

shoot another because he does not wish to belong to the same constitution?

Mr. Wansbrough: What about the case of the United States?

Mr. ANGELO: There were other features about the war in the United States, such as the slave traffic, which will never be found in Australia. I am certain that if we went out for secession in that way we should be told, "If you are prepared to take up your share of the debts, you can go." Already we have been told by one politician in the Eastern States that if we want to go, he will be prepared to let us go.

Mr. Wansbrough: A number of members who now advocate secession would be found in a hollow log if that happened.

Mr. ANGELO: Neither the Premier nor I could readily get into a hollow log, and I do not think we would make the attempt.

Mr. Kenneally: Some members have been in a hollow log for a long time.

Mr. ANGELO: The Dominion League is asking the Government to have a referendum taken in Western Australia to learn whether the people are in favour of secession or not. I hope that will be done. The argument for our case will be very much stronger if before we have the referendum we approach the Federal Government and ask for this convention. Thousands of men and women who to-day would not vote for secession would do so, after we had taken every constitutional means, including a last hour appeal for a convention, to have our grievances redressed, and the Federal Government had turned us down.

Mr. Millington: This is merely secession propaganda, is it?

The Premier: Why not, when we have propaganda for centralisation?

Mr. ANGELO: I hope it is a "gander" that will produce geese that will lay golden eggs for Western Australia. I feel sure that if we went to the British Parliament, and asked them to help us to get secession, we should not obtain anything like the same help we would get if we could say that we had exhausted every constitutional means to secure redress.

Mr. Millington: You would get what you deserved.

Mr. ANGELO: Whilst I am supporting the motion of the member for Katanning, I urge the Government to lose no time in applying to the Federal and other State

Governments for the holding of this convention. If the reply is favourable the sooner we have the case prepared for Western Australia, as suggested by the member for Katanning, the better will it be. The request for a convention need not take much time. Very often the longest way round is the shortest way home. I am glad the hon. member has brought down this motion. In any case, whether it means sending delegates to the convention or arranging for a referendum, we must have our case prepared. Committees have dealt with it and investigations have been made by the Chief Secretary. All that information could be used in the preparation of our case. I trust the Government will approach the Federal authorities, and that the motion moved by the member for Katanning, to appoint a select committee to have the case properly prepared, whether it be for a convention or for use in connection with a referendum, will be carried by Parliament.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 25th September, 1930.

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

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY, CITY BEACH ESTATE.

Mr. MILLINGTON asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the cost of laying the water main to the City Beach Estate? 2, What arrangements were made with the

Perth City Council as to payment for the main? 3, What is the rate of interest and the amount annually due to the Water Supply Department?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, £5,566 5s. 3d. 2, Payment to the department of 8 per cent. per annum (including interest on cost, less rates accrued). 3, 6½ per cent. and £445 (approximately).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for one month granted to Mr. Teesdale (Roebourne) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd September.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [4.36]: I hold in my hand a number of letters and telegrams which have reached me from wool growers in my district. All my correspondents seem to be alarmed at the Bill, and I do not mind admitting that to some extent I share their alarm, not so much because of what the Minister said when introducing the Bill, as because of what he omitted to say. Having read the letters and telegrams from my constituents, I can see that my observations are likely to resolve themselves into the question whether the Minister, when drafting the Bill, gave adequate consideration to the interests of wool growers. Whether he did or did not, I feel that I am entitled to ask the Government what they are going to do as to lowering railway freights on wool. Having regard to the extraordinary times through which we are passing, I admit the Bill to be desirable and inevitable. I recognise that nothing but sheer necessity has prompted its introduction. Like probably every member of the House, I feel sympathetic towards the Minister's objective. Nevertheless I cannot help pointing out to him that there is one guarantee which he has not given and which, had he given it, would have lifted a load of apprehension from the mind of practically every wool grower in the State. If the Bill becomes law—and I believe it will—there is to be a drastic upward adjustment of license fees on motor trucks and charabancs. I believe

the Minister can with truth claim that the proposed revision of fees is just. It seems strange to grumble about justice. Notwithstanding this, I shall do so. The Minister's justice is pure, plain, unadulterated justice, a harsh, unbending, unkind sort of justice. I find myself wishing that in this instance justice had been tempered with a little mercy towards that unfortunate man, the motor truck owner, who now finds himself between the devil and the deep blue sea. If he decides to carry on, he faces ruin; I do not see how he can stand up against the heavy additional expense involved in the new license fees. If, on the other hand, he decides to sell out, he then faces a market wherein there is absolutely no demand for motor trucks, since the principal source of the traffic is being destroyed by the Bill. I can only hope that if the Minister is able to find room for any compensatory kindness, he will avail himself of the opportunity. I quite agree that it is necessary and fair to call upon the motor truck owner and the charabanc owner to pay license fees commensurate with the damage which their particular classes of vehicle have been held under observation, to do to the roads that have been constructed or are being maintained by Government money. I am not complaining of that, but I submit that there might have been a somewhat more merciful consideration for these owners. I trust that when the Minister arranges the operation of the various exemptions which are somewhat plentifully strewn through the Bill, he will find it possible to make some amendments. My principal concern, however, is not so much for the motor truck owner as for the wool grower. The incidence of the new fees upon the wool grower will be rather alarming. I cannot help regarding this as the most important phase of the measure. I trust the Government will give that aspect of the question immediate attention, and, quite naturally of course, I hope they will be sympathetic.

The Minister for Railways: Where are these wool growers situated relatively to the railway system?

Mr. DONEY: The wool growers I have in mind are on the railway, but they happen to be at a point which places them about 100 miles by road from Perth, whereas the distance by rail is about 185 miles. Therefore these wool growers would be placed at a serious competitive disadvantage by the

substitution of rail for road transport. I do not know whether the Government intend making special provision for cases such as this, but I certainly consider there is occasion for it. It is the huge drop in wool prices that has made the question of freights, by comparison, so highly important nowadays. At a conservative computation the wool grower cannot now expect a return of more than 7d per lb. taking all classes of wool—fleeces, locks, etc.—into consideration. It is easily seen that the question of freights, having regard to the alarmingly low prices of to-day, has become a matter of vital importance to him. In many cases motor rates have afforded the wool grower just that easement which has enabled him to keep afloat. No doubt it will be said—it has been said in this Chamber frequently—that the wool grower should not have left the railways; that, come good times or evil times, he should have stuck to them. Perhaps he should, or perhaps he should not. I shall not go into that question now. Per contra it should be admitted that pressure of economic circumstances forced him to take the stand he did, and that in self-defence he could not have done otherwise.

Mr. Wansbrough: Apparently he does not concern himself about the centralisation of his wool.

Mr. DONEY: I do not quite follow the hon. member's interjection. Anyhow, I am surely entitled to ask, and I certainly want to know, what the Government propose to do about wool freights. I feel that this is an opportune time for a declaration on that subject. It must be plain to all of us that if we take away from the wool grower a privilege he enjoyed in the form of motor transport, we should put in its place a privilege of similar value.

Mr. Marshall: What about the men growing wool on the Murchison?

Mr. DONEY: The situation of those wool growers is one of great difficulty, but the growers in my district are also badly off.

Mr. Angelo: The wool growers further north have no railway to bring their wool to market.

Mr. DONEY: Nevertheless we must recollect that the further north one goes, the easier are the expenses attached to wool growing. I know that the Government will help if they can. I quite appreciate the difficulties confronting them. I believe there has been submitted to the Government a new schedule

of prices, and no doubt wool prices are included in it. What I want to know definitely is whether the Government are in a position to declare their attitude towards the new schedule. It must be apparent to all hon. members that at the present moment wool growing stands right on the brink of ruin. There can be no two opinions on that point. I can at this moment call to mind quite a number of growers who have been pushed over the brink into bankruptcy. I regard it as the prime duty of the House to preserve the industry from ruin of a more intense description. The interests of the railways, of the Government, of the people and of the wool growers are surely inseparable and inter-dependent. The interests of the unit are the interests of the whole and it behoves us to do all we possibly can to preserve our major industries, of which wool is one of the two most important.

Mr. Marshall: The attainment of efficiency in the wool-growing industry was accomplished by the individual, and not by Government assistance, as was the case with the wheat grower.

Mr. DONEY: I may perhaps be prepared to admit that assertion. The Minister for Works, who placed the Bill before hon. members, may easily contend that the point I raise has nothing to do with his department. But the Minister for Railways is present and I hope those two Ministers will come to an arrangement whereby one or the other will furnish me with the assurance I desire.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [4.47]: I find myself in a difficult position. From one standpoint I am naturally sympathetically inclined towards the Minister who is striving earnestly to do what is possible in the face of the economic position confronting the State. On the other hand, there is a good deal to be said in criticism of the Bill. It is clear that the Minister for Works has gone outside his own department, because the object of the Bill is largely to assist the railways.

The Minister for Works: The object is to maintain our roads.

Mr. SAMPSON: In conjunction with assisting the railways, the objective is also to maintain our roads.

The Minister for Railways: Who owns the railways?

Mr. SAMPSON: The people of the State—that is admitted. There is a wide-

spread feeling that the railways are partly responsible for the position in which they find themselves to-day. It is said that the railways are, to some extent, autocratic, and there have been instances of an arrogant attitude on the part of the railways in the treatment meted out to the public. I shall endeavour to place before hon. members examples to prove that statement. On many occasions the railways have shown that they have been operated not entirely in the interests of the public. It is certainly going back awhile, but I will recall the railway strike of 1921. It was subsequent to that date that the development of motor traffic became so pronounced. That development has been so great that no longer are the railways in their former autocratic position.

Mr. Sleeman: I think you know more about the printers' strike.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do, because I was one of the victims of that strike. However, the printers' strike has nothing to do with the discussion. Prior to 1921, there was a lack of consideration on the part of the railways in their attitude towards the producers. As a result of that strike, many of those engaged in the growing of perishable produce found that the work of the previous season was thrown away simply because the railways ceased to operate and it was impossible for the produce to be transported to Perth.

Mr. Withers: Even to-day they could not do that, had we not built good roads.

Mr. SAMPSON: Our object should be to make sure that facilities are provided. It is all very well to have great power, but it is a wretched thing to use it as was exemplified in the strike of 1921. If a large number of growers were not ruined on that occasion, it was because they had reserves behind them. The fact remains that in many instances they lost much of their produce for that particular season. We have had other examples of the improper use of power by industrialists prior to the development of the motor traffic. For instance, we had the annually recurring Christmas strike in connection with the tramway service.

Mr. Sleeman: Why not go back to the civil service strike?

Mr. SAMPSON: That has nothing to do with the question at issue. Tram strikes were regularly indulged in each Christmas

until the motor traffic was so improved that the tramway employees no longer had that means of punishing or ill-treating the public. The instances I have mentioned provide complete examples of what happens when organisations have such tremendous power. To that extent we may thank the internal combustion engine—the motor—for protecting the public from such an invidious position.

