the adjoining land. The next matter deals with the closure of Duff-street to the west of the West Perth station. The land adjoining was purchased by the Perth City Council with the object of widening Arthur-street. The council now propose to subdivide the balance that has been secured and to that end it is desired that Duff-street, with the right-of-way running through one of the lots closed, shall be handed over to provide for a proper resubdivision. It is also proposed to close a portion of Daglish-street, Narrogin. This street separates two hospital reserves on one portion of which it is desired to erect an isolation hospital which will encroach on the road in question. It would be an inconvenience to have the hospital buildings separated by a public road, and the local authorities, who have agreed to find a certain portion of the money necessary for the building, concur in the closure of portion of the street in question. The last matter referred to in the Bill deals with the closure of a right-of-way at Lecderville. Without this particular right-of-way all the lots affected have another right-of-way as well as road frontages, and the existence of the right-of-way affects the utilisation of one of the blocks for building puposes. The City Council agrees to the closure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WHOLE MILK.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th September.

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [10.10]: There are many features of the Bill that do not appeal to me, and considerable alteration will require to be made before they appeal to a majority of the members of the House. With regard to the constitution of the proposed board, it must not be forgotten that we propose to vest that board with extensive powers. I feel sure that if such powers were asked for in connection with any other line of business, many members opposite would be the first to oppose them. It is suggested that the board of seven members shall consist of four representatives of the dairying industry, while the vendors are to have two representatives and the consumers one. The member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty), when speaking on the Bill, said that the producers were the main people concerned. I am going to suggest, with all humility, that the consumers are also people who are mainly interested. The consumers occupy a position of no less importance than that of the producers, and yet the Bill proposes that the producers are to have four representatives and the consumers only one.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is more representation than your party proposed to give.

Mr. KENNEALLY: There is no earthly reason why the consumers and the producers should not be equally represented on the board with an independent chairman, but to say that the producers shall have four representatives, the vendors two and the consumers only one, is not a right proposition to submit to the House, and should not receive the serious support of members opposite. In addition, we find that provision is made for the appointment of a chairman who will have a deliberative and a casting vote. If ever there was a system of price-fixing by people concerned in an industry as producers, this is it. I can imagine members throwing up their hands in holy horror if a proposition of that kind had come from this side of the House. If we are to confer powers such as those suggested in the Bill, will members opposite agree to extend similar consideration to the workers.

Mr. McLarty: They have their Arbitration Court.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Then let members opposite agree to apply the principle of arbitration to the fixing of prices dealt with in the Bill. The Arbitration Court consists of a representative of the workers, a representative of the employers and an inde-

pendent chairman. Under the provisions of the Bill, is it proposed to constitute a board along those lines? Certainly not! If the same principle were to apply to the Arbitration Court, then the bench would consist of six representatives of the employers and one representative of the workers. Then, in order to make the position still more safe, we would have to provide for the president of the court having a deliberative as well as a casting vote. Government members should realise that if the suggestion were made that the workers should have the right to fix the price for the product of their labour, there would be great opposition to such a proposal. I shall be surprised if this latest incursion into the realms of price-fixing does not meet with serious opposition.

Mr. Thorn: You do not anticipate that the retail price of milk will be any higher.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I do not know what the board will do. They will be all-powerful. The board will be mainly representative of the producers and, in the circumstances, it would be idle for members to surmise what they will do. If the board were constituted of an equal number of representatives of the producers and of the consumers, there would be a greater prospect of the price of milk not soaring too high. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Thorn) would not suggest that on such a board the producers should have a majority.

Mr. Thorn: I do.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Then will the member for Toodyay extend the same consideration to other industries and give the workers, for instance, the opportunity to fix the price of their labour?

Mr. Thorn: I am afraid that if we had an equal number of consumers and producers on the board, we would find that the former represented the retailers to a large extent.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If they inaccurately represented the views and interests of the consumers, they would act in that direction on one or two occasions only.

Mr. McLarty: There has been no protest from the consumers against the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. Panton: You are getting those protests now.

Mr. Thorn: I would strongly object to any increase in the price of milk to the consumer, but 6½d. a gallon to the producer and 2s. 4d. a gallon to the consumer is an unfair margin.

Mr. KENNEALLY: And it should be rectified. Cheap goods beyond a certain range are not good for any industry. If an attempt were made to-morrow to stabilise the price of milk, and in order to do that those directly represented—the producer and the consumer—were to be given equal representation on the body to effect that stabilisation, it would be a beneficial move. From such a board we might expect a lasting measure of relief and a lasting solution of the problem. I submit for the serious consideration of members that if we have a top-heavy board, such as is proposed in the Bill, it will not be long before opposition will arise from another quarter and the last position will be worse than the first. The position regarding the supply of milk has required attention for many years past and members on both sides of the House agree that the producer should receive a fair remuneration for his labour and that every effort should be made to bring the consumer and the producer closer together, to the exclusion of the middleman.

Mr. McLarty: The producer is merely asking for a fair return.

Mr. KENEALLY: And we can provide that without making the burden heavy on the consumer.

Mr. McLarty: I am sure that the consumer will be able to get cheaper milk.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I believe that is possible, but to achieve that objective, it will be necessary to curb the avariciousness of the middleman. That phase does not apply to milk only.