Mr. Kenneally: Does not the hon. member know that the fact that the power of the Commissioner has been greatly curbed, has not prompted trouble as in the past.

Mr. SAMPSON: The facts of the position were as stated by me, and the hon. member knows it. He knows that there would be no railway strike in these days if the object were merely to prevent perishable produce being transported to Perth.

Mr. Kenneally: There will be no railway strike while the men are reasonably treated.

The Minister for Railways: They went on strike unreasonably.

Mr. Kenneally: The court did not say so.

The Minister for Railways: I did not say the court did.

Mr. Kenneally: The Minister knows more than the court.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member will surely agree that it was most unfair that the producers should be used as a chopping block between parties at variance.

Mr. Withers: If the same set of circumstances arose to-day, the motor traffic would not assist.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the same set of circumstances arose to-day, the producers would be independent of the railways, and could bring their produce into the city in spite of the railway employees.

Mr. Kenneally: That statement can go for the time being.

Mr. SAMPSON: My statement that the railways have partly brought about the present position is absolutely true.

Mr. Hegney: But in other parts of the world the same problem arises.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not say that the actions of men in this State will be different from those of men in other parts of the world. The fact remains that the position I have indicated demonstrates the danger that exists when a large organisation can hold up the means of transportation, as was done in 1921 and as has happened year after year at Christmas time in connection with the trams.

Mr. Munsie: The tramway strike does not occur annually.

Mr. SAMPSON: The hon. member knows that with the approach of the Christmas season for two or three years in succession, the trams ceased running. I am sure no hon. member will support the contention that people who desire to come into the city during the Christmas festive season should be deprived of the opportunity to do so. I will take the question of responsibility a little further. I claim that the Government are partly responsible too. I do not mention any particular Government. In spite of the fact that trams are regarded as obsolete means of transportation, tramway lines nevertheless continue to be laid down in the metropolitan area. By this means the tramways enter into competition with the railways to a greater degree than ever. As a result, the Minister for Works is placed in a most difficult position and is forced to look once more to the motor traffic for further taxation. It is remarkable that all over the world, when financial difficulties arise, the first industry attacked is the motor industry, and the first body of workers called upon to pay extra taxation is that comprising the men who earn their living in connection with that industry.

The Minister for Works: The Bill does not mean taxation; the Government get nothing out of it.

Mr. SAMPSON: It would be improper on my part to refer to the Bill in terms used outside, but it is a very ferocious attempt to extort from those already experiencing strenuous times in endeavouring to eke out a living, three and a half times more than they have to pay at the present. I refer to those engaged in connection with trucks already operating on certain routes and the added fees chargeable in connection with motor buses, charabancs, and taxis running along continuous routes. I hope the Minister will be good enough to provide some amendment whereby the term "continuous routes" may be interpreted, and thus readily understood by those concerned. Then again, the interests of the railways were injuriously affected by the action of the recent Labour Government. The granting of reduced hours of work and long-service leave administered a heavy blow to the railways. Those concessions were granted without reference to the Arbitration Court. That is an old story and I will not labour it. It

partially explains why the railways find themselves in their present position.

Mr. Munsie: Your Government are going to take away what you complain about, so that will rectify the position.

The Minister for Railways: Take what away?

Mr. Munsie: All that the member for Swan is complaining about.

The Minister for Railways: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. Munsie: If not now, you will very soon.

The Minister for Railways: Do not anticipate.

Mr. SAMPSON: Surely the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) does not attempt to justify the action taken in 1924. He would not suggest to-day that it is proper to usurp the functions of the Arbitration Court! I do not wish to labour that point, but I am amazed that he should interject along such lines. I believe there is widespread regret that the action I mention was ever taken.

Mr. Kenneally: The hon. member does not understand the principle of arbitration at all. The Act makes provision for parties entering into agreement.

The Minister for Railways: You would not accept the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Kenneally: The Minister knows that there is the provision I mention.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! One member only can speak at a time, and the member for Swan has the floor.

Mr. SAMPSON: Everyone will agree that the provisions regarding the Arbitration Court are clearly set out in the Act. There should not be interference by the Government, and there is no justification for the hon. member to support something that was entirely wrong. Now I wish briefly to refer to the running of the trains to Armadale, which is symptomatic of the running of trains throughout the whole of the outer suburban areas. In my view the time has arrived when, in place of long trains of empties being hauled over the lines, there should be motor coaches operating on those lines, as obtains in Kyogle, New South Wales, and other parts of the Commonwealth and elsewhere. Motor railway coaches or steam railway coaches could be used, and a better time table provided at considerably reduced cost. I have made these remarks because I want to show that all has not been done by the department that could have been done.

I remember that when Mr. Angwin was Deputy Premier, in the early stages of the previous Government's regime, reference was made to the inauguration of electrification of railways for the outer suburban areas. I do not know that that is practicable, but I venture the opinion that motor coaches or steam coaches on the railway lines would save a good deal of money. In the face of many difficulties the motor buses have established a great service to the public, a service that is much appreciated and which, it is hoped, will not unduly be interfered with. If the proposed additional charges are imposed, the public, of course, will have to pay. There can be no doubt about that, for I believe that without exception the proprietors of the motor buses have now an extremely difficult task in paying their way. A reference to the Bankruptcy Court records will show that many concerns have crashed. So accordingly I say these proposed extra charges must be passed on to the public. Here is another example of the lack of consideration provided by the railways: Prior to the running of the motor buses in the hills districts—I speak of the hills districts because I am well conversant with them—efforts were made, particularly by Mr. Archibald Sanderson, of Kalamunda, to secure a better railway service to Kalamunda and other hills stopping places. But satisfaction could not be obtained. I remember that for a long time I assisted in an endeavour to secure the running of Sunday trains to the hills. Here again, until the motor buses were established, there was no real response on the part of the department. Sunday trains were not run at the time of which I am speaking, but some time later, perhaps two or three years ago, when there was little if any justification for Sunday trains, they ran out to Karra-gullen. They continued that running until about three months ago, when they were stopped. Up to date I have not heard one protest against the non-running of those Sunday trains. There was no use for them. When first the department was urged to run Sunday trains, the request was courteously treated, certainly, but was not then acted upon. So I say that to a large extent the railways have been responsible for the fact that the motor buses have secured the trade.

Mr. Marshall: Did the bus owners make their own roads?

Mr. SAMPSON: They are paying for the roads they use. And here is a remarkable

thing: To build a road between Perth and Armadale has taken a most unreasonable time. Even to-day the Perth-Armadale road, which was begun years ago, is still in course of construction. Several sections are "up" at a time. I cannot place the blame for this, but I say the buses that use that road have to put up with very great difficulties in traversing it.

Mr. Marshall: They have not much to complain of.

Mr. SAMPSON: They have a very great deal to complain of. Frequently the traffic is bogged in wet weather.

Mr. Munsie: It used to be many years ago, but I do not think there was any bogging last winter.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes, the traffic has had to take to the side of the road, with consequent bogging.

Mr. Withers: They are lucky to be allowed to run on the side of the road.

Mr. SAMPSON: Of course they are lucky to be allowed to live. As I have said, whenever a Government want assistance they sling the motor industry in one form or another. Already those who use motors are paying 7d. per gallon duty on motor spirit, and now we find the State Government proposing to inflict this new hardship. In my view the time has arrived when we should realise that we cannot hold up progress. Motors must be given reasonable opportunities.

The Minister for Railways: You are holding up progress now; let us get on with the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: There can be no progress if there is unfair treatment, and it would be unfair to tax motor owners to the extent suggested in the Bill. It is not my intention to vote against the second reading, but I intend when in Committee to give support to an amendment the object of which will be to bring about a reduction in the proposed license fees. Also I will ask the Minister to give consideration to this matter: That vehicles used solely for carrying agricultural, horticultural, dairy and other perishable products direct to the markets, shall be allowed to carry requisites on the return journey, thus providing back loading.

Mr. Marshall: You might just as well ask him to withdraw the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am pleased that my friend, the perpetual interjector, is not in the position of the Minister who, I venture to think, will approve of the suggested

amendment. I do not know that I will say any more about the railways at this juncture.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing about railways in the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: By severe implication if it were not for the railways. I venture respectfully to suggest, the Minister for Works would have looked with a more reasonable eye upon those who use the roads. It has been suggested, and I think it is very true, that if consideration were given to forcing into cultivation the unused land adjacent to our railways, the difficulties of the railways would disappear.

Mr. Munsie: What measures would you adopt for bringing those lands into cultivation?

Mr. SAMPSON: A closer settlement Bill. The position bristles with difficulties.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are discussing an amendment of the Traffic Act, which has nothing to do with land adjacent to railways. I ask the hon. member to address himself to the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: The position which the Minister faces is a complex one. We are anxious to help him, but in helping him we do not want to bring undue difficulty to those operating motor trucks, with which the Bill definitely deals. I will support the second reading, but in the Committee stage I hope that various amendments to be moved will be approved by the Minister.

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [5.11]: The previous speaker said—

Mr. Marshall: Nothing.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I agree with the interjector that nothing important to the Bill was said. But the previous speaker made certain references to the cause of the necessity for taking action regarding motor transport. It is only to the extent of rectifying the inaccurate statements made that I wish to deal with that aspect of the question.

Mr. Sampson: No inaccurate statements were made.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The member for Swan said the attitude of the tramway men and the railway men in causing stoppages of work was directly responsible for the development of the motor traffic.

Mr. Sampson: I said it was partly responsible.

Mr. KENNEALLY: And that as the result of the action taken by those departments, motor traffic was developed in order

to counteract any such action that might be taken in the future. What the member for Swan forgot to mention was that motor development has taken place throughout the whole of the world, and that it has taken place in those countries where there have been no strikes, on either the tramways or the railways. Therefore when he proceeds to tell the House that the cause of motor development in this country was certain action taken by tramway men and railway men, I say, with due respect to the intelligence of the House, that the hon. member is not going to be permitted intentionally or unintentionally to mislead them in that respect. He also mentioned that a portion of the trouble in which we find ourselves at present in endeavouring to compete with motor traffic has been brought about by the actions of a Government, which he hopes will not be supported in any way by any of the present members. He asked the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) not to support the action of the Government in 1924 in granting improved conditions to members of the railway and tramway services and to Government employees generally.

Mr. Sampson: I said he should not support usurpation of the Arbitration Court.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Arbitration Courts have repeatedly pointed out that arbitration legislation provides for minimum rates of pay and minimum conditions, and that not only is provision made for employers to grant wages and conditions in excess of the minimum, but that the courts expect employers not to treat the minimum as the maximum. Statements to that effect are on record. Therefore when the member for Swan claims that the Government, as employers, have encouraged motor competition by conceding conditions in excess of what the court has awarded, he overlooks that the court has signified to employers that it does not expect them to regard the minimum fixed by the court as the maximum. Yet he would take to task the Government who, as employers, did what the court said should be done. As the member for Swan remarked after having exhausted seven-eighths of his time, let us get back to the Bill. We have to consider the Bill in conjunction with the railways and tramways as carriers and the competition of motor traffic. The people of Western Australia have invested £23,615,489 in the railway system, which amount is carrying an annual interest charge of £950,797, an

amount which is constantly increasing. That investment includes rolling stock as well as the fairway and the repair of the fairway, but anyone conversant with tramway and railway operating knows that the construction and repair of the fairway constitute a heavy charge upon the system. In the tramways we have invested £1,094,157, carrying an annual interest charge of £51,552. Are we to be told that we should scrap those investments? Our attitude to the Bill will determine whether we are to scrap them or not. In that light we must judge the proposals contained in the Bill. If we hold that the time has come—as some people say it has come—when the railways and tramways should be a thing of the past, we must consider what we can develop in their stead.

Mr. Withers: Try it out during the week of the Royal Show.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If that is not to be done, then we must consider the concerns in which the people's money has been invested. We seem to have spent money on constructing first-class roads specifically to enable private carriers to compete with the existing public facilities. It is time we took steps to alter that policy. The proposal to increase the seating fees of passenger-carrying motors by £1 10s. per seat falls far short of what it should be, and that remark applies also to the increased fees proposed for vehicles employed in carrying other than passengers. In our legislation we should aim at endeavouring to make those who are using roads constructed out of public money to pay proportionately what other carrying systems belonging to the people have to find for the upkeep of their permanent way. If we judge the question on that basis, we shall have to call upon the owners of motors to pay considerably more than they will pay under this measure. I hope that while the Bill is before the House definite action will be taken in this direction. It is of no use making two or three bites at a cherry. Instances could be cited to demonstrate the unfair competition of motor vehicles with the railways. If the Commissioner of Railways or his officials permitted a truck to be loaded with furniture for Nannup or York or some other inland town and the family to whom the furniture belonged to be conveyed on top of it to their destination, objection would be raised to treating human beings in a way they should not be treated. But we do not

take similar exception when that is done by the driver of a motor vehicle. He is allowed also to put the cat and the dog with the family and the furniture, and transport the lot to the destination. It is time we considered whether the State carrying concern should be required to suffer competition of that kind. If the Commissioner of Railways attempted to do anything of the kind, he would be prevented, and rightly so, but a private individual may do it with impunity.

The Minister for Railways: The dog is the favoured passenger in most private cars.

Mr. KENNEALLY: On the railways a special cubicle is provided for the dog, but the people who would travel with furniture and dog on a motor vehicle in the higgledy-piggledy manner I have indicated, if asked to ride anywhere near a dog in a train, would be the first to object. The policy laid down by the Act should be altered considerably, and particularly as regards the relationship between the Traffic Act and the Main Roads Act. We should not persist in constructing roads that will offer a direct incentive to owners of private carrying concerns to compete with established Government concerns. It may be argued, and perhaps successfully, that people living beyond districts served by railways are entitled to carrying facilities. Attention should be given to such people when planning future development, and we should turn a deaf ear to applications for the construction of main arteries that will permit of direct competition with the railways as a carrying convenience. In this way we should accomplish two objects: we should provide facilities for the people who require them, and assist in retaining the facilities for those people who already have them. If an attempt were made to-morrow to close the railways, considerable opposition would be aroused, and the bulk of the opposition would come from Country Party members. Quite right, too, because the railways have made possible the development of the country, and our efforts should be directed to making them pay in order that they may continue the good work they have been and still are performing. Where road construction is necessary, it should be planned to prevent competition with existing railways or with railways that might be built in the future.

The Minister for Works: It is too late to consider that point of view now.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It may be too late to alter certain aspects of existing com-

petition, but we can insist upon eliminating unfair competition. If motor traffic were placed on a basis of fair competition with the railways, I should have no fear of the result. It is because of the unfairness of the competition that the railways are suffering. People tolerate from private carriers what they would not tolerate from a public concern such as the railways.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Do not you think the railway service could be improved to meet the competition? I think it could.

Mr. KENNEALLY: There are many ways in which the railways could be improved, and there are many ways in which the administration propose to improve them when the money is available.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: But without any extra money.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the hon. member has discovered a way by which the improvement can be made without money, there should be a vacant commissionership shortly, and he should be considered for the vacancy. I wish to take exception to certain portions of the proposed amendments, and in doing so I have a few words to say about the traffic fees under the existing Act in order to show how certain of the proposals would be unfair. Section 13 of the Act, paragraph (a), provides that all fees collected in the metropolitan area shall be paid into the Metropolitan Traffic Trust account. Paragraph (b) provides that the cost of collecting such fees shall be borne by the fees themselves. The amount charged by the Commissioner of Police for the collection, namely, 10 per cent., appears to me inordinately high.

The Minister for Railways: He does not charge anything.

Mr. KENNEALLY: He does. Apparently the Minister knows better than I do. Provision is made whereby this cost has to be met.

Mr. McCallum: He deducts 10 per cent.

The Minister for Railways: No.

Mr. KENNEALLY: It is no use the Minister shaking his head. If the Commissioner does not get it, the 10 per cent. must be floating around.

The Minister for Railways: It goes to the Treasury, of course.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister knows that is a broad-faced joke. Under the Act the Commissioner has the right to deduct the charge for collecting the fees, and this has been in the vicinity of 10 per cent. for

many years. I would point out that these fees are taken to the Commissioner of Police, that he does not have to chase them.

The Minister for Railways: You are trying to urge that this is due to the action of the Commissioner of Police. It is nothing of the kind. It was the ex-Minister for Works who introduced the Bill that provided for the 10 per cent. deduction for collection.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am glad the Minister is convinced of the error of his remarks. The 10 per cent. has been paid, and he says the Commissioner of Police has not been getting it. The charge is made against the total amount of fees received, and from the net amount certain other deductions are made. The charge for collection is very high. It is difficult to understand how the total of the expenses is arrived at. The section in question makes provision whereby out of the net amount of fees received certain expenditure shall be incurred by the Minister. This refers to money that it is necessary to pay out under Section 86 of the Public Works Act, 1902, for certain specified roads. These roads are in the metropolitan area. After that money has been paid, paragraph (c) of the section makes provision whereby the amount that may be left, if any, plus half of the net proceeds, shall be paid as provided for in the section, and divided amongst the local governing bodies in the metropolitan area. I have found it necessary to refer to this section as I propose to deal with the amendments contained in the Bill. In the measure before us, instead of the money referred to in paragraph (b) being employed in repairing the specified roads, it provides that it shall be employed in repairing and improving the specified roads. This will mean a considerable loss to the local governing bodies in the metropolitan area compared with the amount they now receive.

The Minister for Works: Only 50 per cent. may be dealt with in that way.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the total amount that is now being spent is 25 per cent., it will mean that another 25 per cent. can be taken for improvements.

The Minister for Works: Up to 50 per cent.

Mr. KENNEALLY: This means to the extent that the improvements would eat up the balance of the 50 per cent., the local governing bodies would receive that much

less money. The word "improvement" is not defined in the Act, but I imagine it would be all-embracing. If it were decided to regrade a road, that could be deemed to be an improvement. The word could almost be taken to mean that if it were desired to widen a road and to resume land for the purpose, that, too, would be an improvement. If we agreed to such an amendment, in future very little if any surplus from the first 50 per cent. would go back to the local governing body.

The Minister for Works: Probably that is so.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Then we may take it for granted that the local governing bodies in the metropolitan area will, in future, have to depend entirely upon the 50 per cent. net that is provided for in the first place. That would be distinctly unfair to them. The Minister was a member of the select committee which, during the tenure of office of the previous Government, dealt with certain aspects of traffic. It was in connection with the Main Roads Act Amendment Bill rather than a traffic measure, but covered much the same ground. A considerable amount of argument ensued as to what would be a fair thing between the country and the metropolitan districts.

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Ultimately, in order that we might have a unanimous report, we agreed upon what we considered was a reasonable thing. Our proposals were embodied in a report which was submitted to the House on the 10th September, 1929. In that report we made provision for dividing the local governing bodies outside the metropolitan area into three distinct classes, namely, the local authority having a main road running through it, the local authority contiguous to a main road, and the local authority that was considered to be far removed from a main road. The report was included in the amending Bill. We agreed to treat the metropolitan area as belonging to Class "A," and decided it should pay 22½ per cent., the same as the local authority outside the metropolitan area in that class would be called upon to pay.

Mr. McCallum: Even though it had not a main road in it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That is so. We decided that the local authority outside the metropolitan area, contiguous to a district that contained a main road, should be in Class "B" and pay 15 per cent. of the

traffic fees, with the right to have that 15 per cent. reduced by the Minister to 12½ per cent. We also decided that the local authorities in Class "C" should pay 10 per cent. The report was framed as a result of a fairly long deliberation at the hands of the members of the select committee. It was embodied in the Bill and became law, and was looked upon as a fair agreement between the contending parties. In the Bill now before us it is proposed to get away from that. It is desired to collect additional fees, and it is proposed that they shall be paid into a fund controlled by the Minister. The Bill goes even further and says that the Minister may only spend these additional fees in a certain way. One clause limits the Minister to expending the fees on roads outside the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Works: That is correct.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Under existing conditions the metropolitan area pays 22½ per cent. for the upkeep of roads outside its boundaries. I am not complaining about that. The select committee adopted that provision as a solution of a difficulty. It was also adopted by this House. It is now proposed to get in additional moneys, the main portion being collected from vehicles utilising roads within the metropolitan area. This means that the additional money that comes in must be spent outside the metropolitan area whose roads are being used to produce most of the money.

The Minister for Works: That is not in the Bill.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If the Bill is agreed to as drafted, that will be the effect of it.

The Minister for Works: No, it will not.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am looking for enlightenment on that matter. If that is not the intention of the Minister, I hope he will not be averse to accepting amendments that will render more explicit the ideas he has advanced in connection with the Bill. Incidentally, I would point out that the King's Park Board is included amongst the local authorities for the receipt of money.