Hon. P. Collier: It applies in many directions.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I believe every member desires to bring the producer into closer touch with the consumer. Any such move will receive every support that I can give. I think that objective could better be attained if we provided equal representation on the board that will be set up. I am afraid that with a top-heavy board, the parties will drift further away from each other. The board to be set up will have power to fix the price of milk. On one former occasion at any rate, Parliament passed a certain measure of price-fixing, but generally speaking, Parliament has been against that principle. I am hopeful that

the next attempt will not be on the basis of the board proposed in the Bill. To a large extent I favour the principle of price-fixing. We have heard a lot about the law of supply and demand governing prices as between the producer and the consumer but I think a degree of assistance is required to attain the best results. The mere law of supply and demand will not always deal effectively with the economic situation. I would hail with delight some system by which adequate and just price-fixing could be attained. With the member for Toodyay, I believe it is possible to bring the consumers and the producers closer together for their mutual benefit and to secure prices that will secure to the producer a better return and to the consumer, his milk supplies at a low price.

Mr. Thorn: I believe it is possible, because the margin existing at present is altogether too great.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I pass over the remarks that were made by the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) regarding the producer having to rise at all hours. So do the workers. Many people who consume the producers' product have to rise at all hours.

Mr. Thorn: It is an essential industry, but it is one in which I would not like to be employed.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I do not think we should legislate according to our antipathies with regard to any specific industry. Both employers and employees in this industry have to work all hours. I know, however, that the employees of the vendor are not getting much in return for their labour. The work is covered by an award, but the wages provided are comparatively small when we consider those paid in other industries.

The Minister for Agriculture: The worker gets more than many producers with milk at 5d. a gallon.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I can quote instances of employees getting less than the producers. I could cite instances of juvenile labour being exploited to the utmost in order to have the work carried out at the cheapest possible rates. The cause of the trouble is that the producer is receiving very little for his product. When it reaches the market, the vendor tries to make as much as possible, or at any rate what he considers commensurate with the services he is giving. A solution of the problem lies in bridging the gap between what the producer receives and what the consumer pays. The rake-off is between the two. Anything that can be done towards bridging the gap will receive my support. I wish to point out that I consider it dangerous to take out of the hands of the local authorities the responsibility for examining the milk and supervising its distribution. When the Minister was moving the second reading, I asked by way of interjection whether he proposed to extend the system of examination applying to the metropolitan area to dairies that would be producing under this measure, and he said that that was intended. If we remove from the local authorities the responsibility for supervising one of the chief foods of the people, we shall be taking a serious risk.

The Minister for Agriculture: We shall not be taking it out of the hands of the local authorities.

Mr. KENNEALLY: To some extent we shall be. Policing and inspection are main considerations.

Mr. Wells: In that respect the local authorities, in some instances, are making a bad job of it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: In some instances they are, but Lord help the people if the control gets into the hands of less competent people! It is possible that this measure may be made to react against the interests of the producers. If we do not insist upon proper supervision and ensure that milk as a food is sought by the people, we might, instead of helping the producer, do him great harm. Therefore I have grave doubt about the advisability of lessening the authority of health boards in the matter of supervising the milk supply. I hope that both sides of the House will assist to mould the measure in such a form that it will accomplish something for the producer and for the consumer. If the Bill proposed to give the consumers four or six representatives on a board of seven, it would be just as strongly opposed to it as I am to the constitution of the proposed board, simply because, being top-heavy, it could not prove successful. The constitution of the board as proposed cannot make for success, and in a few months or years we shall find ourselves in the same difficult position. Greater co-operation between producers and consumers is required, and if we could provide

for equal representation of those interests on the board, we should be doing something to overcome the present difficulties.

On motion by Hon. M. F. Troy, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 1st December, 1932.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. W. H. Kitson (for Hon. J. M. Drew), leave of absence granted to Hon. T. Moore (Central) for three consecutive sittings of the House on the ground of urgent private business.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Financial Emergency Act Continuance.

2, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—WHEAT POOL.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message—President's Ruling.

The PRESIDENT: I have been asked to give a ruling as to whether, in Message No. 41 from the Legislative Assembly, Amendment No. 5 is relevant to the subject matter of the Bill. I postponed my ruling and have gone to some trouble to ensure accuracy of decision. I have consulted May's Parliamentary Practice, and find the definition there of "subject matter" is practically identical with the interpretation in our Standing Orders. In fact "subject matter" can mean nothing else than the provisions of the Bill as printed, read a second time, and referred to the committee. It could not otherwise be correctly interpreted. I also consulted other authorities and in addition secured the best legal opinion available. All the authorities I consulted are in accord with my opinion that the proposed amendment is relevant to the subject matter of the Bill.

The word "relevant" does not mean identical; it means "to the purpose," "related to," "bearing on the matter in hand." A provision is not relevant where it introduces new principles. The proposed new clause is to vary the powers of the administrators of the Act to prohibit the use for human consumption, of water in water tanks, in certain cases, in the interests of health, just as Clause 31 conveys the very similar power to destroy or remove dairies in the interests of health. The new clause merely varies or further specifies the power of the authorities administering the Act. I, therefore, consider the amendment is relevant to the subject matter of the Bill as printed, read a second time, and referred to the committee.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on amendment No. 5 made by the Legislative Assembly as follows—

No. 5. Insert a new clause, to stand as Clause 28, as follows:—

28. A section is inserted in the principal Act, after Section 158, as follows:—

158A. (1) Where any trade process, whether an offensive trade or not, has been established in any district, and is of such a nature that the carrying on thereof will unavoidably result in fumes, dust, vapour, gas, or other chemical elements which, in the opinion of the Commissioner, are likely to be injurious to health, escaping into the air, the Governor may, on the recommendation of the Commissioner, by proclamation—

(a) define any area surrounding the place where such trade process is carried