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I believe it is not usual to refer on the second reading to any particular clause of a Bill. I would, however, draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that provision is made whereby the increased amount he proposes to obtain from the public will be applied to roads

proclaimed in the first part of the Fifth Schedule. I would also point out that the roads proclaimed in the first part of the Fifth Schedule are all situated outside the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I shall be glad if the Minister will give attention to that matter, and in the course of his reply deal more extensively with it. We have to be not unmindful of the fact that the vehicles which will go over those roads will also use the city roads, and we have to take into consideration the fact that under the Bill it will be possible for the Minister to proclaim certain other roads, and if he does proclaim those roads in a certain direction, it will mean that four times the amount of the fees will be collected from certain quarters. The question then arises whether the House should agree, when that collection does take place, that the money should be spent outside the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Works: I will accept an amendment to cut out "proclamation" and substitute "regulation" so that the House will be in a position to deal with it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That would improve the position, but even then if the House were out of session, any regulation that might be framed might be operative for six months before we would have the opportunity to deal with it. So that would be a weakness. I hope the Minister will see to it that the imposts on the metropolitan local governing bodies will not be increased in the direction he intends at the present time, and furthermore if additional revenue is considered to be necessary, and additional fees are to be levied from those using the roads by virtue of the fact that they have to use the roads, that the people responsible for the roads will be given greater consideration than is evident will be the case. There are one or two other features I wish to deal with. The Minister proposes that if a person is considered to have been guilty of travelling at an excessive speed, there will be no option for those judging the case but to fine the individual, if he should be found guilty, a minimum of £50. I do not think that is a fair provision. The Minister provides by the Bill that a man travelling at an excessive speed shall be in the same category as the man who is drunk whilst in charge of a motor vehicle. When we come to consider the question of judg-

ing whether a man has been guilty of travelling at a speed considered to be dangerous to the public, or at an excessive speed, those who have had some connection with that class of charge know well that various circumstances enter into the matter and that those circumstances will make it dangerous to declare in a statute that there shall be no alternative to a minimum fine of £50. Under another clause of the Bill it is provided that there shall be three months imprisonment awarded for this offence.

Mr. Angelo: In some countries it is considered better to do away with the speed limit.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The existing legislation provides for a fine of £20 and on a subsequent conviction for a fine of £50. I am of the opinion that a fine of £20 is a sufficient deterrent in a matter of this kind, and therefore I am not favourable to unduly penalising people who perhaps have not been travelling at exactly the speed set out as being excessive, and which in the present Act is described as driving recklessly or negligently, or at a speed dangerous to the public, having regard to all the circumstances, including the nature and condition of the road and the amount of the traffic on the road at the time, or traffic which may reasonably be expected to be on the road. All these things have to be considered, and if a fine of £50 is imposed for what may be regarded as a mistake, that surely cannot be described as correct legislation. I hope the Minister will not go on with that particular clause, and if he does, I trust the House will see to it that it is altered. In the case of an individual in charge of a motor vehicle whilst under the influence of liquor and thereby endangering not only his own, but the lives of others, it is necessary to be severe. But in respect of excessive speed, the penalty already provided for the first offence is a sufficient deterrent.

Mr. H. W. Mann: It does not require excessive speed to create a danger to the public.

Mr. KENNEALLY: There is what is known as a given speed in a given place, where one need not necessarily be driving to the danger of the public. I repeat that if there is a £20 penalty attached to a first offence, I do not think the people will regard too lightly the breaking of a

traffic law that involves such a fine. But the main point I wish to make in connection with the Bill is that in its present form it certainly does not do justice to the local governing bodies within the metropolitan area. I support the general principle of seeing that fair competition exists between motor traffic and the established carrying utilities of the public, namely, the railways and tramways. At the same time, when this question is receiving attention, and additional fees and charges are necessary, in order to give effect to the wishes of the Government, we should be in a position to say that in the imposition of these additional charges, and in the spending of the money derived therefrom, the correct thing will be done to the metropolitan local governing bodies. By that I mean that the correct thing should be on the basis of the investigation by the select committee which dealt with the Main Roads Act and which presented a report to this House last session. I hope the Bill will pass the second reading so that in Committee we may be able to alter the provisions with which we do not agree, and that in its final form we shall have a measure which will be uniform and fair as between the private carrying companies and the public carrying companies which are the people's possession.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS
(Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [5.55]: I desire to say very little on the Bill. Apparently there is an impression abroad, and it has been voiced in this Chamber, that the Bill has been introduced for no other purpose than to kill competition with our railways and tramways. That statement is quite incorrect. After all, the railways, and the tramways too, ought to be called upon to exist in fair competition with any other form of transport, and if they cannot do that, they should not exist at all. I do not propose to try to convince hon. members and the public that there is no room for improvement in our railways and tramways. At the same time, I think that on the basis of the capital expended, our railway and tramway systems compare favourably with those in any other part of the world. I do not deny that there was a time when it was possible that our railways were rather slack and that we may have grown into the habit of thinking that we could continue in that way without having regard to the best interests of the

public. However, we are now well awake to the fact that in the first instance whilst we must conserve the best interests of the taxpayers, we must also consider the people who are our customers. I do not suggest that there has been undue slackness because I believe that our railway staff is as good as any other in Australia, from the Commissioner to the porters. I do not think anyone could declare otherwise. As a matter of fact, it is just as well to admit that every other railway system in other parts of the world have had to face exactly the same difficulties as those with which we are confronted, and in a measure, the other States are suffering even more severely than we are. But we must not lose sight of the point that rightly or wrongly something like 26 millions of borrowed money is invested in our railway and tramway systems and we are called upon to find not only the interest on that capital outlay but to maintain the system in such a way that it shall earn interest. Otherwise, there is no benefit to the community. Let me express it in another way. Some hon. members will know that in recent years we have withdrawn quite a number of men from our mines because they were a menace to other men employed there. We provide that those men shall be paid till such time as there is found for them suitable employment at the basic wage. Is it not desirable that we should say to the Government departments, "If you can find work that is suitable for these men, engage them, because it is better that you should get 50 per cent. of their efficiency rather than none at all, because by that means we shall be saving 50 per cent. of the cost." We can compare the railways with that position. Are we prepared to take the view that because we have a more modern system of transport we must pay no regard to the fact that the losses of the railway must be borne by the community, and thus give the other competitors undue consideration? Are we to scrap the capital expenditure of 26 millions and ask the taxpayers to find it in other directions without any service? If we scrapped the railways and tramways to-morrow, we should still have to find the interest, and we should have to tax the community without running any service to provide it. In these circumstances it is infinitely better that we should try to set our house in order, try to ascertain what is lacking in our railway and tramway systems, to discover where

competition is unfair, remove that unfair competition, and so serve the community better. Some of our friends talk about the carriage of wool. I admit candidly that we have imposed a high rate on wool because it was able to carry the burden.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Shipping rates are on the same basis.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Quite so. All railway systems and all shipping lines have various rates which are based largely on the capacity of the customer to pay. The railways increased the freight on wool because at the time the wool grower was able to pay a higher rate than the producer of some other commodity. But, side by side with that, the railways continued to carry fertiliser at a rate that was unpayable. We were urging increased production: and in order that increased production might be obtained, which meant that a greater quantity of fertiliser must be used, we carried that commodity at a rate which would cost the community something. I ask the people who are producing wool and also producing wheat whether it is a fair proposition to call upon the general taxpayer to enable them to get their fertiliser carried at less than the actual cost of carriage, thus allowing them to use the railway system at his expense, and at the same time permit them to use another transport system for the carriage of their wool because that other system's rate for wool is lower than that charged by the railways. Those producers would not demand of the motor carrier that he should carry their fertiliser. The man who gets the advantage of a low freight on fertiliser should give all his custom to the system which affords him that advantage. Since people talk about killing competition, let me compare what is proposed in this Bill with what is done in Victoria and other Australian States. There it is demanded that if fertiliser and other commodities used by the man on the land are carried by the railways at lower rates, he shall give to the railways 100 per cent. of the goods he requires moved from place to place. If he will not do that—

Mr. Doney: If you will give a fair rate on wool, we will be quite satisfied.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The question of what is a fair rate on wool or any other commodity does not arise upon this Bill. A settler at Lake Grace, when I visited that centre recently, told me that only the previous week he had been requested to

give some of his transport work to certain truck owners. They particularly asked him for his wool. He said, "Very well; what are you prepared to cart it for?" They quoted a rate, and he said, "That is very satisfactory compared with what I have to pay the railways. Later in the year I shall have to obtain some fertiliser, and if you will carry my fertiliser from the works to my farm at the same rate as the railways charge me, you can have both my wool and my fertiliser. Go home and think it out." The truck owner did so, and came back and said to the farmer, "I could not possibly do it." That is the actual position. It is not fair to take merely one particular class of freight and lose sight of the others. I say now definitely and distinctly that if all the freights on the railway system applying to any individual, and particularly the wheat grower, were fixed on the basis of charging on all lines so as to compare with road rates, the motors could not compete with the railway system.

Mr. Doney: Will you not admit that you could reduce the wool rate by 25 per cent. and still make a profit comparable with the loss on super?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No; nothing like it. The quantity of fertiliser to be hauled is so large compared with the quantity of wool, that a reduction of 25 per cent. in the wool rate is quite impracticable.

Mr. Doney: Is not fertiliser back-loading?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: On the other hand it might be said that wheat is back-loading for fertiliser. We finish the fertiliser before we take the wheat, and so the wheat is back-loading. Motor carriers will not take the wheat, either. They will, though, cart beer over our roads, and cart petrol over our roads. Our railways are operated by Britishers. The main means of locomotion on our railways is our native coal, the getting of which employs Britishers. Every motor carrying products over the roads is imported in the first instance from some other part of the world, and the means of producing every ounce of power for the motor is imported into Western Australia.

Mr. Doney: Nobody disputes that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Is it not worth while to extend some little additional consideration to the local commodity? There is much airy talk about local

products such as butter and cheese. In this respect I can never separate the question of local butter and cheese from the question of local coal or any other local commodity. It is to the advantage of the people of Western Australia that every pint of petrol that can be cut out shall be cut out, and that every additional pound of coal that can be used on our railways shall be used. Such a policy is to the benefit of everybody in the State, including the man who produces wheat and wool. It is necessary to take a broader view. In introducing the Bill the Minister had no intention whatever of killing competition that is fair. Let me take the question of rates. Many years ago the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) interjected across this Chamber, relatively to the question of providing a satisfactory railway system in the metropolitan area, that the railways should be able to compete with road transport. I replied, "Yes, they can, but only in one way, and that way is that the people who use our roads in competition with our railways shall be placed exactly on all-fours with our railway system." The railway system has to carry the total capital cost, and the cost of maintaining the lines, and must provide interest on the capital invested. If similar charges were imposed on the users of our roads, then we could say definitely that we were going to kill motor transport. Motor transport could not live under those conditions. For years past the general taxpayer has been diving into his pocket to make and maintain roads for the use of motor vehicles. Everyone does not own a motor vehicle, and the motor owner does not pay anything like the amount he ought to pay for the use of the highways that the State provides for him. All the Bill asks is that henceforth he shall do it. I want to tell our friends from the country districts that 95 per cent. of the wheat growers, and of the wool growers as well, realise to-day that the State suffers from unfair competition on the roads. The Railway Department have held public meetings in some agricultural districts and put the position plainly to producers who had diverted their traffic to some extent from the railway system. As a result—the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) can confirm this—all the wool producers in one district, who could easily have carted on the roads, immediately reverted to the railway system, because they realised that the road competition was un-

fair and that they were injuring themselves by the methods they were adopting.

Mr. Doney: Do you say the wool growers can really stand those rates?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: On this measure I am not going to discuss what may be a fair rate for wool, or wheat, or any other commodity. If the freight on any commodity is not considered equitable, that is a matter for discussion in the proper place; but this Bill is not the place. Now let me come to the question of passenger traffic. The most expeditious method of moving from point to point in this year of our Lord is by motor transport. We cannot hold up motor transport. It is not possible to suggest that everybody should be compelled to use either the railways or the tramways. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that while our population increased enormously between 1925 and 1929, by about 44,000 if my memory serves me, and while a large percentage of that increase is in the metropolitan area, the railway passenger traffic in the metropolitan area has decreased by over 2,000,000 passengers per annum. Everyone knows the reason. It is that the roads have been used in preference to the railway system, used because to some extent road transport is more convenient. A striking feature is that where the motor buses, taxis and ordinary carrying trucks have no competition from either the railways or the tramways, their passenger fares are much higher than on routes where such competition exists.

Member: Not in every case.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No; but in most cases. I could give examples, but I do not wish to do so. In the metropolitan area there are certain routes on which motor vehicles are permitted to pick up passengers. It is definitely and distinctly understood that they shall not pick up passengers at certain points along those routes, because then they would be competing unfairly with other means of transport in which the public money is invested. The Government have to police the routes continually, and even to prosecute, in order to prevent motor transport from picking up passengers at those points; and still the taxis and charabanes go on doing it. We are heartily sick of policing the routes established for the purpose of enabling Perth people to obtain the benefit of motor transport. I have seen the spectacle of deputa-

tions from various districts asking for better communication facilities in the shape of more frequent tramway services. When I have inquired whether a better service is needed in view of the figures representing the number of passengers carried, I have often been compelled to tell the deputation, "As a matter of what is actually practicable, we ought to close down the line, because it is not giving a fair return for the cost of the service." If such a district were giving the proper passenger traffic to the tramway system, the position would be different. I have told such a deputation, "If you will support me in ensuring that all passengers within the influence of the tramway system shall be compelled to use that tramway system, I may be able to consider your request." We all know that every one of our metropolitan suburbs that have made anything like definite progress of recent years has done it thanks to the advent of a tramway system. I ask any metropolitan member whether it is not a fact that until the tramways extend to a district, it makes little or no progress. Where is there a suburb which has actually been developed by means of buses? I know of none. But I do know of many districts that have been developed by means of tramways. If suburban residents ask us to provide them with transport facilities at the expense of the general body of taxpayers, many of whom are not concerned and cannot be concerned in tramway operations, then we are entitled to say to those people, "You shall use that which you demand and we provide for you." This Bill will help the Government materially. I do not know that in the measure we go as far as it will be necessary in a few years to go, but at least the Bill serves to focus public attention on the fairness of giving consideration to the people as a whole instead of conferring benefits on those who happen to have both railway and motor services.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [7.30]: Before the Minister replies to the debate, I wish to add a few words regarding the criticism of the measure. I shall support the second reading of the Bill. While I appreciate, in view of the discussion that has taken place, that there are some anomalies con-

tained in the clauses, the Bill as a whole will receive my support. If there is one particular member in this House who should be able to discuss this matter with authority, it is the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) who introduced the parent Act, dealt with its subsequent amendment, and administered the legislation for some years. His contribution to the debate was admirable, but as far as I could discern had one outstanding fault. He was slightly inconsistent in his utterance.

Mr. Sampson: Beware when the Greeks bring gifts!

Mr. MARSHALL: While he elucidated many apparent anomalies, there was one point upon which I could not follow him. I mention the matter so that when we deal with the Bill in Committee, he may be able to give us some idea of what he meant. He argued that the principle underlying the Bill was confiscation. He indicated that people engaged in the motor transport trade had spent their money and much of their time in promoting the business to its present state of efficiency. Before the echoes of his statement had died down, we had him indicating that his objection was that 40 or 50 girls now employed on the buses would be dismissed, and the money so saved would go towards paying for the extra impost under the Bill.

Mr. McCallum: But the increased tax on licenses will not apply to the buses on which the girls are working.

Mr. MARSHALL: I could not reconcile the hon. member's statements, to which I have drawn attention.

Mr. McCallum: The increased license fee amounting to four times the present impost will affect the country areas, but the 30s. increase in the seating tax will apply in the metropolitan area where those girls are employed.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member did not make his reference clear on that point. I do not know whether the Bill will mean confiscation or otherwise, and I do not know whether those hon. members who contend that it does involve confiscation are right in their attitude. To my mind there are two points only with which we need be concerned. The first point relates to the extent that those interested in this branch of private enterprise compete against the railways and tramways of the State, in which the taxpayers have invested £26,000,000 so far, in respect

of which, huge sums of interest have to be paid annually. The other point involves the question whether the motor buses, charabancs, and so forth are at present paying a sufficiently heavy tax commensurate with the destruction the vehicles do to the roads. The construction of those roads has been a costly matter for the taxpayers. As to the confiscation phase, private enterprise and vested interests must take their chance with the rest of us in the State. To date the Government have put off about 280 employees, mostly elderly men. They have, in many instances, lost that employment after having been engaged in the service throughout their lifetime. They were dismissed; their occupations are gone! If it is suggested we are to compensate those engaged in the motor transport trade who may lose their livelihoods as the result of the application of the provisions of the Bill, are not those people who have lost their positions in the Government service equally entitled to compensation? The people in the motor trade embarked upon a speculative business; it is their bad luck if their businesses fail. Hon. members must see to it that they do justice to the taxpayers generally. If they desire a striking example of how these particular people engaged in the motor traffic deal with the roads that were constructed at such cost, they need only go to the Ascot-road on the southern side of the river. These are the people who, in common with private individuals—the Minister for Railways himself was one of them—displayed on the windcreens of their motors, a boldly printed dodger—"We want good roads."

Mr. Withers: And now they won't pay for them.

Mr. MARSHALL: Nor will they, unless members are prepared to support the Bill. It cost the people of Western Australia hundreds of thousands of pounds to provide those motorists with the good roads they desired. Let hon. members view the roads for themselves and see what considerate treatment many of the motoring community give these costly roads.

Mr. MacCallum SMITH: You want the grass to grow on them.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member would then know where to go for a feed! The point overlooked by many members is that in order to supply good roads for the benefit of motor transport, the taxpayers

generally are called upon to pay three different classes of taxation. There is the dual tax, State and Federal; there are the rates levied to maintain the roads; then there is the third heading under which they are called upon to pay increasingly to make up the deficiency on the revenue of our railways and tramways. Again there is that insignificant impost known as the wheel tax which is levied in order to compensate taxpayers a little on account of the money spent in the provision of good roads. Few members, apparently, have taken cognisance of the fact that all the necessities involved in motor transport almost invariably mean so much more into the pockets of the American combine. Western Australia has spent hundreds of thousands of pounds annually in the purchase of motor cars, charabancs, petrol, oils and everything necessary to maintain that particular form of transport. As against that, it may reasonably be urged that practically all the rolling stock in connection with our railways and tramways is manufactured within the State, and the money spent on that work is retained locally.

The Minister for Railways: The motive power is local, too.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. On one hand everything is local; on the other hand, everything is American. Yet hon. members argue that we should take into consideration unfair competition, and should ignore the great loss the State has suffered in the past through the boosting of the American lines. I wish the Minister every success with his Bill. I hope the second reading will be agreed to. While I cannot promise him that I will support every clause in the Bill, I wish to compliment him upon introducing a measure that seeks to make people using motors on the road pay a tax more in proportion to the damage done to the roads, and more in keeping with the heavy burden imposed upon the taxpayers generally. I ask the Country Party members, particularly the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths), to give consideration to the Bill. If the argument advanced by the member for South Fremantle is correct and the passing of the Bill will mean that the trucks will disappear from the roads, then the member for Avon will have a better chance of securing those facilities he has so urgently desired in the interests of the people in the Yarramony district and the

country further east. He has been appealing for a railway in season and out of season, and with the disappearance of the motor trucks his prospects may be brighter. It is singular that whenever the farmers' alleged representatives in this House urge the provision of transport facilities outback, it is to Parliament that they come with their request. Seeing that those facilities are required, why does not private enterprise step in and invest money in providing transport facilities.

Mr. Withers: The freight offering would not be attractive.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course not! Can any hon. member give an instance where, in such circumstances, private enterprise has displayed so much initiative as to provide facilities in the outback areas? Not a bit of it. Invariably private enterprise waits till the State has provided railway facilities, thus enabling the district to be developed. Then when the community is in a more settled state, private enterprise steps in and says, "You get out a road, while we get the profits." The time has arrived when we must prevent that sort of thing. I am sorry the motor transport trade was ever allowed to develop to its present status. The member for South Fremantle can correct me if I am wrong, but I believe the trouble originated when the Federal Government imposed restrictions and set conditions on road making activities in this State. The then Minister had no alternative but to agree to the restrictions and conditions in order that roads might be constructed, thus advantaging motoring interests. Now we must do the best we can to steady up those interests. The Bill will have that effect to a considerable degree. At the same time, I would not like the provisions of the Bill to apply to roads or areas where motor transport provides necessary facilities that are not in competition with railways or tramways. One road is mentioned already and there is another, too, that comes under that heading. The member for South Fremantle has already indicated how one of the roads may be penalised in an unfair way. There is one road that is not served by either a railway or a tramway. I refer to Ascot-road as far as Guildford. It would be unfair to interfere with the motor transport on that road. But as for the main principles of the

Bill and the object which the Minister has, I will give them my support, reserving the right, however, to use my own discretion in Committee.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: To increase the fees?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, I will endeavour to increase them, with the Minister's sanction, of course. I certainly reserve the right to take up in Committee any attitude I think fit. In the meantime I hope members will assist the Minister with his Bill, and I commend the Government for the courage they have shown in tackling the problem now, before it becomes any worse.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [7.47]: In the main I agree with the principle of the Bill, and with most of its contents also. I support the contention of the member for Murchison, who remarked that there are districts served by buses that are not in competition with the trains and trams, and therefore should not be penalised so much as those vehicles that are competing with our State services. I am sorry there is nothing in the Bill relating to the licensing of motor drivers in general. It is well known that quite a number of people without insurances are driving motor vehicles. I believe it is costing the hospitals a considerable amount of money to treat the accidents that occur day after day through the drivers of motor vehicles not being insured. I hold that no man or woman should be given a license without having first obtained a comprehensive insurance policy. Day after day we have the spectacle of uninsured drivers knocking down other people in the street; and it must be remembered that in most instances the relatives of those knocked down have no chance of securing recompense. Then it often happens that the victims of these accidents, on being taken to the hospital for treatment, have not the wherewithal to pay for that treatment, and so the hospitals have to bear the expense. If it is not too late, I suggest to the Minister that there should be inserted in the Bill a provision that no license be issued to a driver who has not satisfactorily proved that he has taken out a comprehensive insurance policy.

The Minister for Works: We have not finalised the Bill yet. That sort of thing may come later on.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope it will. As some members have pointed out, there are one or two little anomalies in the Bill, but they can be amended in Committee.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. LINDSAY—Mt. Marshall—in reply) [7.50]: I am very pleased with the reception accorded to the Bill.

Mr. Marshall: Most of the opposition has emanated from your own side.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: That will be all right when it comes to the point. I have not been given very much to which to reply. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) characterised the Bill as a scheme of taxation. It is nothing of the sort. The Treasury does not receive any of this money, which will be devoted to maintaining the roads. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) declared that I or the Government have limited the number of taxis on a given route, and went on to say that the Attorney General had opposed that on an earlier occasion, whereas the Government of which he is a member had now agreed to it. I am not aware that I actually did do so. I confess that I, as Minister in charge of transport, wrote to the Minister for Police on the 30th June as follows:—

Further to my memo. of the 27th inst. regarding the licensing of buses, I should be glad if you would make it clear to the Commissioner of Police that for the next year he is to refuse to issue licenses for any buses other than those which held licenses on the 30th June. If any new licenses are applied for, they are to be referred to this department.

The reason I did that was because I was trying to get this Bill ready for presentation to the House, and meeting a deputation from the owners of taxis and buses, I told them I intended to increase the fees, and that therefore I thought it was only right that I should refuse to issue any new licenses; that old licenses would be renewed but that no new licenses would be issued without reference to my department and on the advice of the transport committee. But after I had despatched that letter I had a consultation with the transport committee, consisting of the Attorney General and the Minister for Railways, and they did not agree to my proposal. So, parenthetically, it will be seen that the Attorney General has not changed his views after all. Still, the

result was that I had to write a further letter explaining that no new action would be taken.

Mr. McCallum: Is it not a fact that the police are refusing to issue new licenses?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: No, it is not. Actually, one was refused, but it has since been issued. As I say, I think that no further licenses should be issued unless approved by the transport committee. I believe that already there are too many taxis and buses, and consequently it is not in the interests of the existing drivers that further licenses should be issued. Moreover, I think that in some instances, at all events, the public do not require any additions. The member for South Fremantle said this—

We appointed a committee consisting of departmental officers who had made a study of the question, to investigate the problem throughout the world, and make a report to us and advise us. The House should be in possession of that report. The committee have been at work a good many months. I admit they were set a big task, and it will probably take a considerable time to collect the necessary information.

Here is the report. I will agree that this committee was appointed. Dated the 20th March, there is a letter on the file detailing the personnel of the committee and proposing a preliminary meeting to discuss generally the position. Then we get on the file this note—

The above meeting was duly held, the notes thereof being on folios 45 and 46 of M.R.B. 1520/29. It was decided: "That the meeting adjourn till after the elections, and that the Hon. Minister be asked to attend the next meeting to express his views."

That file did not come before me for some time, and on the 3rd June I asked my secretary to notify the committee that their appointment had been cancelled, the reason being that the present Government had appointed a Ministerial committee to deal with transport matters generally. That advisory committee consists of the Attorney General, the Minister for Railways and myself. This Bill, of course, is the result of deliberations of that transport committee. We appointed an officer of the Railway Department, Mr. Hickey, to get all the information required and put it up to the transport committee. The result is that the Bill is here. As the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) mentioned, the member for South

Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) declared that this was a tax of four times the existing fee—actually it is about three and a half times—and that it meant prohibition. Then, to show his consistency, he went on and criticised me for the deviation on the Greenmount-road, by which he said I was adding to the competition from which the railways were suffering. But if this increased fee is to mean prohibition, then I fail to see how the deviation on the Greenmount-road will add to the competition. The hon. member also mentioned that the money for the maintenance of roads comes from the Metropolitan Traffic Trust Fund, into which over £100,000 is paid annually, and that the Minister had the right to draw up to half the amount in the pool. The position is that we have the metropolitan traffic pool, and the whole of the fees from the metropolitan area are paid into it. First of all there is 10 per cent. taken off for the cost of controlling the traffic.

Mr. McCallum: The Act does not allow that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, the cost of collection. Then there is taken 22½ per cent. for the maintenance of main roads, and of the balance 50 per cent. is taken to be used on prescribed roads, as shown on that map on the wall. The remainder is distributed to the local authorities on a well-defined plan, which is not mine, but which I think is a just one. There must be a little doubt in the minds of some hon. members, even in the mind of the member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally), as to where the prescribed roads start. The roads prescribed in the Act are as shown on that map. It is shown clearly that every such road starts from outside the boundaries of the metropolitan area.

Mr. Kenneally: The Minister is to have power to prescribe a road.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, we are going to amend that provision. The House must understand that in dealing with this question we have been rather hurried in the attempt to get the Bill ready, and we may find in future that it is necessary to prescribe another road. If hon. members like to amend that clause when in Committee by cutting out the word "prescribed" and inserting, say, "by regulation," I will have no objection to such amendment.

Mr. Kenneally: I think we can claim the Attorney General's support in opposition to that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very well. The member for South Fremantle also said this—

From the marking on the plan I gather that roads running north start from the centre of the town of Midland Junction, and that roads going to Albany and Bunbury start from the Old Narrogin Inn at Armadale.

The Albany and Bunbury roads do start from the Old Narrogin Inn, but as to the main roads going north, we have never spent any money in the municipality of Midland Junction, or in the area between there and Perth. I have made inquiries and I find the hon. member's statement in that regard was not correct. The hon. member went on to say—

On the other hand the description given in the Bill itself may mean anything or nothing. In all my dealings with the Commonwealth Government the Perth-Bunbury-road, the Bunbury-Bridgetown-road, the Perth-Albany-road, the Perth-Cranbrook-road, the Perth-Merredin-road, the Perth-Wiluna-road, and the Perth-Geraldton-road were each of them described as starting from the boundary of the city of Perth just beyond the Causeway.

That also is not quite correct. I have here a list of the Federal aid roads. The Armadale-Pemberton-road starts at the south-east corner of the Armadale townsite. The Midland Junction-Meekatharra-road starts at the northern boundary of Midland Junction. The Perth-Albany-road starts from the south-east boundary of the city of Perth. The Perth-Merredin-road starts from the north-east corner of the Midland Junction townsite. I want members to understand that although money has been spent from those particular points, there has been no money for maintenance from those points. Payment is made from the Metropolitan Trust Account. It takes in the road to the Old Narrogin Inn at Armadale, and this Bill does not apply to that portion of the road between Armadale and Perth. The member for South Fremantle remarked that Commonwealth money had been spent on roads starting from the city boundary, just from the other side of the Victoria Park tramway track. I then interjected "Not on the Guildford-road," and the hon. member retorted "Yes." My comment on that was that Commonwealth money was not likely to be spent on them in future. Actually, Commonwealth money has never been spent

there, nor has it been spent on the Guildford-road between Perth and Guildford. Money from the Federal aid fund start outside the Midland Junction boundary, both as to the Perth-Northam-road and as to the Midland Junction-Meekatharra-road. The hon. member mentioned that a clearer description was required before the House could agree to the Bill. The Bill states "as shown and more particularly described on the Main Roads Board plan 1030." I did not include the plan in the Bill, because it would have meant much extra cost for printing, and the information is always available to members, and it certainly has been available for some years past to the member for South Fremantle.

Mr. McCallum: That plan is not here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But everyone knew about it, and it must have been known to the hon. member who was in charge of the department for so long. The hon. member said, referring to trucks with solid tyres—

That charge is doubled, being raised from 20 per cent. to 40 per cent. At present trucks with solid tyres are limited to a speed of eight miles per hour.

That speed limit is not quite correct; it is 12 miles per hour. A truck with solid tyres at present pays the ordinary fee and an additional 20 per cent. The Bill stipulates an additional 40 per cent., but that does not double the charge. The reason for the increase is well grounded. I have before me a copy of a report on uniform weight and speed regulations, which no doubt the member for South Fremantle has seen, because it was dealt with at the conference of Ministers held in Canberra and was unanimously approved by them. From it I quote the following:—

The question of the relative effect on the road of vehicles with pneumatic and those with solid rubber tyres has engaged the serious consideration of engineers attending the several conferences held in connection with the Federal Aid Roads Scheme. At the request of the conference, a report was prepared by the Commissioner of Main Roads in Queensland and exhaustively considered by conference held in Canberra last year.

In regard to the question under review, the following is extracted from the report of conclusions adopted by conference:—“(1) The impact of wheels shod with pneumatic tyres is negligible. (2) With this class of tyres (pneumatic) the increase of load caused by impact at a speed of 16 miles per hour is shown (by the graph) as only about one per cent., and

impact need not be considered with pneumatic tyres. At eight miles per hour the load due to impact and using solid rubber tyres would be increased by the ratio of one to 2.2. (3) At 0 miles per hour the load on the road is the static load, that is the actual weight of the ordinary truck wheel. (4) At 10 miles per hour the maximum load on the road under assumed conditions is 2.5 times the static load, and so on. (5) It will be seen that as soon as a truck begins to move the load begins to increase, and the maximum load at 24 miles per hour will average 4.6 times the static load.”

Thus it will be seen that if the load on the road bed is to be kept within the limit of the carrying capacity of the soil, then the faster the truck runs, the less must be the load carried or the greater must be the strength or thickness of the road.

The fact, however, remains that with solid rubber tyres, even at eight miles per hour, the load on the road is 2.2 times what it would be with pneumatic tyres. It is the effect of impact that the engineers have mainly to combat in drawing up regulations

In other words, the recommendation was to increase the amount by 100 per cent., and I have not done that under this Bill. The member for South Fremantle also said—

The Minister has stated, and has repeated, that the money obtained from the operations of the Bill will be paid into the main roads fund, and that not one penny of it will be spent in the metropolitan area, the whole of the funds being reserved for expenditure in the country districts.

I made no such statement. The member for East Perth has raised a question on that point. It is clearly set out under part 1 of the Act, which deals with the question of prescribed routes, that the fee shall be 7s. 6d. per P.L.W. and that the money shall be paid into the Main Roads Trust Account. The 20 per cent. increase will not be paid into the Metropolitan Trust Account. I have not altered that part of the original Act, or the part which provides that outside of the metropolitan area the local governing bodies shall collect the fee. They will still collect the original fee. The only provision made by the Bill under Part 1 is that when any vehicle uses a prescribed road it shall pay 7s. 6d. extra and that money will be paid into the fund. I hope I have made the position clear. If members still are dissatisfied, I shall be prepared to accept an amendment, but I assure members it was never intended to do what has been suggested by some representatives of the metropolitan area. The hon. member also said—

Here the Minister asks Parliament to allow him to impose four times the license fees pay-

able in the metropolitan area, and to spend that money in the country. The local authorities in the metropolitan area will get nothing from the added impost.

I ask no such thing. I say that those who use the prescribed roads, all of which are outside the metropolitan area, should pay an extra 7s. 6d. I do not provide that any vehicle in the metropolitan area using metropolitan roads will pay it, but all vehicles shod with solid tyres will be called upon to pay the extra 20 per cent. on that account, and I repeat that the 20 per cent. will not go into the Main Roads Trust Account. Reference was made to the question of continuous routes. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) tried to deal with it. I heard him explain it some time ago, not in the House. This provision seems to be self-explanatory. The Act distinctly provides that application may be made to run buses over a certain route. Before doing so, a time table must be prepared. In the traffic control section of my department there is a diagram which shows when a bus is on a road and when it is not. A continuous route may be defined as one where there is always a bus on the road during the day. If there is not, it is not a continuous route.

Mr. Sampson: That is, a bus belonging to the same company.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am talking not about companies, but about buses. If there is no bus on the route at any time during the day, it is not a continuous route, and such a bus will not pay the extra seating tax provided under the Bill. As to the question of maintaining and improving the Perth-Fremantle road, I am not going to wreck the Bill for the sake of that clause, but I included it in the Bill with honest intention. I am faced with the position that there is serious congestion on the Perth-Fremantle road, and I require money to improve it. There is no hope of the Treasurer finding money to improve the road. As regards the metropolitan traffic fees, 10 per cent. is deducted by the Government, 22½ per cent. goes to the Main Roads Board for maintenance, and 50 per cent. goes to the Minister in order to maintain the roads shown on the map. If there was any money available out of the 50 per cent., I intended to use it to improve the Perth-Fremantle road. I see no other way of getting money for the purpose and that is why that provision was included

in the Bill. I thought I was entitled to use any portion of the 50 per cent. not required for maintenance.

Mr. Withers: You would not use it for the improvement of the road to the detriment of the maintenance of the road?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; 50 per cent. is provided for maintenance, and all I propose is to use any surplus for improvement.

Mr. Kennelly: It would mean that a lesser amount would go to the metropolitan authorities.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If money is required for maintenance, it is used. If it is not required for maintenance, it remains in the fund. Last year there was £10,000 surplus from the 50 per cent., and I have already handed it over to the local authorities. If the House does not want me to improve the road with these funds, that provision can be cut out of the Bill, but I see no possible hope of getting loan money for the purpose, and without loan money the road cannot be improved unless I can get funds from this source. Mention has been made of the terrific amount of added cost that the Bill will impose on motor buses. I am satisfied that the buses are doing their job well. There are some buses in this State, particularly the Metro. buses, of which we have reason to be proud. They are performing a service for the community, and I should be very sorry to impose such a tax that they would be unable to carry. But in my opinion they are not paying a reasonable amount for the use they are making of the roads, and therefore the tax has been increased. Let me give some figures to show the increase in the number of buses and the effect of the increased tax. According to a report of the Government Statistician, in 1929 there were 187 buses running with seating accommodation for 2,420 passengers, and the seating fees paid amounted to £3,630. The passengers carried totalled 6,378,899, the mileage run was 5,804,131, and the charge made for seating fees—these buses pay the same P.L.W. charges as other vehicles, but 30s. seating fee per passenger extra—was .13d. per passenger. A passenger might travel one mile or 20 miles, but taking the whole of the passengers carried, that was the charge per passenger. Under the Bill I propose to double that charge, so that it will now be

.26d. per passenger. In other words buses will in future pay one farthing per passenger.

The Attorney General: Really a little less than a farthing.

Mr. Millington: But they cannot add that to their fares.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think it can be said that the charge is a heavy one. Last year the number of buses increased to 274, the passenger accommodation was 3,546, and the seating fees paid totalled £5,319. The increased seating fees are estimated to amount to something over £4,000. As I have shown, the average charge per passenger will be increased from .13d. to .26d., and I do not think it is too much to ask the buses to pay. As regards trucks, an A.E.C. 108 P.L.W., two tons, pays £13. Assuming that it runs 10,000 miles a year, the cost per mile is .31d. Under the proposed fee that truck will pay £53 10s., and if it runs 10,000 miles, the cost per mile will be 1.28d. If it runs 20,000 miles, which I think is a fair estimate for a truck carrying on the roads, it will pay .64d. per ton per mile. An International 147 P.L.W. 3 tons, now pays £22. Assuming that it runs 10,000 miles a year, the cost per mile is .32d. Under the proposed fee, that truck will pay £77 2s. 6d. If it runs 10,000 miles, the cost per mile will be 1.84d., and if it runs 20,000 miles, .92d. That figure may be divided by three in order to ascertain the cost per ton mile. A Republic truck, 170 P.L.W., 3½ to four tons, pays £29 10s., the cost per mile for 10,000 miles being .70d. The proposed fee is £93 5s., which works out at 2.23d. for 10,000 miles and 1.11d. for 20,000 miles. People talk about prohibition, but what about the effect of this competition upon the railways which pay considerably more than that? It is not asking too much of the owners of motor trucks that they should pay this amount. It has been said that the bus owners cannot afford to pay these fees. They have to put in statistics every year. From these we learn that in 1925, 74 buses were running, their revenue was £70,835, and their working expenses £51,935. The difference, less depreciation, was the profit. In 1929 the buses numbered 187, the seating accommodation was for 2,420, the passengers carried numbered 6,378,000, the revenue was £216,232, and the working expenses £175,994. From these figures they

appear to have been making a reasonable profit. I agree there are certain buses that are not making as much profit. They are trying to build up a route on which there is not a great deal of traffic. As the member for South Fremantle has stated, this is a non-party measure. I hope members will not move too many amendments, but I promise to give consideration to any they do move.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 18th September; Mr. Richardson in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

New Clause:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for South Fremantle had moved for the insertion of a new clause to stand as Clause 7, as follows:—

A section is inserted after section twelve of the principal Act, as follows:—

12a. No person shall be employed or engaged on or in connection with any scaffolding or gear unless such person has a sufficient knowledge of the English language to enable him to speak such language intelligibly.

Mr. MUNSIE: The member for South Fremantle is unavoidably absent from the House just now. He has, however, moved his new clause, and I take it that the Minister has since then had time to go into the matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not prepared to accept the new clause as it stands. It means that no person can be employed on scaffolding unless he can speak English intelligibly. A similar provision was embodied in the Bill last year, and was largely responsible for its defeat. One of the objects of this measure is to reduce the fees. In my travels around the market gardening districts in the metropolitan area I have noticed in the limestone country that a good many houses have been erected at a low price by Southern Europeans. I should be sorry to see that position affected by the proposed new clause. Officers of the department, have, however, told me that when inspecting these buildings in course of con-

struction they have sometimes endeavoured to convey an instruction to the men working on them with regard to the scaffolding, but, because they could not understand English, it was impossible to do so. I would, however, agree to an amendment to provide that on any building, the construction of which requires scaffolding, at least one person shall be employed who speaks the English language intelligibly.

The CHAIRMAN: If the Minister moves an amendment along those lines, it would cut out the whole of the proposals advanced by the member for South Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so.

Mr. MUNSIE: The proposal of the Minister will not overcome the difficulty that exists in the city and the metropolitan area. There is always at least one man on scaffolding in these areas who can speak English, and there are often five or six foreigners who cannot understand a word that is said around them. It is dangerous to allow such foreigners to work on any scaffolding.

The Attorney General: What are the dangers?

Mr. MUNSIE: Some of the gear may give way and a warning may be shouted, as the result of which the men who understand the warning, will get out of the way. A foreigner, however, might not understand what had been said, and might not get out of the way. Such a case is already known in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Angelo: Would it be the language that would make the scaffolding give way?

Mr. MUNSIE: It is not a joking matter. The proposal of the Minister will not improve the position in any way. It does not amount to an amendment of the new clause, but it is something quite different from what was moved by the member for South Fremantle.

The CHAIRMAN: It will be necessary in this case to move an amendment that all the words after "follows" be struck out, with a view to inserting other words.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment on the new clause—

That all the words of the new clause after "as follows" be struck out.

I have always thought that the reason for abandoning the building of the Tower of Babel was that the builders could not under-

stand each other—not that they were dropping bricks on each other. The member for Hannans said there were a hundred and one reasons why men not understanding the English language 100 per cent. should be employed together. In an emergency, however, a warning sounds just the same whether it is spoken in English, or French, or Spanish, or perhaps Chinese. The only warning given in an emergency is a loud shout; there is not time to utter a sentence. If I felt that there was any genuine danger in employing one who could not understand the English language, I should vote for the new clause; but I do not regard the objection raised as really bona fide. I believe the new clause to be in pursuance of a policy of compelling, as far as possible, employment to be in the hands of British subjects.

Mr. Withers: Why not?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Personally I wish to see the Australian population built up of Anglo-Saxons. I would prefer to see the Australian people 100 per cent. British or Australian born. But as long as we allow other people to come to Australia, become Australian citizens, pay taxes, abide by the laws—

Mr. Angelo: And join the unions.

Mr. Marshall: When they are able to abide by the laws, they will be able to speak the English language intelligibly, and so will not come under the new clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In a police court a defendant cannot say, "I do not understand the English language, and therefore did not know what the law was." He would be put in gaol. His inability to speak English might get him landed more readily than would the ability to speak it. My friends opposite, who in a contest as to who was the best democrat would leave me hopelessly in the rear, want to divide the population of Western Australia into sections, one of which can get a particular kind of job, while the other cannot. I am unable to agree that there should be any distinction in rights in this country according to a man's nationality, or his ability to speak English, or of the colour of his hair.

Mr. Munsie: Would you suggest wiping out the same provision in the Mines Regulation Act?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I believe that provision was inserted there not from a motive of protection at all, but to try to

keep the work a monopoly for those who can speak English.

Mr. Munsie: It was proved conclusively that many men had lost their lives owing to others employed with them not being able to speak English.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member may be right; I do not know. But anyone proposing such a provision as the new clause should put up an overwhelming case of proof that the employment of persons speaking a foreign language is dangerous.

Mr. Corboy: What do you demand? The production of a dozen dead, or what?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I demand some kind of case which would convince an entirely unbiassed person of the danger. Personally I fail to see why Smith and Vermicelli, working on the building of a five-roomed cottage, are likely to kill each other because of Vermicelli not being able to speak English.

Mr. Munsie: What about a five-storeyed building?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. member can make a case for that, well and good. This new clause is of a most general nature. It would, for instance, prevent six people who were all foreigners from working on a building.

Mr. Munsie: The Minister's amendment does that, because under it one man must speak English.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The new clause will practically prohibit a gang of, say, Italians from building a house to which the Inspection of Scaffolding Act applies. I cannot conscientiously agree to such a proposal. I have not had much contact with these people.

Mr. Raphael: You would speak differently if you had.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As long as a man is allowed to live in Western Australia, very powerful reasons must be put up for depriving him of the equal rights of citizenship which are an essential characteristic of our laws.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I hope the amendment on the new clause will not be carried. We can advocate the principle of requiring people in such employment as this to have a knowledge of the English language, without being accused of trying to prevent foreigners who have come to this country from earning their living. With the Attorney

General I hold that whilst these people are allowed into the country, they have a right to make their living in it. But surely we have a right to require that the Britishers in this country, including the Australians, shall be protected against the dangers emanating from an influx of people ignorant of our language. There are plenty of avocations in which such people can be employed without endangering the lives of English-speaking people. That is all the new clause seeks to ensure. The Attorney General mentioned the building of the Tower of Babel. I have had brought to my attention a more recent case, in which a Frenchman complained about the difficulty of understanding what he termed the idioms of the English language. He was working on a building and happened to be on the lower storey. His complaint was that the English did not use the right words when wishing to convey a warning. He said in French, "I was working underneath, and I heard someone above call out 'Look out!' I looked out, but I should have looked in, because I caught the brick." The same difficulty would occur if the majority of the men employed were speaking French and one was speaking English. I hope the Committee will place on the statute-book the amendment previously agreed to by the House, under which those engaged in a dangerous occupation must have a knowledge of the English language.

Mr. CORBOY: The Attorney General has viewed the amendment moved by the member for South Fremantle from the point of view of the contractor's job being made easy in dealing with the inspector.

The Attorney General: Why not say the inspector's job made easy in dealing with the contractor?

Mr. CORBOY: The Minister has viewed the matter as between the contractor and the department, but that is not what influenced the member for South Fremantle. He was concerned with the protection of the workers themselves from dangers involved in having men on the job who were unable to speak the English language. A similar provision had to be inserted in the Mines Regulation Act and, while it is not suggested that the building trade is as dangerous as the mining industry, it cannot be gainsaid that there is a big element of danger when high buildings are under construction. As English is the language of Aus-

tralia, surely it is only right that foreigners engaged in positions in which the lives of their fellow workers may be endangered should be able to understand, and intelligibly convey, warnings of impending danger.

The Attorney General: How is the test applied under the Mines Regulation Act?

Mr. Munsie: The inspector of mines calls the foreigners up and puts various questions to them.

Mr. CORBOY: He tests the foreigners in the customary expressions that may be used in connection with work in the mines.

Mr. Wansbrough: Plain Australian, and a good deal of it!

The Attorney General: That would imply a knowledge of words not always to be found in a dictionary.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes. I ask the Minister to reconsider the amendment moved by the member for South Fremantle from the standpoint of danger to the worker and not that of easy administration.

Mr. ANGELO: Are the men to whom the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie has objected, members of a union?

Mr. Corboy: What the duece has that got to do with it?

Mr. Munsie: Some of them are.

Mr. ANGELO: Then, if the union accepts the foreigners as members of the organisation, surely it is in the hands of the union to deal with them. Why cannot the union, before accepting their membership, see that the foreigners can speak and understand the English language?

Mr. Kenneally: And you would be the first to complain.

Mr. Munsie: You would be the first to accept such dictation.

Mr. Corboy: Your herring is not even red; it is barely pink.

Mr. ANGELO: I cannot understand the union accepting the membership of these men and then attempting to deny them a job in the industry.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Both the Attorney General and the Minister for Works have overlooked the importance of the original amendment, which does not deal with a scaffold but with scaffolding. In the construction of a large building, such as the new Commonwealth Bank, a number of scaffolds will be used. If foreigners were employed on one of the higher scaffolds, danger to the workers below could arise through a mis-

understanding regarding the nature of a warning given. Every argument used by the Attorney General in opposition to the amendment moved by the member for South Fremantle, was urged against a similar amendment inserted in the Mines Regulation Act, but we have lived to realise the benefits that arose from the addition to the latter Act. I hope the amendment moved by the Minister for Works will not be agreed to. The amendment on the amendment should not have been accepted in the form in which it was placed before the Committee. I am afraid the Minister's amendment on the amendment was hurriedly framed and ill-conceived.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I must apologise to the Committee for having mislaid temporarily the amendment furnished me by the Crown Solicitor. In order to show that the amendment had not been hurriedly drafted—I could not put my hand on the draft for the moment—I have here the minute from the Crown Solicitor embodying the amendment to that submitted by the member for South Fremantle. The department deals with scaffolding from the standpoint of the safety of the workmen, and it is the inspector's job to act accordingly. If it is not for that purpose, why do we charge fees? The trouble is that where Jugo Slavs are dealing with the scaffolding and are told that it is wrong, they do not understand. So it was suggested by the department that if there was one man on the job who could speak English, the others could be made to understand that the scaffolding was not right.

Mr. Withers: How could you make the others understand?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We could provide that one man shall speak English, but it is not suggested that there shall be one man who can speak all the known languages. The point is that the one who can speak English will tell the others. In the clause I have made it clear that if a Southern European wants to erect a building on his own property, and has another with him as a partner, it is all right, for they will not then come under the Act; whereas if the owner has to employ another man he will be under the Act. Of course if it comes to a building of two or three storeys, I agree that every man working on it should be able to speak English.

Mr. MUNSIE: The difficulty now is that we are asked to accept the amendment moved by the Minister in preference to the one moved by the member for South Fremantle. If a vote were taken no doubt the Minister's amendment would be carried, but I am of opinion that it would be quite useless. I am prepared to move an amendment on the amendment moved by the member for South Fremantle. It would do all that the Minister is asking in his amendment.

The Minister for Works: What is your amendment?

Mr. MUNSIE: Well I wish to move that after "gear" in line three of the amendment the words "extending beyond one storey in height" be inserted.

The Minister for Works: That will do.

Mr. MUNSIE: That would permit of any foreigners working together on a cottage but if the building were of two storeys, they would be required to speak English. If the Minister withdraws his amendment, I will move mine.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If I withdraw my amendment to have those words struck out, the member for Hannans can then move his amendment. I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment on the new clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. MUNSIE: I move an amendment on the new clause—

That after "gear," in line three, of the proposed new clause, the words "extending beyond one storey in height" be inserted.

The Minister for Works: I will accept the amendment.

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

The CHAIRMAN: This amendment should have been moved during the passage of Clause 6, but I am prepared to accept it as a new clause, Clause 8 of the Bill.

Mr. MUNSIE: On behalf of the member for South Fremantle, I move an amendment—

That a paragraph be inserted in Regulation 20 in Part II. of the Schedule to the principal Act, as follows:—

(v) The Governor may at any time and from time to time by Order in Council reduce, as he shall think fit, the rates of fees respectively prescribed in paragraph (i) of this regulation, and the rates of fees respectively specified in such Order in Council shall thereafter be payable under this regulation in lieu of the said prescribed fees until such Order in

Council is revoked, whereupon the said prescribed fees shall again become payable under this regulation until the same are again reduced by a subsequent Order in Council.

At present if the Minister wishes to reduce the fees, he has to come to Parliament for permission. The member for South Fremantle, when administering the Act, sought to reduce the fees in a Bill containing other clauses also. That Bill was defeated, and so the fees could not be reduced. If this amendment be carried, the Minister will be able to reduce the fees without consulting Parliament.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not suppose this amendment will be pressed against the will of the Minister, because it is trying to make the Minister take power that he does not want. Always have I steadfastly set my face against taking regulation powers, and here the Minister himself says it is not necessary. He is content to come to Parliament for this power whenever it is required. Curiously, the first time I rode my hobby-horse against regulations in this House, it was on the original Scaffolding Bill. I suggested to the then Minister for Works that the powers for prescribing fees ought to be in the Act as a schedule. After some consideration he agreed with my proposition, and so that power was put into the Bill as a schedule. Now the present Minister for Works is following the good example of the ex-Minister for Works, but the ex-Minister for Works wants to go back to his original view-point.

Mr. Corboy: Experience has taught him that this power is needed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: But the present Minister for Works does not think so.

Mr. Munsie: I doubt whether in these stressful times the Minister will ever again put that power into operation. He will collect every shilling he can get.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Well, he does not want the power to reduce fees without coming to the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Hannans says that in these stressful times I am not likely to want to reduce the fees. Yet that is what I am doing now.

Mr. Munsie: I hope you will be able to get the Bill through another place. They rejected ours.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But they are all friends of mine. The Bill in-

introduced by the ex-Minister for Works contained fees higher than the present fees. The last amending Bill proposed a fee of 5s. per £100 up to £10,000, whereas in this Bill the fee is 4s. Also the fee in the previous Bill of 2s. 6d. for every additional £100 up to £50,000 becomes 2s. in this Bill. So I have reduced the fees to such an extent that I do not think it likely that it will be necessary to reduce them still further. If power is given to the Minister to reduce fees by regulation, it leaves the Minister open to the importunities of deputations. I think it better to leave that power in the Bill. Why did not the previous Minister take this power, and why does he now want me to take it?

Mr. MUNSIE: In the original Bill, after consultation with the builders and contractors, the first set of figures were fixed, but after an experience of nearly 12 months it was discovered that they were more than double what was necessary. The then Minister for Works could not alter the fees without coming to Parliament. He introduced an amending Bill reducing the fees to what the builders and contractors thought would be a fair thing. Even then it was suggested if building were carried on to any great extent, the fees could again be reduced. In the present condition of the building trade there is not likely to be any surplus. The fees are designed to cover the cost of administration, and it is not intended to make a profit out of them. The State would not suffer as a result of the proposal.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I hope the amendment will not be carried. We should not make it possible for any combination of persons to wait on a Minister and request him to grant concessions. If any alteration be required, it should receive the approval of Parliament. Otherwise an alteration could be made without Parliament having any knowledge of it for six months.

New clause put and negatived.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—HIGH SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. A. L. Davy—West Perth) [9.22] in moving the second reading said: This Bill arises out of a measure passed last session. Mem-

bers will recollect that a Bill was passed to alter the name of the High School. It being a school constituted by Act of Parliament, it was necessary before the name could be changed for a further Act to be passed. When it was proposed to change the name, some opposition arose from the Diocesan Council of the Church of England, and part of the opposition was that the name of a Church of England Bishop should be given to the school which, by its original statutory charter, was confined in its education to entirely secular education. They thought it would be an impropriety that the name of a dignitary of the Church should be given to a school that imparted entirely secular education. Although the words "exclusively secular" appear in the original Act, the High School has always given education of an undenominational character. A compromise was reached between the Governors of the High School and the Diocesan Council, whereby the council withdrew its opposition if the Governors undertook certain things which are irrelevant at the moment, and also undertook to ask Parliament at the earliest possible moment to strike out the words "exclusively secular" and insert "undenominational." This measure asks Parliament to do that. It will bring the law into accord with the actual practice of the school. This matter is not one of great concern to Parliament in actuality because, though the High School, now Hale School, was more or less a Government school assisted by an annual subsidy, it now has no real interest for the Government. Still, Parliament has power to grant or refuse any amendment to the statutory charter. I commend the Bill to the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 9.29 p.m.